

Cape-Atlantic Conservation District Minutes

March 28, 2024

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AND PUBLIC NOTICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Chairman, Robert Fenton called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. at the District Office in Mays Landing, NJ.

Chairman, Robert Fenton 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 Counties specifying time and place this meeting is to be held.

FLAG SALUTE

Chairman, Robert Fenton led the salute to the flag of the United States of America.

ROLL CALL & DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

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

Staff: Michael Kent, Glenn Ward, Lauren Tigue, Riley Blankenship, Daniel Bononcini, and Marie Rogowski

USDA-NRCS: Rebecca Acosta, and Scott Snell

MINUTES

A. Minutes of February 22, 2024, Meeting

After Board review, a motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Cormac Morrissey to approve minutes from the February 22, 2024 meeting. Allen Carter abstained from motion. The Motion passed.

B. Executive Session Minutes of February 22, 2024 Meeting

After Board review, a motion was made by Richard Dovey and seconded by Joseph Lomax to approve executive session minutes from the February 22, 2024 meeting. Allen Carter abstained from motion. The motion passed.

FINANCES

A. Treasurers Reports

1. District Financials – February 2024

After Board review and discussion, a motion was made by Allen Carter and seconded by Cormac Morrissey to approve the District's February 2024 treasurer's report, balance sheet and expenses in the amount of \$184,041.37. The motion passed unanimously.

2. **PMC Financials – February 2024**

After review of the PMC monthly expense report for February 2024, a motion was made by Richard Dovey and seconded by Joseph Lomax to approve treasurer’s report, balance sheet and account balance of \$23,001.80. The motion passed unanimously.

B. FY-2025 Budget Committee

Cormac Morrissey and Richard Dovey will serve on the FY-25 Budget Committee. The committee will meet with Michael Kent to review and discuss FY-25 budget.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plans

1. February 2024 Certifications

A motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Allen Carter approving all Plan Certifications listed on the February 2024 Application Report except for 79-24. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Cormac Morrissey and seconded by Joseph Lomax approving applications 79-24. Richard Dovey recused. The motion passed.

2. February 2024 Re-Certification

A motion was made by Allen Carter and seconded by Cormac Morrissey approving all applications listed on the February 2024 Re-Certification Application Report. Joseph Lomax recused. The motion passed.

B. Farmland Program

After Board review and discussion, a motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Allen Carter approving the following conservation plans. The motion passed unanimously.

1. Conservation Plan

a. Middle Township, 12 Acres, Forest Stewardship Plan

b. Port Republic, 10 Acres, Restoration of rare or declining natural communities.

C. USDA-NRCS PMC Agreement

Scott Snell, Acting PMC Manager, updated the Board on meeting with Michael Kent and Joseph Lomax. Action will be taken at the next meeting giving the Board time to review the revised agreement.

D. Mileage Reimbursements

The District previously approved following the Federal mileage reimbursement rate. It was noted that the Federal rate has increased to \$0.67 per mile, therefore the District rate will increase to \$0.67 per mile.

E. Regional Supervisor Meeting

Michael Kent discussed upcoming meetings. All Supervisors along with Michael Kent will be attending either the Southern Region meeting on April 18, 2024 or the Central Region meeting on April 23, 2024. Richard Dovey will be attending all three meetings, Northern, Central and Southern.

F. Auto Insurance

Michael Kent gave an update on current auto insurance policy and discussed adjusting the deductible. A motion was made by Cormac Morrissey and seconded by Allen Carter to review policy and modify as discussed. The motion passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE

A. Haley Jackson

Michael Kent updated the Board on the resignation letter received from Ms. Jackson. Joseph Lomax and Cormac Morrissey commented on the exit interview conducted.

B. Joe Atchison III

Update on email received from Mr. Atchison announcing new Secretary of Agricultural Ed Wengryn effective March 25, 2024. Mr. Atchison thanked everyone while he served as Assistant Secretary of Agriculture.

C. Atlantic County 4-H Sponsorship

Atlantic County 4-H Association is seeking support for their 2024 4-H Yearbook. A motion was made by Cormac Morrissey and seconded by Joseph Lomax to purchase a full-page ad for \$175.00. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Education

Glenn Ward

- Update on presentation with homeschooling groups.
- Update on District Poster Contest entries received.
- Update on 2024 NJ Envirothon. Donation of \$500.00 will made to the Envirothon as budgeted.
- Continuing to prepare for Cape May and Atlantic County Earth Day events.

B. Grants/Agreements

Michael Kent

- Distributed and commented on report listing all current District grants and obligations.
- Tabled all other comments until executive session.

