

Cape-Atlantic Conservation District Minutes

April 28, 2021

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AND PUBLIC NOTICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Chairman Allen Carter, Jr., called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. at the USDA-NRCS Plant Materials Center in Cape May Court House, NJ.

Chairman Allen Carter, Jr. stated that in review of the Sunshine Law, Chapter 231 PL 1975 adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by mail to The Press of Atlantic City and Gazettes of Atlantic and Cape May County specifying time and place this meeting is to be held.

FLAG SALUTE

Chairman, Allen Carter, Jr. led the salute to the flag of the United States of America.

ROLL CALL & DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Supervisors: Allen Carter, Jr. Robert Fenton, Cormac Morrissey, Joseph Lomax and Richard Dovey

Staff: Michael Kent, Glenn Ward, Chelsea Steffes and Marie Rogowski

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS): Michelle Pedano

NRCS-Plant Materials Center (PMC) : Chris Miller

New Jersey Association of Conservation District (NJACD) : Louise Davis and Lily Mehl

MINUTES

A. Minutes of March 24, 2021 Meeting

After Board review, a motion was made by Richard Dovey and seconded by Cormac Morrissey to approve minutes from the March 24, 2021 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Executive Session Minutes of March 24, 2021 Meeting

After Board review, a motion was made by Richard Dovey and seconded by Joseph Lomax to approve executive session minutes from the March 24, 2021 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

FINANCES

A. Treasurers Reports – March 2021

After Board review and discussion, a motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Robert Fenton to approve the Districts March 2021 treasurer's report, balance sheet and expenses in the amount of \$118,375.62. The motion passed unanimously.

After review of the PMC monthly expense report for March 2021, a motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Robert Fenton to approve treasurer's report, balance sheet and account balance of \$9,209.32. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Certificate of Deposits Rates (CD)

Michael Kent reported that after exploring interest rate options, a CD with OceanFirst Bank has been rolled-over into a 12-month CD at a rate of .1%.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plans

1. March 2021 Certifications

A motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Richard Dovey approving all Plan Certifications listed on the March 2021 Application Report except for application 92-21. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Richard Dovey approving application 92-21. Cormac Morrissey and Robert Fenton recused having a conflict of interest. The motion passed.

2. March 2021 Re-certifications

A motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Robert Fenton approving all applications listed on the March 2021 Re-Certification Application Report except for applications 63-09, 5-90, 173-83, 66-84, 179-82 and 228-81. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Cormac Morrissey and seconded by Robert Fenton approving applications 63-09, 5-90, 173-83, 66-84, 179-82 and 228-81. Richard Dovey recused on application 63-09 and Joseph Lomax recused on remaining applications due to conflicts of interest. The motion passed.

B. Farmland Program

None

C. Verizon Wireless

Michael Kent discussed terminating service for 1 cell phone and 3 hot spots that district staff are not utilizing. After Board discussion a motion was made by Cormac Morrissey and seconded by Joseph Lomax to cancel service on the 4 devices. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Route 30 Farm

Discussed frequency of stormwater issues on local farm fields.

E. SADC Soil Protection Standards

Copy of Soil Protection Standards were distributed to the Board for review and comments. Michael Kent requested all comments be submitted by May 15, 2021 so they can be forwarded to Frank Minch.

F. Ocean County Soil Conservation District (SCD) Shared Service Agreement

Ocean County SCD would like to extend the current shared services agreement with the District that expires June 30, 2021. The proposed extension would run from July 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021. The only change to the agreement was an increase to the hourly rate to coincide with the District's new fee schedule. After board discussion a motion was made by Cormac Morrissey and seconded by Joseph Lomax to extend agreement until December 31, 2021. The motion passed unanimously.

G. Farm Inspections

Barbara Ernst, Cape May County Farmland Preservation Director has contacted the District inquiring about completing annual farm inspections on their behalf. Proposed agreement was distributed to the Board for review. After discussion, a motion was made by Cormac Morrissey and seconded by Richard Dovey to enter into agreement under the terms specified. Joseph Lomax recused from motion. The motion passed.

Michael Kent stated that under the current agreement with State Agricultural Development Committee (SADC) all farm inspections have been completed and invoice has been mailed out for reimbursement.

CORRESPONDENCE

A. National Association of Conservation District (NACD) Wildfire Program

NACD will be hosting Winds, Water and Wildfires webinars throughout the month of May. Northeast sessions will be held May 25th & 26th, 2021. Online registration required.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Education

Glenn Ward

-Update on 2021 Envirothon. Committee held a dry run of the event to work out any issues. Virtual event scheduled for May 22, 2021. Virtual training session for students was reschedule for May 7, 2021. Currently 8 teams have registered. One team from the Cape Atlantic District.

Lily Mehl

-Reported that the National Envirothon will take place this year and the event will be held virtual.

