

**EAST AMWELL AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REORGANIZATION MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 16, 2022
EAST AMWELL MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 1070 ROUTE 202, RINGOES, NJ**

CALL TO ORDER, FLAG SALUTE & STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The meeting of the East Amwell Agricultural Advisory Committee began at 7:00 p.m. In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of this meeting was published in the February 10, 2022 issue of the Hunterdon County Democrat. A copy of this agenda was forwarded to the Hunterdon County Democrat, filed in the Township Clerk’s Office, posted on the bulletin board and township website.

SWEARING IN OF MEMBERS

The members of the Committee were sworn in for 2022 by Krista Parsons, Acting Clerk.

ATTENDANCE – ROLL CALL

2022 ATTENDANCE

Agricultural Advisory Committee Member	1/19/2022	2/16/2022	3/16/2022	4/20/2022	5/18/2022	6/15/2022	7/20/2022	8/17/2022	9/21/2022	10/19/2022	11/16/2022	12/21/2022	
Kit Crisafulli	Rescheduled – no quorum	X											
Ann del Campo		<i>Resigned 2/16/22</i>											
Bill duFosse		X											
Michael Mills		X											
John Pehinys		X											
John Mills (TC Liaison)		X											
Secretary		AM											

❖ *Also in attendance, Krista Parsons, Acting Clerk*

NEW BUSINESS - REORGANIZATION

Ms. Merz asked for nominations for Chairperson. John Mills nominated Kit Crisafulli as Chair. Mr. Crisafulli accepted the nomination and John Pehinys seconded the nomination. The nominations were closed. All in favor.

Ms. Merz asked for nominations for Vice Chairperson. Kit Crisafulli nominated Bill duFosse as Vice Chair. Mr. duFosse accepted the nomination and Mike Mills seconded the nomination.

The nominations were closed. All in favor.

2022 MEETING SCHEDULE

A motion made by Mike Mills and seconded by Chair Crisafulli to approve the Committee's 2022 meeting schedule was unanimously approved with no objection or abstention. It was noted that per Chair Crisafulli, no meetings would be held during May and June due to hay season. The Committee will meet on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM. March 16, April 20, July 20, August 17, September 21, October 19, November 16, and December 21, 2022.

REVIEW OF AGENDA

Under New Business, the resignation of Ann del Campo was added.

PRESENTATION OF MINUTES

December 15, 2021 Minutes

A motion made by Bill duFosse, seconded by Mike Mills to approve the December minutes were unanimously approved by voice vote.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

A motion made by Mike Mills, seconded by John Perekhyns to open the meeting to the public was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Darcy Perekhyns, 40 Garboski Road, Stockton, NJ – Ms. Perekhyns asked if she could get the dates for all of the scheduled focus meetings and how farmers are being contacted. Some farmers still don't have any idea about these meetings. Ms. Parsons stated that she has three dates on the calendar and would give those dates to Ms. Perekhyns. Members of the farming community are being contacted by members of township committees/boards to let them know about these meetings. Ms. Perekhyns also asked about the status of the farm project and whether it is now contained within the master plan. Ms. Perekhyns stated that the AAC Committee should read the master plan before the next AAC meeting so they can provide updates to the farming community. The public should also be able to provide feedback as there are many items in the master plan that could affect farmers' lives and businesses. No dates have been set yet for public comments per Ms. Parsons.

David Bond, 325 Route 579, Ringoes, NJ – Mr. Bond said that people always seem to speak of small farm vs. big farm when discussing agriculture. He asked why are people always trying to separate them up when having discussions; they are all the same. They all may have different issues but everyone needs to work together and stop speaking of farms as either small or big, they are all farms.

Frances Gavigan, 123 Wertsville Road, Ringoes, NJ – Ms. Gavigan would like to see transparency regarding the Farm Project. All documents should be available and they are not therefore Ms. Gavigan has submitted OPRA requests to obtain information. The master plan needs to be done right, it's too expensive to do it over. There seems to be too much rushing to get it done. Also, the right people need to be involved in updating the plan and it's not happening. Many farmers are in the dark about it which is not a positive sign.

Lindsey Ambs, 110 Amwell Road, Ringoes, NJ – Ms. Ambs commented that people feel blindsided by the farm plan which seems to be the trend over the past year as it relates to the farm project and what the planning board is doing with it and the board’s vision of the plan. East Amwell needs to support the local farms and businesses that are already here in East Amwell before making plans to add other non-local farm businesses/activities. Ms. Ambs feels the Ag committee recommendations during past meetings/discussions are being overlooked by the planning board since items that were opposed by Ag are still in the master plan revision. The master plan revision information about agriculture needs to be shared at an Ag meeting with the farmers since they do this for a living and could greatly impact them; their voices/input should be included in the master plan.

Chuck Bacon, 20 Harvest Hill Drive, Stockton, NJ – Mr. Bacon expressed his frustration about scheduled meetings and not being able to find information about them easily on the website. Mr. Bacon runs a small business and is too busy to spend time looking for meeting information. Mr. Bacon stated that his time and the Ag committee’s time is valuable and feels that the Committee needs to get moving forward and start making decisions about scheduling focus meetings, discussing master plan revisions, etc., instead of constantly spinning its wheels and taking too long to make a decision; people lose interest in the meetings. Make a decision and move on; even if it’s a bad decision, learn from it and move forward.

A motion made by Mike Mills, seconded by Bill duFosse to close the meeting to the public was unanimously approved by voice vote.

REPORTS

1. FOSPC – The annual reorganization meeting was held on 2/14/22. The township’s current Farmland Preservation Plan is being reviewed and work to update the plan will be starting.
2. CADB Meeting - John Pehinys attended the meeting; there were no new updates.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Deer Management – The subject will continue to be listed as unfinished business as it is an ongoing issue.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Resignation of Ann del Campo
Ms. del Campo submitted her resignation to the Committee, effective 2/16/22.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

A motion made by Bill duFosse, seconded by Mike Mills to open the meeting to the public was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Frances Gavigan, 123 Wertsville Road, Ringoes, NJ – Ms. Gavigan ran into a hay farmer about

ash trees down on their property and feels the township needs to come up with a cooperative way to handle and/or manage trees that are falling down into usable land. Regarding hunting, Ms. Gavigan suggested that people who are deer hunting could also hunt coyotes as well since there are many in the area and some have killed cows and pets. She mentioned that Amwell Valley Hounds are hunting coyotes but there are so many places they are not allowed to hunt so the coyotes cannot be managed.

Charles Gneiding, 19 Winding Trail, Mahwah, NJ – Mr. Gneiding is an avid deer hunter who has plenty of time on his hands, regularly hunts in East Amwell and has noticed an uptick in coyotes. He mentioned that only deer hunting is allowed on the old Higgins property which is owned by NJ Dept of Conservation but no coyote hunting is allowed on that property. Mr. Gneiding stated that maybe it's possible to get depredation permits to shoot coyotes but agrees that something needs to be done about them. Mr. Gneiding is attending the meeting tonight because of the subject of deer management. Mr. Gneiding stated that he did a lot of deer hunting this season and did very well. Deer management is a subject that gets a lot of discussion over time but little seems to get done about it. Mr. Gneiding gets does mostly and an occasional buck but is happy to hunt on anyone's property that would like his help, who has the appropriate depredation permits.

A motion made by Mike Mills, seconded by Bill duFosse to close the meeting to the public was unanimously approved by voice vote.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion made by Bill duFosse, seconded by John Perehynys to adjourn the meeting at 8:00pm was unanimously approved by voice vote.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 16, 2022 at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Jo Merz
Secretary, Agricultural Advisory Committee