

**MEETING MINUTES  
EAST AMWELL AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
FEBRUARY 18, 2019; 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 7:30 p.m. Notice of this meeting was published in the January 24, 2019, issue of the Hunterdon County Democrat, with an agenda filed in the Township Clerk’s Office, sent to the Hunterdon County Democrat, and the agenda posted on the municipal bulletin board.

**2019 ATTENDANCE**

Agricultural Advisory Committee Member	1/18/19	2/18/19	3/18/19	4/15/19	5/20/19	6/17/19	7/15/19	8/19/19	9/16/19	10/21/19	11/18/19	12/16/19
<b>Kit Crisafulli</b>	<b>Cancelled</b>	<b>X</b>										
<b>Ann del Campo</b>		<b>X</b>										
<b>John Pehinys</b>												
<b>Candice Wiggum</b>		<b>X</b>										

*Others present: Sharon Brighthaupt as recording secretary*

**CALL TO ORDER**

The secretary recognized two members of the public in attendance. Asked for their patience until the reorganization of the committee was complete.

**REORGANIZATION OF COMMITTEE FOR 2019**

The secretary asked for a reorganization of the Committee for 2019, beginning with a nomination for a member to serve as Chair. Candice Wiggum made a motion to nominate Ann del Campo as Chair, seconded by Kit Crisafulli who asked if she would be willing to serve. Ann del Campo responded that she was already serving as President of Rotary and did not think she would be in a position to accept the nomination at this time. She asked if someone else could serve for 2019 and she would serve for the next year. Candice Wiggum interjected that she was not sure how active the committee would be under the present circumstance. She explained she would be resigning after she sees through the Deer Management Panel and if no one stepped up to fill the open position on the committee there would be only three members and if one does not attend a meeting would not take place due to a lack of quorum. Ann del Campo asked Kit Crisafulli if he would be able to serve, he responded he has no more time due to his service on the fire company squad.

Ann del Campo accepted the nomination with the understanding that her time is also limited.

The secretary asked for a nomination of someone to serve as the vice chair. Ann del Campo made a nomination for Kit Crisafulli to serve as vice chair, seconded by Candice Wiggum. Kit accepted the nomination, all in favor.

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**RECOGNITION OF PUBLIC**

Ann del Campo made a motion to open to the public, seconded by Candice Wiggum. All in favor. The secretary asked them to identify themselves for the record. Their names are Lisa Miccolis and Mike Mills. Lisa Miccolis went on to say she had spoken to Candice Wiggum by telephone and provided her with documents by email.

Lisa Miccolis went on to explain they came to the Agricultural Advisory Committee to seek guidance and advice regarding an on-going problem they are experiencing. She investigated before buying a property located on Block 33, Lot 11 by contacting the East Amwell Township zoning official at the time Peter Kneske. Her plan was to buy a property to grow plants only, in containers. She asked if she would be able to build and use temporary hoop houses and if she would be able to build a deer fence and asked what other challenges she might be facing. He told her the deer fencing and cold frame hoop houses should not be a problem as there was no permanent foundation or footings planned. He advised he would need to see a plot plan and recommended she contact the construction official to see if a permit would be required.

She has a retail business in Hillsborough and has no plan to sell anything from this property, her plan is to grow plants in containers and live in the residence on the property. She purchased the property located at 270 Wertzville Road, obtained the fence permit and had the deer fencing installed. While she was running her business in Hillsborough, Mike Mills took over to move forward with preparing for the growing of the container plants. He met with the current zoning official and was told the setback for the hoop houses should be 32 feet. Based on the zoning official's advice they began to prepare the site plan. Soon after a neighbor raised a complaint and he was notified the setback now needed to be 100 feet for the cold frames. At this point he felt they were being misinformed as they read the UCC Right to Farm rules and the farmland assessment rules. The farmland assessment act provides for an exception specifically for these temporary structures. They believe these cold frames fall under section A and not L of the Right to Farm rules. This is not to be a market and no customers will come to this property.

Now that they were referred to the County, they believe in error it is snowballing with many other agencies and officials quoting rules and regulations that should not be considered.

Ann del Campo advised them to chronologically prepare a letter to send to the Township Committee addressed to the Mayor of their experience. They came to the AGC to ask for someone to be a mediator for them with the Township Committee. Candice Wiggum advised them to contact Rick Wolfe, she has forwarded their messages to him. She believes he may be waiting for them to contact him and would be the official they should be contacting. Ann del Campo explained the committee does not have the power to mediate for them with the Township Committee or the Zoning Officer, they can only offer suggestions. Candice reiterated the best advice is for them to get in touch with Rick Wolfe for his advice. Ann del Campo suggested they contact the neighbors of the property and Candice Wiggum suggested they contact the Amwell Valley Trail Association to find out if they have concerns or could be supportive.

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**PRESENTATION OF THE DECEMBER 17, 2018 MINUTES**

Ann del Campo asked if there are any changes or exceptions to the minutes. Seconded by Kit Crisafulli. None being heard, minutes were approved as presented. All in favor.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Ann del Campo suggested farmers in the township should be encouraged and Kit Crisafulli agreed. These new residents are repurposing a property that was abandoned and the township is gaining a functioning farm in the township. It's been sitting for years in limbo.

Candice Wiggum and Ann del Campo agreed that a task for this committee is, how can we support our farmers. Ann del Campo suggested she is seriously thinking about ways to improve communication between the AGC and the farmers currently in the township.

Kit Crisafulli called to the attention of the members the limited number of farmers who are actually farming the properties in the community. Most of the larger farms are renting the property to only a handful of active farmers.

The members agreed they have tried to recruit additional committee members and have been told by those they spoke with, the committee is not being used for advisory purposes. As a result, new members are difficult to bring on board. It's important that the Township Committee give a clear definition to the committee members what is expected of the committee. The liaison for the AGC is Rick Wolfe and the committee members are hopeful he will be able to attend some of the meetings going forward. Also, a member needs to be appointed as liaison to FOSPC and obtain email addresses for the farmland assessed property owners.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Deer Management Strategies meeting will take place on March 5, 2019. Candice Wiggum asked how to go about getting some bottled water and perhaps some cookies for the meeting. She will need them to be delivered to the meeting as she is still incapacitated. The secretary advised her to contact the CFO to have a requisition prepared for the purchase. Her biggest concern is that the items would need to be in place for the meeting, she will personally be unable to do it as she is still in the wheelchair.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Budget

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

No public present. Kit Crisafulli made a motion to both open and close to the public, seconded by Candice Wiggum. All in favor.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, motion by Kit Crisafulli, seconded by Candice Wiggum, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at approximately 9:00 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 18, 2019 at 7:30 PM.

/s/ Sharon L. Brighthaupt

Sharon L. Brighthaupt, Recording Secretary