

Minutes
Hope Township
Agricultural Advisory Committee
Wednesday October 8, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm by Chairman, Bob May.

Open Public Meetings Act:

Under the provisions of the “Open Public Meetings Act” adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by publishing notice in the legal section of the Express Times and by posting notice in the Hope Post Office and on the Township bulletin boards—all on October 3, 2014.

Present at this meeting were members: Bob May, Richard Goodbody, and Josh Miller. Also present was Sandy Urgo of the Land Conservancy of New Jersey.

Update on Farmland Preservation Efforts:

- Sandy Urgo gave the members an update on the efforts of the Land Conservancy, on behalf of Hope Township’s Farmland Preservation Program, since its last meeting. Two farms are approaching preservation, and a third one (Bob May his son, Jason) has completed the process. *(It was noted that Bob May had recently been reappointed to the Hope Township Agriculture Advisory Committee, now that the sale of a development easement closed on his (and his son’s) property.)* Ms. Urgo told of her efforts to contact various farm owners in Hope, and she and the committee spent some time going over a number of these potential properties. Ms. Urgo reminded the committee that Hope Township has been accumulating funds in its Farmland Preservation and Open Space Trust Fund and that the timing was right to pursue the purchase of additional development easements to preserve farmland.
- Ms. Urgo related that many of the potential farm owners have unrealistic expectations as to what the value of their properties is. Those expectations, however, can be mitigated, she suggested, with explanations of current market prices and development realities.
- Ms. Urgo reminded the committee that Hope Township has \$1,250,000. in its Planning Incentive Grant account and commented that sooner or later those monies will be reallocated, if the Township doesn’t make use of them.
- The committee and Ms. Urgo then discussed when another out-reach effort should be pursued with owners of targeted farms in Hope Township. It was suggested, by Mr. Miller, that March, 2015 might be a good time for such contact.

Discussion of Frequency of Meetings:

- It was then decided that meetings of this Agricultural Advisory Board would occur bi-monthly, with the next meeting scheduled for Wednesday December 3, 2014.

Adjournment:

- There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Richard Goodbody
Secretary

