



**COLTS NECK FARMLAND PRESERVATION
AND OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE**

Farmland and Open Space Committee

02/12/18

Meeting Minutes

Attended by: Chair Jena Cosimo, Thomas Morin, Richard Rehm, Kevin Walsh, Albert Yodakis and Alternate Alison DeNoia

Excused: Liaison Thomas Orgo, David Barclay, Mike Stivala, Joanna Connelly

Absent: Alternate Janine Pinguelo, Abbey Feiler-Kober

Ms. Cosimo called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. There were no meeting minutes to approve.

Old Business

Ms. Cosimo reported that the Mosley Farm application was submitted to the State Agricultural Development Committee (SADC) for review. This farm is located on Laird Road across from Jessup/Crystal Brook. The Town currently has no funding available with the State, but an award is anticipated now that a project is in line waiting for funding.

The appraisals for the deGroot farm on Route 34 have been submitted to the (SADC) for review and certification. Partners anticipate being able to make the family an offer soon.

New Business

Ms. Cosimo informed the Committee that there is grant funding available with the SADC for non-profits with applications due on April 3rd. Monmouth Conservation is currently looking for a farm to submit.

There have been discussions with a landowner about preserving their 20-acre farm located on Route 537. If the Township Committee is supportive, an application to preserve this farm can be submitted through the non-profit program. Mr. Orgo was going to speak to the Township Committee to determine if they were supportive.

Ms. Cosimo explained the cluster ordinance in Town. The open space set aside as a result of developments created under this ordinance is deed restricted by the Town. There are a number of farms that were preserved throughout the Town under these conditions. Unfortunately, these deed restrictions have proven to not be permanent in the eyes of the courts. There was discussion amongst the Committee about asking the Town to modify the language in the existing deed restricted properties to strengthen them and modify the language so they became conservation easements, which are permanent. In addition, going forward, the ordinance may require an amendment. The Committee decided to discuss this further at the next meeting.

Mr. Morin asked if there was a COAH update. It was determined that the courts have not yet made their decisions many Towns, Colts Neck included, are still waiting.

Ms. Cosimo discussed the need for new County Agriculture Development Board liaison. This liaison is necessary in order for the Town to be eligible to receive funding from the CADB for cost share on farmland preservation projects. The former Chair of the committee was the liaison and a new liaison is needed which will need to be appointed by resolution. A liaison and an alternate can be appointed. The committee discussed the liaison and the meeting dates for the CADB meetings. They questioned if it was possible for the committee to rotate who attends the meetings.

The frequency of this Committee's meeting scheduled was discussed. It was determined that we would cancel meetings as necessary if there was no business to discuss.

The wildlife committee meets frequently to discuss the ways to handle the large population of deer in Town, which have become a detriment to the habitat on our preserved open space and the crops that are grown on local farms and preserved farms. Ms. Cosimo alerted the Committee to an upcoming deer management workshop.

The Town's Open Space Plan needs to be updated every ten years. Ms. Cosimo is going to reach out to our Township planner Tim Anfusio to discuss the current open space plan and its goals and determine when it needs to be updated. If it needs updating, the committee can assist.

Monmouth Conservation Foundation is reaching out to farm owners through the Field to Farm initiative to determine if there are ways to assist land owners with maintaining their farmland assessment. Keeping farms in production helps prevent them from being developed.

Ms. Cosimo alerted the Committee to the upcoming NJ Land Rally on March 1st.

On a motion by Mr. Yodakis, and seconded by Mr. Rehm, the meeting was adjourned at 8:08 PM. Next meeting will be on **Monday, March 12, at 7:00 PM.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jena Cosimo.