

Cape-Atlantic Conservation District Minutes

June 24, 2020

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AND PUBLIC NOTICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Chairman Allen Carter, Jr., called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m. via video conference.

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., Joseph Lomax, Cormac Morrissey and Richard Dovey

Staff: David Reilly, Michael Kent, Glenn Ward and Marie Rogowski

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS): Michelle Pedano

State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC): John Showler

MINUTES

A. Minutes of May 27, 2020 meeting

After Board review, a motion was made by Richard Dovey and seconded by Joseph Lomax to approve minutes from the May 27, 2020 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Executive Session Minutes of May 27, 2020 meeting

After Board review, a motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Richard Dovey to approve executive session minutes from the May 27, 2020 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

FINANCES

A. Treasurers Reports – May 2020

May 2020 District and Plant Materials Center (PMC) Treasurer's reports were emailed to the Board for review.

After review and discussion a motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Richard Dovey to approve the Districts May 2020 treasurer's report, balance sheet and expenses in the amount of \$55,799.14. The motion passed unanimously.

After review of the PMC monthly expense report for May 2020, a motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Cormac Morrissey to approve treasurer's report, balance sheet and account balance of \$29,724.96. The motion passed unanimously.

B. *Fiscal Year 2020 (FY-20) Audit Engagement Letter*

David Reilly reported that the District received FY-20 Audit Engagement Letter from Nightlinger, Colavita & Volpa, P.A. After board discussion, a motion was made by Richard Dovey and seconded by Joseph Lomax to accept and to authorize David Reilly to sign and return engagement letter. The motion passed unanimously

NEW BUSINESS

A. *Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plans*

1. May 2020 Certifications

A motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Cormac Morrissey approving all Plan Certifications listed on the May 2020 Application Report except for application 183-20. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Cormac Morrissey and seconded by Richard Dovey approving application 183-20. Joseph Lomax recused having a conflict of interest. Joseph Lomax abstained from motion. The motion passed.

B. *Farmland Program-NONE*

C. *Computer Software Upgrades*

David Reilly and Michael Kent discussed the need for the District to upgrade computer hardware and software. There was Board consensus to have staff assess current equipment and to research upgrades needed and costs associated with upgrades.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

OLD BUSINESS

A. *Education*

Glenn Ward

-Update on Poster Contest.

-Discussed Newsletter and options for the District.

B. *Covid-19 District Operations*

David Reilly discussed safety barriers and procedures in place for when staff can return to work in County building.

After discussion there was Board consensus for staff to move forward with a re-opening plan for the office in accordance with State and County safety protocols.

Joseph Lomax suggested a safety guidelines/handbook be created to distribute to staff.

COMMENTS

A. Staff

Marie Rogowski

-Commented on the continuation of processing 251 applications and other work related duties while working from home.

Glenn Ward

-Reported on work detail with Ocean County SCD.
-Participated in Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Green Infrastructure webinar that took place on June 11, 2020.

Michael Kent

-Commented on 251 applications received and activity throughout the District.
-Continuing to work with David Reilly to transition into new position.

David Reilly

-Commented on working with Michael Kent to assist with transitioning into new position.
-Rebecca Watson has received and accepted a job offer from NRCS. Rebecca has not received at start date, however she will continue her work with the District until said date.
-Received an inquiry from Robert Vettese, Hammonton Public Works Department regarding water issue on a farm near Route 30 and Oak Road. Met with landowner, Michelle Pedano, NRCS and Robert Vettese, to see if issue could be rectified and if NRCS could provide assistance to land owner.
-Received notification that Joseph Lomax and Robert Fenton have been reappointed to the District Board.
-Received notice that the District should be receiving the final paperwork on the current NFWF application extension shortly.
-SACD preserved farm inspections are still on hold as directed by the Governor. There is no time frame as to when inspections may resume but the District will not be held to the July 7, 2020 deadline.

Comments continued after Executive Session

B. NRCS

Michelle Pedano

-Commented on NRCS monthly activity report that was emailed to staff and board.
-Diane Gray continues to serve as Acting State Conservationist.
-Continuing to report to service center daily as staff and partner employees continue to work remotely.
-National Pollinator Week is June 22-28, 2020.
-Soil Health Strategic Plan kick-off meeting will be held July 1, 2020 with over 20 agencies/partners involved.
-Commented on 2 contracts that have been completed and awaiting landowner's signatures and 14 applications that have been pre-approved.

C. SSCC

John Showler

- Reported on 251 quarterly report of all districts.
- Commented on DEP Green Infrastructure webinar.
- Reported that all staff continue to work remotely. There have been no dates announced when staff will be able to return.

Joseph Lomax thanked John Showler for his commitment and continuing efforts to the District.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Cormac Morrissey to go into executive session at 9:10 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 9:45 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 Richard Dovey to hire Luis Almeyda for the Agricultural Conservation Specialist position to begin on or about July 20, 2020 subject to the position being vacated and upon COVID-19 restrictions permitting additional staff in NRCS Vineland Field Office.

