

**Ocean County Agriculture Development Board
Minutes of November 14, 2024
Manchester Township Town Hall**

Attendance: Doug Hallock, Chair; Kathleen Sucharski, Vice Chair; Jeff Vogel (OCADB); Martin Lynch (OCADB); Timothy Gleason (OCPLD); Thomas Thorsen (OCPLD); Mat Thompson (County Counsel); Jessica Pinto (Soil Conservation District); Dr. Stephen Yergeau (OC Ag Ext); Katie Mazzella(SADC)

Public Attendees: Diane Vogel

I. Flag Salute

II. Call to order and Compliance with Open Public Meetings Act- Mr. Hallock (Chair) called the meeting to order at 8:00 pm by stating the Open Public Meetings Act requirements had been met.

III. Roll Call

IV. Approval of Minutes from September 12, 2024

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Lynch to approve the September 12, 2024 minutes. Mr. Vogel seconded. Roll call. All in favor, motion carried.

V. Program update:

- **Lewis Farm** - Mr. Gleason informed the Board on the closing of the 58th preserved farm in Ocean County known as the Lewis Farm located on County Road 539 in New Egypt. This brings the total area of preserved farmland in Ocean County to 3,578 acres.

VI. New Business:

- **Hisham Moharram & Crescent Farmland of New Egypt LLC** - Mr. Thompson informed the Board that Dr. Moharram filed a lawsuit against the State. They then filed a motion to dismiss, but Dr. Moharram decided to answer the motion to dismiss and include Ocean County named in the lawsuit. The litigation was filed incorrectly so Ocean County has not been able to answer yet. The lawsuit involves the location of the exemption area, which cannot be built on due to wetlands on site. The State's motion to dismiss is pending.

VII. Old Business:

- **SADC Statewide Farmland Preservation Formula Update** – Mr. Gleason informed the Board that a concept for the new appraisal formula has been drafted

and was presented at the October SADC meeting. The final formula has not been adopted yet, but it will be brought back up to the Committee at their December meeting. The SADC is hoping to have this adopted in the early stages of 2025. Once it is adopted it'll be another component that appraisers can use to come up with valuations for farmland.

- **Cameron – Farmland Preservation Application** - Mr. Gleason informed the Board that a site visit of this farm located on Long Swamp Road in New Egypt was conducted by staff and a Board member at the end of September. The farm is about 20 acres and mainly produces Christmas trees. There will be no SADC partnership because it has less than 50% tillable acreage. This is a property where Ocean County would purchase the development easement. Appraisals on the easement value of the property have been ordered.
- **Maritime Marina, et al v. Parson's Mariculture, LLC Update** – Mr. Gleason gave an update on Parson's Aquaculture, which the Board had determined to be a commercial farm in June of 2023. The SADC reviewed the Board's findings and determined that the air drying of shells is a generally accepted agricultural management practice. A resolution was passed and it is currently in a review period before the governor. After the resolution becomes finalized, the OCADB will be required to hold a public hearing and issue findings and recommendations. Mr. Thompson clarified that the Board's responsibility will be to look at the fine details of the operation and the impacts on the neighboring properties.
- **Canka Stables & Farm/GreenCell Holdings, LLC** – Mr. Gleason informed the Board that a formal complaint was received from the tenant farmer against the property owner. The complaint claimed that there are numerous residential tenants living on the property. They are leasing different areas of the farm to operate a construction company and an auto mechanic shop. Dump trucks full of solid waste material has been seen entering the property. Illegal tenants and occupants are living in different structures on the property along with numerous RV's that have taken up residency. The tenant farmer also claims that he continues to be locked out of his portion of the farm. Mr. Gleason suggested scheduling a site inspection with all the correct agencies.

VIII. Public Comment

Katie Mazzella provided updates on the status of the SADC's Statewide Farmland Preservation Formula. She also informed the Board that annual farm inspections averaged 99.7% completion last year.

Jessica Pinto informed the Board that Canka Stables & Farm is still in violation with the Soil Conservation District.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Vogel to move into closed session at 8:12 pm. Mr. Lynch seconded. Roll call. All in favor, motion carried.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Vogel to move out of closed session into open session at 8:17 pm. Mr. Lynch seconded. Roll call. All in favor, motion carried.

There will be action taken on the preserved farm that was discussed in closed session:

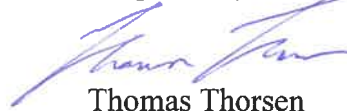
A **MOTION** was made by Ms. Sucharski to approve the fee simple acquisition of the Cier Denson Farm for \$1,620,000 or \$25,000/acre. This recommendation will be made to the Ocean County Natural Lands Trust Fund Committee and Ocean County Board of Commissioners. Mr. Vogel seconded. Roll call. All in favor, motion carried.

IX. Adjournment

A **MOTION** to adjourn at 8:36 pm was made by Mrs. Sucharski and Mr. Vogel seconded. All in favor, motion passed.

Next Meeting: December 12^h, 2024 at 7:00pm
Manchester Township Council Meeting Room/Courtroom

Respectfully Submitted,



Thomas Thorsen
GIS Specialist