

**MILLSTONE TOWNSHIP  
AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
DECEMBER 10, 2024**

Chairperson Butewicz called the Meeting to Order at 7:31 p.m.

Chairperson Butewicz read the Adequate Notice

**ROLL CALL:**

**Present:** Mr. Asprocolas, Ms. Butch, Ms. Butewicz, Ms. Posten(7:37), Mr. Ziner

**Absent:** Ms. Coppinger, Mr. Peck,

**PUBLIC COMMENTS: Opened at 7:32**

Mr. Walker, 11 Pine Hill Road: Mr. Walker asked how the Ag Council promotes Agritourism in Millstone. Ms. Butewicz noted that agritourism is a recent term used in reference to activities on a farm that help generate additional income to allow farms to remain economically viable while continuing their agriculture or equine activity. Agritourism activities are ancillary and must still meet health and safety requirements. Ms. Butch noted that any farm can go before the County Ag Board if they are having issues with municipal officials in getting approval for their activities. They can review the AMPs available or get a Site Specific AMP that would permit their activity under the Right to Farm laws.

Mr. Holzer, 174 Sweetmans Lane: Mr. Holzer commented that he applied for a variance to operate a hard cider facility on his farm. He did not anticipate the resistance that he received from township officials and neighbors. He is in the process of going to the County Ag Board to be certified as a commercial farm and implement an AMP.

Katie Zella, SADC Representative: Katie presented her report from the SADC. The committee reviewed the final draft and public comments for the Soil Protection Standards.

A summary of the Statewide Valuation Formula Value is up on the SADC website. It is expected to be published in February or March. Once it is published, they can begin using the formula for farmland preservation valuation.

The next generation Farmer program is kicking off to help with transitioning the next generation of farmers.

The SADC recently purchased 160 acre farm in Hopewell Township, Mercer County.

For preserved farms in the State, there are opportunities to have special occasion events on the farm to promote agritourism. Applications are filed with the SADC and farms must meet local health and zoning requirements. The SADC offers free mediation services to help farmers settle issues with their Municipality.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS: Closed at 8:07**

**MEETING MINUTES:**

October 8, 2024 Minutes – Mr. Asprocolas moved to accept the minutes. Ms. Butch offered a second. Mr. Asprocolas, Ms. Butch and Ms. Butewicz voted in favor.

November 12, 2024 Minutes – Mr. Asprocolas moved to accept the minutes. Ms. Butch offered a second. Mr. Asprocolas, Ms. Butch and Ms. Butewicz voted in favor.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** – The Secretary received an email from Harriet Honigfeld, Supervising Planner, Monmouth County Division of Planning regarding her review of the Municipal PIG application from Millstone Township.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**SADC Statewide Formula:** Per Katie Mazzella's comments earlier, the formula should be available by March 2025.

**Municipal Planning Incentive Grant 2026:** The grant is due by December 15<sup>th</sup>. The County has reviewed it and the Township Committee passed their resolution for submission. The Secretary will submit it to the State tomorrow.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Budget 2025:** Need to make sure that funding is available to issue 2 newsletters in 2025 even though Open Space did not issue the Fall newsletter.

**Spring Newsletter:** Start thinking about articles for the Spring newsletter. Need an article to promote the role of the Ag Council for farm and equine owners. We should also promote the new Statewide formula for the valuation of preserving farmland. Please submit articles by early Spring.

**Landowner Meeting:** The Council would like to host another meet and greet for landowners sometime in March. The TC and Planning Board should be encouraged to attend to get a better understanding of the issues affecting the agricultural and equine communities and the activities that are allowed under the Right to Farm laws.

Chairperson Butewicz moved to go to executive session at 8:25PM.

Council returned from Executive Session at 9:01PM.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrew DeFelice