

# Cape-Atlantic Conservation District Minutes

April 25, 2024

## **MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AND PUBLIC NOTICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

Chairman, Robert Fenton called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m. at the Rutgers Cooperative Ext. office in Cape May Court House, 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, Lauren Tigue, Connor Smilon, Riley Blankenship, and Marie Rogowski

USDA-NRCS: Michelle Pedano, and Scott Snell

Rutger Coop. Ext.: Claudia Gilarroyo

## **MINUTES**

### **A. Minutes of March 28, 2024, Meeting**

After Board review, a motion was made by Richard Dovey and seconded by Cormac Morrissey to approve minutes from the March 28, 2024 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

### **B. Executive Session Minutes of March 28, 2024 Meeting**

After Board review, a motion was made by Allen Carter and seconded by Richard Dovey to approve executive session minutes from the March 28, 2024 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

## **FINANCES**

### **A. Treasurers Reports**

#### 1. District Financials – March 2024

After Board review and discussion, a motion was made by Allen Carter and seconded by Joseph Lomax to approve the District's March 2024 treasurer's

report, balance sheet and expenses in the amount of \$79,372.39. The motion passed unanimously.

2. **PMC Financials – March 2024**

After review of the PMC monthly expense report for March 2024, a motion was made by Richard Dovey and seconded by Joseph Lomax to approve treasurer’s report, balance sheet and account balance of \$23,002.71. The motion passed unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plans**

**1. March 2024 Certifications**

A motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Allen Carter approving all Plan Certifications listed on the March 2024 Application Report except for 141-24. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Cormac Morrissey and seconded by Richard Dovey approving applications 141-24. Joseph Lomax recused. The motion passed.

**2. March 2024 Re-Certification**

A motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Allen Carter approving application 195-14 listed on the March 2024 Re-Certification Application Report. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Allen Carter and seconded by Joseph Lomax approving application 553-18 listed on the March 2024 Re-Certification Application Report. Cormac Morrissey recused. The motion passed.

**3. 251 Quarterly Report**

Michael Kent commented on the quarterly report that was included in the meeting packet.

**B. Farmland Program**

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

1. Conservation Plan

- a. Egg Harbor City, 4.4 acres, Wildlife Habitat Planting & High Tunnel System
- b. Atlantic City, 18 acres, Bivalve Aquaculture Gear and Biofouling Control, Streambank and Shoreline Protection
- c. Mullica Twp., 75 acres, Forest Stewardship Plan
- d. Hammonton, 4.8 acres, Wildlife Habitat Planting, Windbreak
- e. Egg Harbor Twp., 5.5 acres, High Tunnel System
- f. Mullica Twp., 20 acres, High Tunnel System
- g. Hammonton, 6.9 acres, Drip Irrigation System, High Tunnel System, Organic Systems Plan
- h. Middle Twp., 6.8 acres, High Tunnel System
- i. West Cape May, 33 acres, Cover Crop
- j. Dennis Twp., 15.5 acres, Conservation Cover and Wildlife Habitat Planting

**C. *USDA-NRCS PMC Agreement***

Scott Snell, Acting PMC Manager, updated the Board on minor changes made to the agreement. After discussion, the following motions were made:

- a. A motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Cormac Morrissey to accept and enter into the agreement as presented. The motion passed unanimously.
- b. A motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Allen Carter to have the District set up and maintain a UPS account for the purpose of having the PMC be able to ship seed material. UPS fees will be paid from PMC account. The motion passed unanimously.

**D. *Supervisor Reappointments***

District Supervisor appointments for Cormac Morrissey and Richard Dovey will expire June 30, 2024. Mr. Morrissey and Mr. Dovey will continue serving on the District Board. Renomination forms will be completed and forwarded to the State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC) for review and approval.

**E. *IT and Computer Hardware Update***

The District has reached out to several IT companies for quotes to purchase additional computer workstations for the new staff along with existing computers, copier, and telephone system improvements. After discussion, a motion was made by Allen Carter and seconded by Cormac Morrissey to authorize up to \$20,000.00 for technology upgrades. The motion passed unanimously.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**None**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**A. *Education***

Michael Kent

- Update on 2024 NJ Envirothon. The District has five teams registered for the event.
- Poster contest winners have been selected. First place posters have been submitted to the State for judging.
- Homeschooling group presentations are finished for the school year. Looking to continue in the fall.
- Preparing for ACUA Earth Day event.

Marie Rogowski

- Update on Cape May County Earth Day that was held on April 20, 2024.

**B. *Grants/Agreements***

Michael Kent

- Distributed and commented on report listing all current District grants and obligations.
- District was contacted to enter into a new agreement to hire a Civil Engineer Technician (CET) partner employee to work out of the Woodstown field office. Additional information forthcoming.
- Paperwork has been submitted for reimbursement for partner employees.

**C. Meetings**

Michael Kent

- Distributed and commented on list of upcoming meetings.
- Commented on Cape May Technical High School Advisory Committee meeting Glenn Ward attended.
- State Technical Committee Meeting scheduled for June 12, 2024 9am-4pm.

**D. Forestry Update**

Michael Kent

- Update on Daniel Bononcini and the work he has been performing.
- Predicts numerous forestry opportunities available for the District.