COMMENTS CONTINUED

A. Staff

David Reilly

-On June 3, 2020 David and Michael Kent attended Restore America's Estuaries, Coastal Watershed Grant Program webinar. Reported on grant opportunities available. Ocean County SCD contacted the District inquiring about a submission of a multi-district grant effort.

After discussion a motion was made by Richard Dovey and seconded by Joseph Lomax authorizing staff to submit Letter of Interest by the August 7, 2020 deadline. The motion passed unanimously.

Michelle Pedano exited meeting at 10:00am

D. Supervisors

Richard Dovey

-Reported on Atlantic County Utilities Authority (ACUA) activity and new contracts with Mullica Twp., Hamilton Twp. and Bridgeton.

Cormac Morrissey

-Thanked the staff for working hard during the Covid pandemic.
-Commented on the allocation of funds for District computer hardware and software needs.

- Commented on new development throughout the District.
- Commented on the possibility of opportunities becoming available for urban gardens as previously discussed.
- Will need to leave meeting to attend DEP Stormwater seminar.

Cormac Morrissey exited meeting at 10:15am

Joseph Lomax

- Update on changes from Governor's office and views on environmental issues.
- Division of Land Use Regulations has changed name to Division of Land Resources Protection.
- Serving on Cape May County Hazard Mitigation Planning committee.
- NACD continues to move forward.
- Recommended the District draft a letter to the Governor's office voicing concerns on the loss of funds to the Department of Agriculture. There was Board consensus for David Reilly to work with the Board to draft a letter that will be forwarded to Dennis Dougherty for review and comments prior to sending to Governor's office.
- Commented on issues related to horseshoe crabs.
- Thanked David Reilly and Michael Kent for their work efforts during this time of transition. Suggested forming a sub-committee to identify and accomplish any tasks needed over the next few weeks.
- Suggested having David Reilly involved in the 501c3 in the future.

Allen Carter, Jr.

- Attended and reported on Farm Bureau meeting held June 23rd. Meeting was held on Farm Bureau President, Ryck Suydam's farm where members were able to social distance.
- Update on "Know your farmer, know your food", initiative.
- Covid update and issues farmers are dealing with.
- Update on State budget freeze.
- American Farm Bureau continuing to plan full convention that takes place in January. Alternate 1 day event being planned if full convention is unable to be held.
- Suggested the District create a Facebook page in lieu of newsletter.
- Update on announcement from Gov. Murphy on wind maintenance facility in Salem County.

E. Rutgers

Allen Carter Jr.

- Reported on Rutgers budget freeze and the major funding cuts from the State.
- Cape May County Ag. Agent interviews are currently on hold.

F. Public

Opened meeting to public comment.
No comments from public.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Allen Carter, Jr. adjourned the meeting at 10:50 a.m. The next meeting will be Wednesday July 22, 2020 at 8:00 a.m. at the District Office in Mays Landing, NJ.

Marie Rogowski,
Administrative Assistant

Executive Session
of the Cape Atlantic Conservation District
June 24, 2020

Motion to go into executive session was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Cormac Morrissey at 9:100 a.m. to discuss personnel issues. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was held via video/tele conferencing.

Attendees

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

District Staff: David Reilly, Michael Kent

NRCS: Michelle Pedano

Allen Carter reported that a Personnel Committee of David Reilly, Michael Kent, Michelle Pedano, Cormac Morrissey and, himself conducted a video interview of Luis Almeyda for an Agriculture Conservation Specialist position to work out of the NRCS Vineland Field Office.

David Reilly reported that Luis Almeyda had a successful interview. Michelle Pedano reported that the interview was a successful one and that she feels comfortable working with Luis Almeyda as they worked together and she served as his supervisor in 2019 during her time as Acting Manager of the CMPMC. Joseph Lomax added that Luis Almeyda's fluency in Spanish would be compatible with the District's goal to work with the Hispanic agricultural communities.

David Reilly reported that Luis Almeyda is currently employed with the District and is detailed to the CMPMC under the Seasonal Agreement. David Reilly reported that he discussed the personnel issues with CMPMC Chris Miller, and that he is agreeable to continue to working with the District on having Luis Almeyda continue at the CMPMC until he would be able to report to Vineland FO. David Reilly commented that the District had to lay off two seasonal employees due to COVID-19 restrictions and that both employees would be interested in returning to the CMPMC when possible.

Cormac Morrissey commented that Luis Almeyda had a successful interview and that he would recommend naming him to fill the Agriculture Conservation Specialist position.

Joseph Lomax commented from an HR point that the District needs to best utilize the time that remains until David Reilly's retirement.

A motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Richard Dovey to end executive session at 9:45 a.m. and return to the regular meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by David Reilly