

**Gloucester County
Agriculture Development Board**

Chairperson: West (Jay) Kandle, III

Secretary: Eric M. Campo

Minutes of the January 8, 206 6:00 pm

Members Present: Chuck Romick, Joel Viereck, Jay Kandle, Mike Visalli, Michelle Casella (non-voting member)

Staff Present: Scott Burns, Asst County Counsel, Eric Agren and Mary Cummings, Office of Land Preservation, Robin Haque, GC Office of Taxation

Others Present: Heather Siessel, SADC, Lindsay Fitzpatrick

Meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm by Assistant County Counsel Scott Burns.

Commissioner Matthew Weng administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Kandle and Mr. Visalli.

Mr. Burns opened the nominations for Chairperson of the board.

Mr. Visalli made a motion to nominate Mr. Kandle, Mr. Viereck seconded the motion.

A motion was made by Mr. Viereck and seconded by Mr. Romick to close the nominations. A roll call vote was taken on the nomination of Mr. Kandle. The motion passed.

Commissioner Weng swore in Mr. Kandle has Chairperson.

Mr. Burns turned the meeting over to Chairperson Kandle.

Mr. Kandle asked for opened the floor to nominations for Vice Chairperson. Mr. Visalli nominated Mr. Curtis. The motion was seconded by Mr. Romick. Mr. Romick made a motion to close the nominations. It was seconded by Mr. Viereck. Motion passed

A role call vote was taken on the nomination of Mr. Curtis, the motion passed.

Commissioner Weng swore in Mr. Curtis to the position of Vice chair.

Chairperson Kandle asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the April 24, 2025 meeting. Mr. Curtis made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Viereck seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Chairperson Kandle asked for a motion to open the public hearing to discuss the expansion of Gloucester County's Agricultural Development Area. Mr. Viereck made a motion to open the hearing, it was seconded by Mr. Romick. After a brief discussion. Mr. Visalli made a motion to close the hearing, it was seconded by Mr. Viereck. Mr. Romick made a motion to approve the update to the ADA, it was seconded by Mr. Viereck. After a roll call vote the motion passed.

Correspondence- Heather Siessel from SADC reported the new statewide formula is doing well. It is averaging a 23% increase. Brian Wilson was appointed as the new SADC Executive Deputy Director. The SADC has approved a soil and water grant available to farmers to hire their own engineer. This was done to decrease the work load of NRCS. The Green Pages, a resource for farmers has been updated by SADC staff. It is available on the SADC website. The Pinelands formula was reviewed and has been update to reflex an increase to account for the cost of living.

Director's Report -1-8-2026

- The Office of Land Preservation continues to advance multiple farmland preservation applications throughout the County. Current projects include properties located in East Greenwich, Franklin, Mantua, Greenwich, and West Deptford. These applications are progressing through various stages of the preservation process, including initial application review, surveying, and appraisal.
- Under the “Public Hearing” section of the agenda, we request the Board’s consideration of the following item:
 - Discussion and possible action on expanding Gloucester County’s Agricultural Development Area (ADA), in connection with the Gloucester County Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan and the required annual update to the County’s Planning Incentive Grant (PIG) application.
- Our current funding grant from the SADC is \$2.9 million, and we are eligible to receive an additional \$2 million in competitive funds.
- The SADC has been holding quarterly partner outreach seminar sessions with all CADB counties on various topics. Our office staff has been actively attending these sessions.
- **Our office finalized settlement on the following farms:**
 - ***Conner Farm**, Elk Township – 29.5 acres
 - ***Love Farm**, Mantua Township – 12.40 acres
 - ***Martorana Farm**, in partnership with Franklin Township’s PIG program – 135 acres.
Funding breakdown: Franklin Township and the County each contributed **\$54,113.12**, and the SADC provided **\$4,432,905.00**.
- In total, we received \$1,027,541 in cost-share funding for the three farms listed above. To date, we have received **\$2,727,898** in cost-share funding from SADC for six farms.
- The County’s total preserved land now stands at 24,597 acres, including 21,052 acres preserved as farmland and 3,545 acres preserved as open space.
- The New Statewide Formula (NSF) for appraising farms is yielding excellent results, providing higher-value offers for farmers.
- **We are working on an open space project totaling 36 acres adjacent to the County Veteran’s Cemetery.** Settlement is expected to be completed by the end of December 2026. This project will provide additional buffer protection for the Veteran’s Cemetery, complementing the 80-acre Senor property the County preserved in 2021.
- **Our office is overseeing the demolition of two houses and a barn on the Senor Open Space property, which the County purchased in 2021 near the County Veteran’s Cemetery.** The Gloucester County Improvement Authority (GCIA), along with their environmental consultant CME, is assisting with the project. CME has helped secure the necessary permits from the DEP, Gloucester County Soil Conservation District, and Monroe Township. We anticipate completing the demolition by the end of the year.
- **Our office is working in partnership with the South Jersey Land & Water Trust and Green Acres to preserve a 12-acre parcel known as the Moore property in West Deptford Township.** This parcel is adjacent to 120 acres already preserved under the Green Acres Program.

- **Our farm inspector, Steve Tuttle, continues to conduct farm inspections.** Letters have been mailed to property owners requesting that they schedule appointments for their inspections.

The SADC is actively developing a Next Generation Farmer Program to support the future of farming in New Jersey. This initiative aims to help new farmers from all backgrounds overcome the challenges of starting and growing their operations. It also provides support for established farmers to enhance profitability, adapt to changing conditions, and prepare the next generation to take over their farm businesses.

The Next Generation Program is progressing with innovative initiatives in the following areas:

- Establish NJ Land Link
- Farmer Resource Pages and Agricultural Resource Pages
- Registered Apprenticeship Program
- Farm Transfer and Succession Planning
- Support for Active-Duty Military and Veterans through Skill Bridge
- Support for Urban Agriculture

At the SADC-TDR Bank meeting in October, the Board discussed the Woolwich Township TDR matter. The terms of the settlement offer regarding the loan were sent to the Township shortly after the meeting. The Township is currently reviewing the offer and its terms. Further updates will be provided as they become available.

Legal Issues

In addition to the other items previously mentioned, County Counsel Eric Campo oversees all legal matters related to Land Preservation activities and manages all legal issues pertaining to the CADB.

- No additional Legal matter.

Old Business- Woolwich TDR- Woolwich received a settlement offer from the TDR bank board. The board is independent of SADC. A motion was made by Mr. Viereck and seconded by Mr. Visalli for Mr. Burns to draft a letter to be sent to the Deputy Attorney General to see if the issue can be resolved.

New Business- Approval of the Direct Easement Application for the Estate of Lucy Marie Frass, Block 45, Lot 11, Harrison Twp. A motion was made by Mr. Viereck and seconded by Mr. Visalli to approve the application. The motion passed.

Public Portion

Mr. Kandle asked for a motion to open the public portion of the meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Romick and seconded by Mr. Visalli. Motion passed

Seeing no one looking to speak. A motion was made by Mr. Vierck and seconded by Mr. Visalli to close the public portion.

Adjourn

Mr. Visalli made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Viereck seconded the motion. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned.