

Minutes of the Parks & Environment Advisory Board
Meeting May 6th, 2020 online via Webex

In attendance:

Officers Present - Bill Reinert – Chairman, Mike Hogan – Vice Chairman

Members Present - Stephen Fielder, Dick Colby

Members Absent - Ken Sooy, Jill Miles, Heather Warburton

Freeholder Representative – James Bertino - absent

County Staff - Greg Brookins, D.H.P.W - present

Secretary - Eric Husta – D.D.P.R. – present

Member of the Public - Bill Hutchinson

Old Business:

The board's April meeting was cancelled as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Guest Speaker:

Rick VanVranken, Agriculture and Natural Resource County Agent and County Extension Department Head

Rick's talk focused on the current trends of farming in Atlantic County and New Jersey in general. There was general discussion regarding genetic engineering along with the fact, while many long-time farmers are aging, there is an influx of young first-time farmers as well.

There are roughly 450 farms in Atlantic County with 99% of them producing crops and 1% being dedicated to livestock. Of all farmland in the county, only 2% is organic. There is also a push towards CSA (Community Supported Agriculture). This included discussion on produce distributors and wholesale produce markets.

Rick also talked briefly about innovations in drip irrigation and highlighted some examples of herb preserves.

Roundtable Discussion topics:

Roundtable discussions were postponed until our next meeting or possibly at the conclusion of our field trip in June.

Our field trip/ next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 3rd, 2020 at a predetermined field trip location or via Webex online.

cc: Dennis Levinson, County Executive
Jerry DelRosso, County Administrator
Diana Rutala, Dep. County Administrator
Frank Formica, Chairman - Board of Freeholders
James Bertino, Board of Freeholders – PEAB Representative
Greg Brookins, Dept. Head Public Works
All Advisory Board Members