

Cape-Atlantic Conservation District Minutes

December 17, 2024

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AND PUBLIC NOTICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Chairman, Robert Fenton called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.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, and Richard Dovey.

Staff: Michael Kent, Lauren Tigue, Connor Smilon, Renee Capetola, Riley Blankenship, John Hooven, and Sharon McKenna.

USDA-NRCS: Michelle Pedano, Julie Hawkins and Chris Miller.

MINUTES

A. Minutes of November 21, 2024, Meeting

After Board review, a motion was made by Richard Dovey and seconded by Robert Fenton to approve minutes from the November 21, 2024 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Executive Session Minutes of November 21, 2024, Meeting

After Board review, a motion was made by Richard Dovey and seconded by Joseph Lomax to approve executive session minutes from the November 21, 2024 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

FINANCES

A. Treasurers Reports

1. District Financials – November 2024

After Board review and discussion, a motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Richard Dovey to approve the District's November 2024 treasurer's report, balance sheet and expenses in the amount of \$86,844.56. The motion passed unanimously.

2. **PMC Financials – November 2024**

After review of the PMC monthly expense report for November 2024, a motion was made by Richard Dovey and seconded by Joseph Lomax to approve treasurer's report, balance sheet and account balance of \$24,965.59. The motion passed unanimously.

3. **Farm Bureau Bank CD renewed through December 4, 2025 with a 4.25% interest rate.**

NEW BUSINESS

A. Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plans

1. November 2024 Certifications

A motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Richard Dovey approving all Plan Certifications listed on the November 2024 Application Report except for 345-24 and 534-24. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Richard Dovey and seconded by Robert Fenton approving applications 345-24 and 534-24. Joseph Lomax recused. The motion passed.

2. November 2024 Re-Certifications

A motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Richard Dovey approving all applications listed on the November 2024 Re-Certification Application Report except for 105-21. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Richard Dovey and seconded by Robert Fenton approving application 105-21. Joseph Lomax recused. The motion passed.

3. 251 Updates

Connor Smilon

-Update on the 251 program and large number of applications being submitted to the District.

B. Farmland Program

After Board review and discussion, a motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Richard Dovey approving the following conservation agreement. The motion passed unanimously.

1. Conservation Agreements

a. Anthony D. Penza – 9.16 acres, Hammonton

C. 2025 Meeting Schedule

After Board review, a motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Richard Dovey to approve the 2025 Meeting Schedule. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Health Care

Healthcare costs will be increasing by 17% next year.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

OLD BUSINESS

A. Education

Sharon McKenna

- Update with Chris Miller on PMC plant releases and marketing initiatives.
- Work continues with Local Working Groups meetings outreach.
- Work continues with site selection and approvals for Mr. B's pollinator project.
- Update on the 2025 Envirothon that will take place on May 17th, 2025.
- Commented on previously attended and upcoming events and meetings.

B. Grants/Agreements

Michael Kent

- Gave update on NFWF Grant Narrative.
- Update on partner employee agreements.

C. Meetings

Michael Kent

- Distributed and commented on list of previously attended, upcoming meetings, conferences, events, and potential meeting opportunities.

D. Forestry Update

John Hooven

- Gave update on various forestry plans in progress.
- Provided updates on field activities and community forestry outreach.
- Discussed becoming an NRCS technical service provider.

E. Agriculture Update

Riley Blakenship

- Distributed summary of agricultural activities.
- Commented on meetings attended.
- Working on conservation plans and agreements.
- Update on new staff and partner employees in NRCS office.
- Update on preserved farm inspections for 2025.

F. Coastal Zone Soil Survey

Joseph Lomax

- Update on fieldwork timeline.
- Discussed planning a follow-up meeting with NRCS along with other key players.

G. District Employee Handbook

Michael Kent

- The rough draft of the handbook has been forwarded to the District Solicitor for review before the draft is finalized and presented for approval at the January meeting.

H. District Merger

Michael Kent

- Approval has been received by the State Committee to move forward with the merger process.
 - Joseph Lomax discussed shared service agreement for the merger.
 - Richard Dovey discussed legislation related to the merger.

COMMENTS

A. Staff

John Hooven

- Discussed thoughts on land conservation laws in New Jersey.

B. Supervisors

Richard Dovey

- Commented on the NJACD Annual meeting attended on November 25, 2024 where the budget and merger were discussed. Cormac Morrissey will be acting as NJACD Treasurer. Joseph Lomax will be acting as the NJACD Secretary.
- Discussed 2025 Envirothon planning and potential grant opportunities.

Joseph Lomax

- Meeting to be held in January with the American Littoral Society regarding bayshore shoreline and horseshoe crab restoration.
- Commented on the collaboration between NRCS and the District with Fluffy Farms.
- Discussed the Avalon Environmental Commissions sustainable landscaping publications: Native Trees and Shrubs and Native Wildflowers. The Cape Atlantic Conservation District and the PMC were recognized in these publications.
 - Chris Miller commented that the PMC provided materials to Avalon elementary for their grasses and classes program.

Robert Fenton

- Update on wildlife populations.

C. USDA-NRCS

Julie Hawkins

- Thanked the District for including her in the meeting, and attendance at the State Technical Meeting.

Michelle Pedano

- Distributed and commented on NRCS monthly activity report.
- Commented on funding and deadlines for NRCS programs.
- NRCS have speakers scheduled for the 2025 New Jersey Agricultural Convention and Trade Show on February 4th, 2025.

Chris Miller

- Discussed plant material orders.
- 2024 Annual Report is out for review.
- Update on new plant material release this year.

D. Public

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Richard Dovey and seconded by Joseph Lomax to go into executive session at 5:03 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Richard Dovey to end the executive session at 5:26 p.m. and return to the regular meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ON ITEMS FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Richard Dovey and seconded by Joseph Lomax for one District supervisor and one staff member to attend the Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show. The District will also pay registration costs only for two NRCS staff members. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Richard Dovey and seconded by Joseph Lomax for one District supervisor and two staff members to attend the New Jersey AG Conference. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Richard Dovey and seconded by Joseph Lomax to allow one District staff member to attend the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary Science and Environmental Summit. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Richard Dovey and seconded by Joseph Lomax for one District supervisor and one staff member to attend the National Native Seed Conference. The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Joseph Lomax and seconded by Richard Dovey to adjourn the meeting at 5:29 p.m. The next meeting will be held Thursday January 16, 2024, 8:00 a.m. at the District Office, Mays Landing, NJ. The motion passed unanimously.

Lauren Tigue
Resource Conservationist