**E. Agriculture Update**

Riley Blakenship

- Commented on work being conducted at the NRCS field office.
- Continuing with SADC annual preserved farm monitoring site visits.
- Will be starting farm inspections for Cape May County.
- Update on animal waste.

**F. Vehicle Update**

- District has taken ownership of two new Subarus.

**G. 251 Staff Update**

- Update on Renee Capetola and Connor Smilon, the District's two new staff members that started on April 8, 2024.

**COMMENTS**

**A. Staff**

**Michael Kent**

- Update from meeting with USDA-NRCS, Chief Terry Cosby.
- Will be meeting with Mark Dinglasan, NJ Office of the Food Security Advocate (NJOFSA).
- Update on lack of office space.

**Marie Rogowski**

- Office remains busy. Commented on work being conducted.

**Lauren Tigue**

- Commented on 251 work being completed.
- Assisting with training of new staff.

**Connor Smilon**

- Commented on 251 training that he is receiving.
- Looking forward to working for the District.

**Riley Blankenship**

- Will be attending Join Chiefs' Landscaping Restoration Partnership outreach event on May 3, 2024 in Egg Harbor City.
- Update on recent meetings attended.
- Commented on the possible collaboration with Mark Dinglasan of NJOFSA.

## **B. Supervisors**

### **Joseph Lomax**

- Commented on the development of the District's forestry program.
- Commented on hosting horseshoe crabs and pinelands fieldtrips.
- Update of the subaqueous mapping.
- Commented on the audit analysis of the Districts.
- Commented on work the staff and supervisors are conducting to propel the District forward.

### **Richard Dovey**

- Update from meeting with County Administrator to discuss additional office space for the District.
- Discussed upcoming Envirothon.
- Commented on holding awards ceremony for Envirothon and poster contest winners.
- Tentative date for the NJACD Annual meeting will be November 25, 2024 at the Eco-Complex.

### **Allen Carter**

- Commented on joint efforts in hosting tours.
- Update on Farm Bill.
- Commented on Heat Stress Bill.
- Update on Soil Protection Standards.
- Update on recent meeting with American National Insurance Company.
- Tree ordinance update.
- Updated on Secretary of Agriculture.
- Attended Regional Supervisors meeting. Commended Richard Dovey on a job well done.

### **Cormac Morrissey**

- Attended and commented on Regional Supervisor meeting. Thanked Richard Dovey for his work.
- Commented on the many new opportunities available for District employees.
- Updated on the 251 Standards.

### **Robert Fenton**

- Commented on public relations with Legislators.
- Attended and commented on Regional Supervisor meeting.
- Busy preparing for the upcoming farming season.

## **C. USDA-NRCS**

### **Michelle Pedano**

- Distributed and commented on NRCS monthly activity report.
- Reported on programs available, their signup and cutoff dates.
- NRCS NJ Urban Grant opportunity open until June 7, 2024.
- Application being accepted until April 30, 2024 for the Firman E. Bear Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society scholarship.
- Commented on the Join Chiefs' Landscaping Restoration Partnership outreach event.

**D. Rutgers**

**Claudia Gilarroyo**

- Update on three new program associates that will be working out of the Cape May Extension office.
- Updated on programs and workshops being offered to residents. Classes have been successful and well attended.
- In the process of hiring a new office manager.
- Update on school outreach efforts.

**E. Public**

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

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Cormac Morrissey to go into executive session at 10:28 a.m. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Richard Dovey to end the executive session at 11:34 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 interview, and hire, if warranted, a candidate for a Forestry position. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Richard Dovey and seconded by Joseph Lomax to have four supervisors and two staff attend the NACD/Northeast Summer Meeting in Boston, MA. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Cormac Morrissey and seconded by Richard Dovey to authorize Michael Kent to attend NACDEA Summer Board Meeting in Billings, MT.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Cormac Morrissey and seconded by Richard Dovey to adjourn the meeting at 11:45 a.m. The next meeting will be held Thursday May 23, 2024, 8:00am at the District Office in Mays Landing, NJ. The motion passed unanimously.

Marie Rogowski  
Administrative Assistant

Executive Session Meeting Minutes  
Cape Atlantic Conservation District  
April 25, 2024

The motion to go into executive session was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Cormac Morrissey at 10:28 am. The motion passed unanimously.

**Attendees:**

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

District Staff: Michael Kent

**Personnel:**

Michael Kent informed the Board that he, Cormac Morrissey, and Joseph Lomax met with our consulting foresters to discuss the District Forestry program and the possible candidate that may be interested in helping the District accelerate the program as he holds several accreditations and certifications needed to become a NJ Certified Forester.

**NACD / Northeast Summer Meeting:**

Michael Kent informed the board that registration would be opening soon for the 2024 NACD/Northeast Summer Meeting in Boston, MA. Discussion was had about District participation.

**NACDEA Summer Meeting:**

Michael Kent informed the Board that there will be a summer meeting in Billings Montana for the National Association of Conservation Districts Employees Association board of which Michael is a member. Michael informed the Board that all expenses are paid by the NACDEA.

**Local Legislators:**

Discussion was had on how to be more engaged with local legislators on both a regional and statewide level.

A motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Richard Dovey to end the executive session at 11:34 a.m. and return to the regular meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by Michael Kent