B. Grants

Michael Kent reported on the following;

-2021 NACD District funding was approved.

-Quarterly reports for current NACD and Civil Engineer Technician (CET) grants have been submitted.

-NACD Ag. Conservation Specialist vacancy to be discussed in executive session.

C. Regional Supervisor Meeting

Michael Kent reported that the Regional Supervisor Meeting will be held virtual on May 11, 2021 at 4pm. Link to attend meeting will be emailed to all supervisors.

Louise Davis stated that State Conservationist, Julie Hawkins will be the main speaker at meeting and that the agenda is being finalized and will be email shortly.

COMMENTS

A. Staff

Glenn Ward

- Commented on the District's possible use of drones in the future.
- Reported on 251 quarterly report and activity throughout the District.
- Information welcome so the District may add it to our Facebook page.

Chelsea Steffes

- Completed all SADC farm inspections for this year.
- Will be meeting with Barbara Ernst to pick up files to start working on Cape May County farm inspections.
- Update on 251 work and site inspections.

Michael Kent

- Budget committee will be meeting later today to review FY-22 budget. Committee will present budget at next meeting.
- Office remains very busy. Thanked the staff for their hard work.

B. Supervisors

Richard Dovey

- Reported on COVID related issues at the Atlantic County Utilities Authority (ACUA).
- Commented on ACUA employment vacancies.
- Reported on large sewer construction projects taking place.

Joseph Lomax

- Reported on consulting activity taking place throughout the district.
- Update on Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) enforcement in the farming community.
- Update on Eric Hanson and the position he will be taking with NRCS.
- Update on NACD Coastal Resource Policy group.
- Applications now be accepted for next round of NACD Technical Assistance grants.

Robert Fenton

- Commented on farming activity and new greenhouse installation.

Cormac Morrissey

- Will be serving on Budget Committee that will be meeting later today.
- Commented on a study conducted by Rutgers University on sea level rise and it's impact on development in coastal areas.

Allen Carter, Jr.

- Attended Farm Bureau Meeting on April 27, 2021. Major topic of discussion was federal tax increase and its effect on the farming community.
- County 4-H Fair update and the hardships they are facing with COVID restrictions.

- Department of Agriculture and County Health Department are working together to provide COVID vaccines at farm locations.
- Cape May County Commissioners and Rutgers Administration are moving forward to fill vacant Cape May County Ag. Agent position.
- Commented on State budget.

C. USDA-NRCS

Michelle Pedano

- Update on facility staffing and workplace safety.
- The Firman E. Bear Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society is offering college scholarships to students majoring in natural resource conservation.
- Update on program applications and new program signup deadlines.

Chris Miller, PMC

- Update on new administration and their focus on climate change.
- Update on daily activities at the center.
- Commented on PMC lease agreement.

D. NJACD

Lily Mehl

- Thanked the District for the invitation to attend meeting.
- Commented on the association's new website that was recently updated. Looking for feedback.
- Looking forward to communicating with all Districts in the future.

Louise Davis

- Update on communication with elected officials.
- Newsletter update.
- Reported on items the Association is working on.

E. Public

- Opened meeting to public comment.
- No comments from public.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Cormac Morrissey and seconded by Richard Dovey to go into executive session at 10:20 a.m. to discuss personnel issues. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Richard Dovey to end executive session at 10:40 a.m. and return to the regular meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ON ITEMS FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Robert Fenton to hire Rachel Thornton for the position of Level I Site Inspector/Plan Reviewer with an anticipated start date of July 1, 2021 and a starting salary between \$40,000-\$42,000 a year. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Richard Dovey and seconded by Joseph Lomax to hire Zachary Nixon to fill the NACD Technical Assistance Grant vacancy at the NRCS

Vineland Field Office with a projected start date of May 10, 2021 and a starting salary of \$36,400.00. The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Allen Carter, Jr. adjourned the meeting at 10:45 a.m. The next meeting will be held virtually on Wednesday May 26, 2021 at 8:30 a.m.

Marie Rogowski,
Administrative Assistant

Executive Session
of the Cape Atlantic Conservation District
April 28, 2021

Motion to go into executive session was made by Cormac Morrissey and seconded by Richard Dovey at 10:20 a.m. to discuss personnel issues. The motion passed unanimously.

Attendees

District Supervisors: Allen Carter, Joseph Lomax, Richard Dovey, Robert Fenton and Cormac Morrissey

District Staff: Michael Kent

Cormac Morrissey, Richard Dovey and Michael Kent presented to the Board their results from the interview they had with Rachel Thornton for the position of Level 1 Site Inspector/Plan Reviewer.

Mr. Kent updated the Board on the interview he and Michelle Pedano had with Zachary Nixon to fill the vacant NACD TA grant position.

A motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Richard Dovey to end executive session at 10:40 a.m. and return to the regular meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by Michael Kent