

**MILLSTONE TOWNSHIP
AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 27, 2021**

Ms. Butewicz called the Meeting to Order at 7:42 p.m.

Ms. Butewicz read the Adequate Notice.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Mr. Asprocolas, Ms. Butch, Ms. Butewicz, Mr. Peck

Absent: Ms. Posten

Guests: Deputy Mayor Grbelja, Township Committee Liaison

PUBLIC COMMENTS: James Hagelstein of the Zone 15 Hunting Group wanted to discuss the overpopulation of deer in the community and would like to know how they can assist in Millstone Township. The devastation of the crops this past year has motivated his group to assist the Township with the deer population.

Mr. Hagelstein stated the Zone 15 Hunting Group is out there to only control the deer/doe population to help the local farmers. The problem is exasperated due to municipal owned lands being closed to hunters. The hunting community, especially the Zone 15 Hunting Group, is willing to work with the township to assist to mitigate the problem.

Mr. Asprocolas stated he would like to get bowhunting back to Millstone's public grounds to lessen the population in those areas. There is plenty of County ground that has procedures on how to hunt, and Millstone may adopt those procedures. We have done studies and it has gone nowhere; the Township should do something to move ahead.

Ms. Butewicz agrees we should ask to reinstate bowhunting Millstone.

Mr. Peck stated accessibility is the biggest issue with deer management. As a farm owner we open our farms to hunting but it does not solve the deer problem on municipal and county grounds. With farmers only being 1% of the population it is difficult for the community to understand the devastation of crops suffered by the farmer.

Ms. Butch stated the issue came about when, in the opinion of the homeowners, hunters would get too close to the houses and the residents complained to the Township. We have to go back to the Township Committee with a (wildlife management) plan where we have a buffer stay away from the houses. Some of the public sector is anti-hunting and that they may protest against the plan. We need to know where it is safe to open up hunting.

Mr. Asprocolas stated there is already a plan established with the County perimeters. The State gives you restrictions of going far from the homes and if they do not then they should not be hunting. The Town could possibly get permits from who would like to hunt.

Ms. Butch stated we should map, by block and lot, where the bow hunters could safety hunt.

Mr. Hagelstein stated residents will still have an issue when we are at the permitted amount of space from the closest dwelling (150 ft. with a bow). Make sure you have the right people that know how to talk to the neighboring properties with the permission card showing they are allowed

to be there. Our Zone 15 Hunting Group only takes in the most qualified hunters.

Ms. Butch would like to compile all of the results of the mailed surveys, the spot light survey and the map, listing by blocks and lots, safe hunting areas.

Mr. Peck stated Dr. Jay Kelly of Raritan Valley Community College presented a program, "Impacts of Deer & Invasive Plant Species on Forests". We have this presentation that the Township Committee Members may view, if they are interested.

Ms. Butewicz would like to get data from the NJ State Police the number of accidents caused due to deer.

Ms. Butch stated we should grab data of all deer that are killed in the area via, state & county statistics, local farmers, and deer/motor accidents.

Ms. Butewicz stated we should report how much of the meat is being donated to food banks to show it is being put to good use.

With no further comments from the public, the public portion of the meeting was closed at 8:11 p.m.

COUNCIL APPOINTMENT: Ms. Butch read the resolution appointing Ms. Butewicz, Mr. Peck and Ms. Posten for two-year appointments that will be ending December 31, 2022. Ms. Butewicz was also appointed as our Monmouth County Agriculture Development Board Representative for a one-year term.

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENTS: Chairperson Butch stated the confidentiality agreements must be signed and sent back to Millstone Township by the re-appointed members.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Asprocolas made a Motion to nominate Pat Butch as Chairwoman and Mr. Peck offered a Second.

Roll Call Vote: Asprocolas, Butch, Butewicz and Peck voted yes to appoint Ms. Butch.

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON: Chairperson Butch made a Motion to nominate Amy Butewicz as Vice-Chairwoman and Mr. Asprocolas offered a Second.

Roll Call Vote: Asprocolas, Butch, Butewicz and Peck voted yes to appoint Ms. Butewicz.

DESIGNATION OF OFFICIAL NEWSPAPERS: The Asbury Park Press and The Times of Trenton. Mr. Asprocolas made a Motion to designate the above papers as the official council newspapers and Vice-Chairperson Butewicz offered a Second. Roll Call Vote: Asprocolas, Butch, Butewicz, and Peck voted yes to the designation.

