

MEETING NOTES
EAST AMWELL AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
JULY 11, 2016; EAST AMWELL MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 1070 ROUTE 202, RINGOES, NJ

CALL TO ORDER & OPEN PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE

The meeting of the East Amwell Agricultural Advisory Committee began at 7:45PM. Notice of this meeting was filed in the Township Clerk’s Office, sent to the Hunterdon County Democrat, and the agenda was posted on the municipal bulletin board.

2016 ATTENDANCE

Agricultural Advisory Committee Member	1/7/16	2/1/16	3/14/16	4/18/16	5/16/16	6/20/16	7/11/16	8/1/16	9/6/16	10/17/16	11/21/16	12/19/16
Kit Crisafulli		No	7:45	X				Cancelled				
Rob Garrett	X	Qu	X	X	X	X	X					
John Perehinys		oru	X	X								
Candice Wiggum	X	m	X	X	X	X	X					
Joseph Heckman		Pre		X	X	X	X					
		sent										

Others present on 7/11/16: Sharon Brighthaupt as recording secretary, David Wang-Iverson, Tony Robbi, Mike Van Clef, Dan Roberts, Larry S. Katz, Jodi Powers

CALL TO ORDER

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Rob Garrett noted this being a special meeting of the committee for open discussion about deer management in the township some of the formalities of the meeting will be tabled in the interest of expedience. All in favor. Rob Garret kicked off the meeting by welcoming the guests and thanking them for coming. He suggested the format of the meeting should be to recognize each expert for a period of ten minutes and then at the end open the forum for questions and open discussion. This being a preliminary discussion to gather facts and determine if there is enough interest to plan for a public meeting in the fall which would be advertised and of interest to farmers. All in favor.

Mike Van Clef, Stewardship Manager for Hopewell Valley Open Space.

The Hopewell Valley has multiple preserves in varying sizes and safety zones. Their guideline is one antlerless deer per five acres. This is an aggressive goal and requires approximately ten hunters per five acres of space. Their program has been in existence for approximately eight years. Photos of harvested deer are required. He learned from his experience the photos are necessary as the harvest numbers were higher before the photo requirement was instituted. The Hopewell Valley program began with an open invitation to hunters to participate with few requirements. Experience has determined those who do not meet quota are removed from the program. They started with over sixty participants, it has been reduced to thirty hunters and about fifty percent of them take about ninety percent of the deer. He has learned it is not the number of hunters participating, but the number of effective hunters that make the program work well. As hunters leave the program, the number of acres available for those left is increased, allowing them more freedom to increase the harvest. Monitoring of the program is important to the success of the program. Results of the monitoring program indicate if the surrounding towns do not have a deer management program it will have negative impact by allowing increased numbers of deer to come in from other areas. It is important to get as many landowners involved in deer management. Agricultural areas and no-go areas (about 40% are no-go) are where the numbers are very high. Recreational is not enough to control the herd, the program needs to continue to be expanded by

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convincing landowners of the need.

Dan Roberts and Jodi Powers of the Fish & Wildlife Department

Active deer management programs are currently taking place in Hillsborough, Montgomery, Princeton. Talking about instituting programs is taking place in Readington, Raritan, Franklin, Hunterdon County, Somerset. These areas are hot beds and are problem areas. Access in these areas is limited by the landowners. There has been a slight reduction in the numbers since the late 90's and early 2000's, but the numbers are still too high.

Step one for implementing a program is taking place now by talking about the problem. Setting the goal for the recreational season. Fish and Wildlife sets the season, currently approximately five months beginning in early September to mid-February for unlimited antlerless harvest. In this area about 90% of the harvest is taken on private property. The county park system does rotate some properties in and out of the program as the need arises. Where we know there is a problem we implement liberal rules to offer the opportunity for success. In the absence of an organized committee private landowners can set their own rules for hunters they allow onto their property. The lands are identified and the quotas are set and the landowners are covered for liability by their organizations and the landowner liability act as long as they are not charging for access by the hunters.

Recommendations are for antlerless harvest to take place before a buck can be taken. This will ensure control of the numbers. Statistics are available on line to support those who are monitoring the local program. A community based permit program on municipal property or county property would require an active management to be in place. Utilization of traffic reports, management reports from Fish and Wildlife and other organizations, for allowing extended permits. Agricultural properties evidencing damage are allowed extended permits.

A Pilot program could start with a small group and gain access to contiguous blocks of property. Begin with the regulated hunting season and monitor for a few years to gather data to justify instituting a community based program. This will give you justification for extending the season and gaining approval for additional methods in excess of the regular hunting season. The data from the Hunterdon County Preserves in the Sourland Mountains was included in the last season's statistics.

Larry S. Katz, PhD, Senior Associate Director, NJ Agricultural Experiment Station, Director, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Professor, Animal Sciences

It is important to solicit support for the program as there are organizations and people who will be opposed to any type of management program. You need to be prepared for those arguments when the time comes and know what is fact and how to respond in order to control the dialogue. For example you may want to put rules in place for allowing speakers the floor at public meetings, like if you want to speak you must be a resident of the Township. They would need to provide their address of their place of residence. The New Jersey Agricultural Experimental Station ran a census of deer by infrared counts and the number was about 120 deer per square mile. The densest population in the State was in this Hunterdon County area. His recommendation is to look at the impact of the deer, not the number of deer in the area. Balance is important, the people and hunters need to be able to see the deer, on the other hand ecologically it is important to keep control. Damage is measured in millions of dollars in loss of crops and auto accidents.

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There is no approved method of contraception for deer and there is no method of dealing with the population. These arguments will be used to try to confuse the issue suggesting this will work in an uncontrolled population. Very aggressive programs can have success in controlling populations.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next regular meeting will take place on September 6, 2016. Rob Garrett made a motion for the date of the next meeting. Candice Wiggum seconded. All in favor.

PRESENTATION OF MINUTES

Rob Garrett made a motion to accept the minutes as presented for June 20, 2016. Candice Wiggum seconded the motion. All in favor.

OLD BUSINESS

Joseph Heckman reviewed and consolidated the Excel Spreadsheet containing farmland information. The secretary will forward the findings to the other committee members.

NEW BUSINESS

REPORTS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CORRESPONDENCE

Farm Bureau and CADB Meeting Minutes

ADJOURNMENT

Rob Garrett made a motion the meeting be adjourned at approximately 9:45PM. Joseph Heckman seconded, all in favor.

Next AG Advisory Committee Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 6, 2016 at 7:30PM.

/s/ Sharon L. Brighthaupt

Sharon L. Brighthaupt, Recording Secretary
July 30, 2016