

**MILLSTONE TOWNSHIP  
AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
MAY 14, 2024**

Chairperson Butewicz called the Meeting to Order at 7:42 p.m.

Chairperson Butewicz read the Adequate Notice

**ROLL CALL:**

**Present:** Mr. Asprocolas, Ms. Butch, Ms. Butewicz, Ms. Coppinger, Mr. Peck, Mr. Ziner  
**Absent:** Ms. Posten  
**Public:** Howard Crawford, 26 Rising Sun Tavern Road  
**Guest:** Katie Mazzella, SADC Representative

**PUBLIC COMMENTS: Opened at 7:45**

Howard Crawford, 26 Rising Sun Tavern Road – Mr. Crawford is the owner of the Rising Sun Tavern Farm. He wanted to update the Council on the status of his farm market opening. Since last month’s meeting, it has taken a long time to get a return call from the fire inspector. When they finally returned his call, he was told that they could not come out until the Township building department got involved since the building use changed.

Ms. Butch asked if he reached out to Dan Specht who offered to assist with the fire inspection. Mr. Crawford had left a message for Mr. Specht but did not follow up yet. The farm is running out of time to have an opening.

Ms. Butewicz noted that there is an issue in Millstone Township with the long delays in getting fire inspections done. There is a very limited time frame when the fire inspector is available.

Mr. Crawford was under the impression from the April meeting that the farm could open while the permits are pending. The Council agreed that was their impression also from last month’s meeting.

Ms. Butch noted that Mr. Crawford has to get the Certificate of Occupancy from the building department. She will double check with the Township tomorrow about the ability for the farm market to open.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS: Closed at 7:53**

**MEETING MINUTES: Tabled – no minutes available.**

**CORRESPONDENCE: NONE**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**SADC Soil Standards Update:** Ms. Butch noted that at the last SADC meeting, revisions to the soil standards were rolled out to address the concerns from farmers. They are on the website for everyone to review. There seems to be enough changes to satisfy a majority of farmers.

**Labor Housing Ordinance:** Ms. Butch noted that there are two different proposals. On proposal is general covering year round farm labor and the second proposal deals with farm animals. The Council should help create ordinances for the Township since the State will take time to finalize their bill. The Council could also make recommendations to the State before things

are finalized. As long as the Township ordinance does not end up more restrictive than the State bill, there wouldn't be an issue. However, we need someone who can write a township ordinance.

Mr. Ziner asked who wrote the township ordinance for the Equine labor housing.

Ms. Butch noted that the Township did not write an ordinance so it defaults to the State law. If the Township does write an ordinance, the two main points that need to be incorporated are:

- 1) All of Agriculture should be allowed labor housing provided that they meet the qualification for the Right to Farm law.
- 2) Labor housing use must be registered in the deed as to the specific use so that when that use no longer exists, the housing does not remain.

Qualifying labor housing by the number of labor hours would be preferred over income producing standards. The standard would be the same as the qualification for a commercial farm. Any housing would still need to meet building and health code standards. Mr. Ziner will follow up with Ms. Mertz, the Township Planner regarding the creation of a township ordinance.

Katie Mazzella, SADC Representative – Ms. Mazzella informed the Council that Ms. Susan Payne is retiring from the SADC on June 1<sup>st</sup>. The SADC approved the publication of the soil standards changes. The SADC is working on the Statewide Formula Value (SFV). The handbook on farmland preservation has been updated.

**Spring Newsletter** – The newsletter went out and was well received.

**Clam Bake:** The Clambake for June 2<sup>nd</sup> has been cancelled.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Ms. Butch suggested that the Ag Council website be updated to include the following information under Farm Markets:

- 1) The law that requires a Certificate of Occupancy
- 2) NJ code for retail food establishments
- 3) Cottage Industry Licensing

Ms. Coppinger discussed her experience with obtaining a Cottage Industry License. There are several tests that are taken online. Her specific license pertains to cooking brownies, cookies and other similar items. You have to list all ingredients and define your sterilization process. The kitchen used for those items does get inspected.

**New Trailer Ordinance:** Mr. Ziner noted that this proposed ordinance has its second reading before the Township Committee tomorrow.

Mr. Asprocolas noted that his farm uses multiple trailers for farm operations and that the ordinance allows for agricultural exemptions. He has 2 boats that are also stored on the farm during the winter months and how the ordinance will impact him. The stipulation that vehicles must be registered in the landowner's name is an issue. There are many times when trailers and farm equipment is not in the landowner's name.

Mr. Ziner noted that commercial farms were excluded

Mr. Peck expressed concern that office trailers and refrigeration trucks on farms might not be excluded based on references in other sections of the ordinance. The interpretation of other sections that are vague about whether agricultural purposes are exempt could pose an issue.

Mr. Asprocolas questioned why the Ag Council was not asked to provide input before the proposed ordinance was presented to the Township Committee.

Mr. Ziner noted that representatives from the Council can attend the TC meeting tomorrow and express their concerns.

Ms. Butewicz requested that Mr. Ziner present the Council's concerns if Mr. Peck or Mr. Asprocolas are unable to attend due to a prior commitment.

Chairperson Butewicz moved to go to executive session at 8:36PM.

Council returned from Executive Session at 8:57PM.

Ms. Butch commented that the Township must pass a resolution allowing the option of the Statewide Formula Value to be offered to properties applying for farmland preservation. Mr. Ziner will have Ms. Mertz draft a resolution to present to the TC.

Seeing no further business, Councilperson Peck moved to adjourn. Councilperson Asprocolis offered a second. Meeting adjourned at 9:03PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrew DeFelice