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**EAST AMWELL FARMLAND/OPEN SPACE PERSERVATION COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES: MAY 13, 2019  
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 1070 ROUTE 202, RINGOES, NEW JERSEY**

**CALL TO ORDER & OPEN PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE**

Present:

Members: Peter Fick, Chair  
Richard Wolfe, Mayor's Designee  
Erica Johanson, Vice Chair  
Fred Gardner, Alternate II  
Paul Sterchele – Historic Preservation Liaison

Absent: Tom Jarick

Others Present: Corwin and Beth Roth

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Administrator Fullerton. In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, it was noted that this is a regular meeting pursuant to the meeting notice published in the January 24, 2019 issue of the Hunterdon County Democrat. On April 30, 2019, 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 bulletin board.

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Mr. Wolfe made a motion to open the meeting to the public. Mr. Gardner seconded. The meeting was open to the public for comments. Mr. Roth had no comments, he just wanted to learn more about preservation. A motion by Mr. Gardner and seconded by Mr. Wolfe was made to close to the public. All in favor.

**MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

A motion to approve the March 11 minutes was made by Mr. Wolfe and seconded by Mr. Gardner. Mr. Sterchele and Mr. Fick abstained, as they did not attend the March 11 meeting. The minutes were approved.

**BILLS FOR APPROVAL**

**ADDITION TO THE AGENDA**

An additional agenda item regarding the Agriculture Advisory Committee was already added to the agenda.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**1. Potential Preservation**

Ann del Campo sent a summary of who she had contacted on the Target List, along with some questions regarding farmland preservation and the tax implications. Ms. Fullerton researched the tax records for the Target properties and prepared a draft letter. It was not felt that this letter would appropriately help the farmers. There was a discussion regarding

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farm assessed tax practices and farmland preservation, which answered some of Ms. del Campo's questions. There was also a discussion regarding the appraisal process for SADC and the current market value being certified by the SADC. It was noted that we can not provide any value to a property owner, since we need to get recent appraisals as part of the preservation process.

The list of Target Properties was reviewed regarding interest levels of certain property owners.

Mr. Wolfe was willing to answer Ms. del Campo's questions. He was also willing to have a financial session if we invite the three major land trusts. He would also want 4-5 property owners to attend to make the session worth-while. Mr. Wolfe will work with Ms. del Campo to look into dates for a financial information session.

## **2. Kanach Thomas Application Block 21 Lot 13**

The Kanach Thomas Application went through the CADB meeting last week. It was approved, although the Board did have some hesitation with the location of the driveway. It was suggested that the old driveway should be used, rather than the proposed driveway along the ridge. The proposed location of the driveway and the house would take away tillable acreage from the farm. FOSPC members felt that the owners know the property best, and if this is the best location for the driveway and house, then they should have the exception where they want it.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. Green Fest Report**

Greenfest was wet. It was hard for the color powder to be sprayed onto the runners, but it was a good experience. There was a good turnout of non-profit organizations.

### **2. Potential Financial Information Session**

This topic was discussed earlier under Potential Preservation.

### **3. Change to FOSPC meeting schedule**

Due to the revisions of the Municipal Planning Incentive Grant program from SADC, the State wants to see evidence of greater participation from the Agriculture Advisory Committee. East Amwell's Agriculture Advisory Committee has been participating with farmland preservation applications well enough, but going forward, the Township will need to include copies of the minutes from the Agriculture Advisory Committee meetings in the annual reports to the SADC.

As the Secretary for the Agriculture Advisory Committee resigned in April, there is an opportunity for FOSPC and Agriculture Advisory to be more efficient by overlapping the meeting times. The date for the meeting needs to be coordinated.

All the members were in agreement to look into potential other meeting dates. Mr. Wolfe will talk to Ann del Campo regarding potential dates. It was noted that if FOSPC changes its meeting date, a new legal notice will need to be sent to the Hunterdon Democrat.

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## **REPORTS:**

### **Administrator's Report**

The usual amount has been spent on field maintenance out of the Open Space Trust Fund. The usual amount of interest has been generated. As mentioned earlier, the Kanach Thomas application is being processed by the County.

There was a potential for an agriculture subdivision of a preserved farm. There are questions about this application, so the County is looking into it more. The County and the State can subdivide preserved farmland if both new parcels can be viable as agricultural lots. Originally, this application seemed simple, but now questions have been raised regarding the viability of the agricultural activities on this lot.

At the March meeting, the SADC finalized the changes to the municipal PIG program. Along with the Ag Advisory minutes, the Township will need to update the Farmland Preservation Plan. The Township Planner does not feel that there will be a large amount to update. It should be similar to the Open Space and Recreation Plan that was updated in 2017. Mr. Wolfe wanted an estimate of the cost for the revisions. As the Farmland Preservation Plan is part of the Master Plan, the work will be paid through the Planning Board and therefore, they should authorize the Planner to begin work on the Farmland Preservation Plan revisions.

There was a discussion regarding the proposed DEP re-designation of certain streams as C-1 streams. C-1 streams are waterbodies that support trout habitat and require greater preservation and a 300-foot buffer from the water edge. The East Amwell Township Committee plans to write a letter of support for this re-designation. Mr. Wolfe mentioned a presentation by Ms. Carlucci that was given to the Township Committee and she will be presenting to the Board of Health. Mr. Wolfe also anticipates that Ms. Carlucci will do some analysis of other streams and properties.

The Planning Board approved the NJCF application to carve out the lake, so that NJCF can move forward with preservation of the Higgins property. Similarly, we are waiting for Green Acres to award the Township funding for the Wertsville Industries property so that property can close.

### **Township Committee:**

The Heliostop application was approved by DOT. The Township is fighting it.

### **Historic Preservation:**

The Committee is busy cleaning and organizing the basement files. The Craft Show is this weekend at the East Amwell Museum. 18 vendors are coming, along with the Plant Swap and the Environmental Commission tree give-a-way.

### **Recycling:**

The Township is expanding the number of things that can be recycled. The Township is recycling bottle tops, batteries, and corks. If it is recyclable, the Township will have a way to recycle it.

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**CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

There were no members of the public.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be June 10, 2019.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Wolfe made a motion which was seconded by Mr. Sterchele to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:22pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Recording Secretary

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