MEETING SCHEUDLE: The Board discussed changing their meeting night from the fourth Wednesday to the fourth Tuesday of the month. The Board having reviewed the amended proposed monthly meeting schedule, Mr. Asprocolas made a Motion to adopt and Mr. Peck offered a Second. Roll Call Vote: Asprocolas, Butch, Butewicz and Peck voted yes to the monthly meeting schedule.

Adopting a monthly meeting schedule to be held at 7:30 pm on the fourth Tuesday of the month via Zoom, as follows:

February 23, 2021
March 23, 2021
April 27, 2021
May 25, 2021
June 22, 2021
July 27, 2021

August 24, 2021
September 21, 2021
October 26, 2021
November 23, 2021
December 21, 2021
January 25, 2021

This meeting is being held remotely as the conditions attendant to the emergency compromise the safety of Council members and members of the public if the meeting were conducted in person.

Members of the public have the option to attend the meeting either by using a device (PC, laptop, tablet or smartphone) or by dialing in via telephone.

Attending Using a Device

If attending using a device, you will be able to see and hear the members of the Agricultural Advisory Council while they conduct the meeting. By clicking on the Q&A icon, you may submit comments or questions throughout the meeting. Your comment or question will be read aloud during the Public Comment portion of the meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9225936112>

Meeting ID: 922 593 6112

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Dial by your location

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You will need to dial *9 on your phone. This will notify the moderator of your designation.

Please be advised that, pursuant to New Jersey Administrative Code section N.J.A.C. 5:39-1.4(d) and N.J.A.C. 5:39-1.7(c) all individuals giving sworn testimony must appear by both video and audio.

Pursuant to N.J.A.C.5:39-1.4(f) members of the public may submit comments to the Council secretary by electronic mail at r-tillou@millstonenj.gov or in written letter form at 470 Stage Coach Road, Millstone Township, N.J. 08510 at least two (2) business days prior to the meeting date. Comments timely submitted shall be read aloud at the meeting audible to all meeting participants and the public, subject to the same time limits as are placed on public comments.

If you have any questions prior to the meeting regarding Zoom Conferencing feel free to contact Agricultural Advisory Council Secretary Robin Tillou at r-tillou@millstonenj.gov during normal business hours.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: December 10, 2020

Ms. Butch made a Motion to approve the Minutes and Ms. Butewicz offered a Second. Roll Call Vote: Butch and Butewicz voted yes to approve the meeting minutes

CORRESPONDENCE: Chairperson Butch advised the Council that Steven Bruder, Planning Manager, Department of Agriculture sent an email to the Township regarding submitting additional components that must accompany the Millstone Township Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan. The Township submitted the additional requested information. The SADC confirmed receipt and scheduled the Plan to be considered for approval at the SADC meeting to be held on February 25, 2021.

OLD BUSINESS: UPDATED COMPREHENSIVE FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN

Chairperson Butch advised the Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan has been completed and the SADC has this on the agenda for the SADC February 25, 2021 meeting.

JCP&L SERVICE DURING OUTAGES: Mr. Asprocolas stated that the outage which lasted four days presented a challenge for him. It was difficult for him to keep his produce at the appropriate temperature to prevent it from perishing. Mr. Asprocolas mentioned that Vermont provides a power connection for farmers at the roadside during power failures. The power company supplies a generator for their use.

Ms. Butch stated that Assemblyman Dancer was working to get Millstone priority status with JCP&L. Assemblyman Dancer is sponsoring the following bills: A4763, A108, A198, and A260 which includes reimbursement for refrigeration spoils, generator loans up to \$8,000.00 with no interest, "Vegetation Management Response Act", limits infrastructure damage and the use of drones to assess the service area disruption.

Actions to be taken:

- It was suggested that a letter be drafted supporting Assemblyman Dancer's bills.
- In addition, we will connect with Monmouth County to discuss these issues and possible solutions. (Mr. Peck)
- Research the Specialty Crop Block Grant by USDA to ascertain the possibility of getting a grant to supply generators. Request assistance from the tri-county grant writer (Mr. Peck).
- Research other alternative grant opportunities for farmers
- Develop emergency plans assist farmers during power outages.

2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS: The Council established 2021 Goals and Objectives and finalized the 2020 Accomplishments which are attached to the minutes.

Seeing no further business at this time, Ms. Butch made a motion to leave the regular session and enter into the Executive Session to discuss pending executive material such as contracts and acquisitions. Mr. Peck offered a Second and the Council unanimously moved to executive session at 8:59 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robin Tillou