

**Ocean County Agriculture Development Board  
Minutes of May 9, 2024  
New Egypt Town Hall**

**Attendance:** Doug Hallock, Chair; Kathleen Sucharski, Vice Chair; Herbert Marinari (OCADB); Glenn Riccardi (OCADB); Jeff Vogel (OCADB); Martin Lynch (OCADB); Timothy Gleason (OCPLD); Thomas Thorsen (OCPLD); Larisa Paxton (OCPLD); Bob Kuhn (OCPLD); Mat Thompson (County Counsel); Charles Roohr (SADC); Dr. Stephen Yergeau (OC Ag Ext); Jessica Pinto (OC Soil Conservation District).

Public Attendees: Diane Vogel, Robert Bowen, Dan Watkins

**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. Oath of Office**

At 8:03 pm, Mr. Thompson administered the Oath of Office to Herbert Marinari.

**V. Approval of Minutes**

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Lynch to approve the February 8, 2024 minutes. Ms. Sucharski seconded. Roll call. All in favor, motion carried. Mr. Marinari abstained.

**VI. Old Business**

- Lewis Farm, Plumsted Township – Staff updated the Board on the status of the acquisition of a development easement at 698 Route 539 in New Egypt. They reminded the Board that the application was approved by the CADB recommending it to the Natural Lands Committee. The application was brought in front of the Natural Lands Committee and a resolution was passed on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024 recommending the acquisition to the Ocean County Board of Commissioners. Staff informed the Board that the application was approved by the Ocean County Board of Commissioners at the February 21<sup>st</sup> Commissioners Board Meeting. A signed contract has been received and a surveying consultant has been notified to begin work. This will be a sole County-owned easement and the owners will continue to live and farm the property. There was no action taken on this matter.

- Cicconi Farms, Jackson Township – Staff updated the Board on the status of the Cicconi Farm’s application. They reminded the Board that this farm is located on Farmingdale Rd. near the racetrack. Staff was previously working with the SADC on this application, however, on December 4, 2023, SADC staff sent a notification stating that they were not able to proceed with this application due to the new proposed soil protection standards law. Most of the farm is greenhouses with gravel farm lanes, parking, storage, and a temporary, seasonal Halloween attraction. The owner reached out to County staff again inquiring about the County purchasing the development easement without the SADC. Staff is currently in contact with the owner currently about moving forward with their application. Staff ordered appraisals to look at the values for different scenarios for preservation. The owner has expressed to staff that depending on the values, they may be willing to not do their Halloween events on the farm. The County is looking into potentially purchasing the development easement on its own. There was no action taken on this matter.

A **MOTION** was made by Ms. Sucharski to move into closed session at 8:07 pm. Mr. Lynch seconded. Roll call. All in favor, motion carried.

A **MOTION** was made by Ms. Sucharski to move out of closed session into open session at 8:14 pm. Mr. Lynch seconded. Roll call. All in favor, motion carried.

There will be action taken on a single farm discussed in closed session.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Vogel to recommend the purchase of the Riccardi Farm to the Natural Lands Advisory Committee. Mr. Lynch seconded. Roll call. All in favor, motion carried.

## **VII. Van Kirk (Canka/GreenCELL) Potential Deed of Easement Violation**

Mr. Marinari recused himself and vacated his seat from the dais.

- Staff gave a presentation on the timeline of events occurring on the Van Kirk farm. The Board then opened the meeting to the representatives of Canka Stables and Farms, LLC and GreenCELL, LLC.

Dan Watkins, the tenant farmer and owner of GreenCell spoke in front of the Board and informed them of his activities on the farm. Mr. Watkins explained that the soil has been imported for soil remediation and amendments to the farm roads on the property. Mr. Watkins stated that the steel and construction vehicles have been on the property for some time now. Mr. Watkins spoke on the firearms training area stating that it is for educational purposes only and to bring in customers onto the farm to purchase farm products. Mr. Watkins stated

that if the Board or the municipality has an issue with the firearms range, he is willing to cease the activities associated with the firearms training. The Board asked questions regarding the soil chemistry and Mr. Watkin's plans for the soil amendment. Mr. Watkins responded that the imported soil will be used to amend the pre-existing soil to be used for regenerative agriculture practices.

Staff stated that upon the revival of the owner's soil report, the owner's counsel has requested that all parties involved in the matter have a meeting to discuss any standing issues. There was no action taken on this matter.

#### **VIII. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

#### **IX. Adjournment**

A **MOTION** to adjourn at 8:41 pm was made by Mr. Vogel and Ms. Sucharski seconded. All in favor, motion passed.

**Next Meeting: June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 8:00pm**  
**New Egypt Town Hall**

Respectfully Submitted,



Larisa Paxton  
Planner Trainee