C. Meetings

Michael Kent

- Distributed and commented on list of upcoming meetings.
- Commented on list of ideas generated while attending the NACD conference that Riley Blankenship and Glenn Ward prepared.
- Commented on Local Working Group reports that were sent out to all who participated.

Riley Blankenship

- Update on Intro to USDA meeting held on February 28th.

D. Forestry Update

Daniel Bononcini

- Update on recent training workshops and site visits attended.
- Continuing with online schooling.

E. Agriculture Update

Riley Blakenship

- Commented on work being conducted at the NRCS field office.
- Continuing with annual preserved farm monitoring site visits.
- Update on meetings attended.

F. Vehicle Update

Michael Kent

- Contacted several dealerships for quotes. The District has received one quote and is expecting others to arrive soon.

G. 251 Staff Update

Tabled until executive session.

COMMENTS

A. Staff

Michael Kent

- Office remains busy. There are many new opportunities becoming available.
- Commented on lack of office space.

Glenn Ward

- Commented on 251 monthly application report and the number of applications being submitted.

Lauren Tighe

- Commented on 251 work being completed.

Daniel Bononcini

- Busy with 251, schooling, and forestry work.

Riley Blankenship

- Was asked to sit on Advisory Board for the Northwest Jersey Food Processing and Innovation Center.

Marie Rogowski

- Attended Employee's Associated training held on February 26th. Commented on Administrative Roundtable held in the afternoon.

B. Supervisors

Joseph Lomax

- Thanked Glenn Ward and Riley Blankenship for report and insight from attended NACD Conference.
- Commented on Local Working Group reports. Stated how the District has become a national leader in showing that the process is working.
- Commented on Haley Jackson's exit interview.
- Update of the subaqueous soils mapping.

- Commented on the audit analysis of the Districts self-assessment reports.
- Commented on the State Associations trip to Washington D.C. to visit Congressional Delegation.
- Was approached to host horseshoe crabs and pinelands fieldtrips. Additional information forthcoming.
- NACD Summer Board Meeting/Northeast Regional Meeting is scheduled for August 10-13, 2024 in Boston Massachusetts.

Cormac Morrissey

- Commented on the District's 5-year plan and how much the District is changing and moving forward.
- Commented on the revised changes to the 251 Standards.

Richard Dovey

- Attended and commented on Administrative Roundtable session held at the Employee's Association training on February 26th.
- Visited Envirothon site. Gave update on the location.
- Attended and commented on NRCS 101 meeting held.
- Commented on State Committee meetings attended.
- Update on Senate Bill 1934
- Invited to meet with NRCS Chief when he visits April 11, 2024.
- DC Fly-in update.

Allen Carter

- Thanked the District for their support in attending the NACD Conference.
- Update on Farm Bill and Agricultural funding.
- Update on new Sectary of Agriculture appointee.
- Commented on Soil Protection Standards.
- Hosting Rutgers Climate Conference.
- USDA Census update.
- Commented on meetings with new assembly people.
- Commented on transplanted dune grass test plots in Upper Twp.
- Commented on Maryland bridge collapse and the impact in our area.

Robert Fenton

- Thanked the staff and supervisors for all their work in growing the District.
- Busy preparing for the upcoming farming season.

C. *USDA-NRCS*

Rebecca Acosta

- Distributed and commented on NRCS monthly activity report.
- Reported on programs available, their signup and cutoff dates.

Scott Snell

- Plant Materials Center (PMC) remains busy.
- Chris Miller's detail will be ending in May.
- Thanked Michael Kent and Joseph Lomax for meeting to work on agreement between the PMC and the District.

H. *Public*

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Cormac Morrissey and seconded by Joseph Lomax to go into executive session at 10:20 a.m. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Cormac Morrissey to end the executive session at 11:40 a.m. and return to the regular meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ON ITEMS FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Cormac Morrissey and seconded by Joseph Lomax to hire Connor Smilon and Renee Capetola as Level 1 Site Inspectors and to purchase any necessary workstation equipment needed. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Cormac Morrissey and seconded by Joseph Lomax to enter into an agreement with NRCS to hire a Certified Engineering Technician partner employee to work out of the Woodstown field office. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Cormac Morrissey and seconded by Richard Dovey to hire an IT specialist to evaluate and update existing computers and communication systems. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Richard Dovey to adopt the current exit interview format as part of the District's Policies and Procedures. The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Richard Dovey to adjourn the meeting at 12:00 p.m. The next meeting will be held Thursday April 25, 2024, 8:30am at the Rutger Cooperative Ext. of Cape May County, Cape May Court House, NJ . The motion passed unanimously.

Marie Rogowski
Administrative Assistant