

**MINUTES OF MERCER COUNTY
SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
590 HUGHES DRIVE
HAMILTON SQUARE, NJ 08690
JUNE 9, 2022**

MCSCD SUPERVISORS

Scott Ellis
Gary Mount
Lucia Huebner
Theodora Wang

STAFF

Linda Sandusky

OTHERS

Meredith Melendez
Lewis Goldshore, Esq.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, S. Ellis at 12:30 pm. The Statement of Adequate Notice was read.

The minutes of the May 12, 2022 meeting were reviewed by the Board.

MOTION 1

A motion to approve the minutes as corrected was made by G. Mount seconded by T. Wang, carried unanimously.

The Treasurer's Report was presented to the Board. The District was in the red for this period due to an unusually low number of new applications received.

MOTION 2

A motion to receive and file the Treasurer's Report pending audit was made by T. Wang, seconded by L. Huebner, carried unanimously.

The Director's Report was given.

NON-POINT SOURCE POLLUTION PROGRAM

11 - APPLICATIONS RECEIVED
2 - PREREVIEW INSPECTIONS
22 - REVIEWS
92 - INSPECTIONS
5 - PRE-CONSTRUCTION MEETINGS

- 25 - FINAL REPORTS OF COMPLIANCE
- 3 - CONDITIONAL REPORTS OF COMPLIANCE
- 2 - VIOLATION NOTICES
- 0 - STOP WORK ORDERS
- 0 - DENIALS
- 0 - CERTIFICATION DELEGATIONS
- 2 – 251 EXEMPTION DETERMINATIONS

CHAPTER 251

The spring-seeding season ended the beginning of May. Therefore, the focus of inspections has switched to active construction sites, away from final project inspections and close outs.

A Violation Notice was issued for the Raajipo site in Robbinsville Twp. for failing to complete over 10 conditional reports of compliance. A thirty-day extension was issued, with little progress.

Another Violation Notice was issued for the Horizon Center project in Hamilton Twp. for failing to complete the detention basin / temporary sediment basin in the proper sequence. The District had made repeated requests over several months to complete the basin. Due to wet-weather conditions, there were some legitimate reasons as to why the basin could not have been completed earlier. However, after drier weather arrived, progress was not occurring.

PRESENTATION / TOUR

A presentation on the Miry Run Ponds master plan was provide by Anthony Cucchi, Superintendent of Parks for the Mercer County Park Commission after the District's May 12th Board of Supervisors Meeting. Mr. Cucchi discussed a wide range of topics, from the master planning process, environmental issues, and concerns, along with park design elements and features. The presentation was very well received and highly informative. Everyone was extremely grateful for Mr. Cucchi's insights and time. After the presentation, District Staff and Board Members toured several accessible areas of the lake.

HUNT LAKE DAM

The District Manager reached out to Frank Minch, Director of Agriculture and Natural Resources, regarding a meeting between the District and the Department of Agriculture to discuss Hunt Lake Dam and a potential process moving forward. S. Ellis also contacted Secretary D. Fisher regarding a meeting. A meeting was subsequently scheduled for June 7th at the District office. Attendees were Secretary D. Fisher, Director F. Minch; Supervisors: S. Ellis, and G. Mount; District Manager: P. Schiariti. A brief recent history was provided and a discussion to derive a plan to move forward was ensued.

The District was notified that the embankments, top of bank and spillway were mowed by the Hopewell Twp. Municipal Public Works Department as requested.

The Annual Inspection Report was forwarded to USDA NRCS for review, comment and signature by the State Engineer, Hilary Trotman, to submit to the NJDEP.

The District Manager and District Council took part in a conference call with Paul Stofa, of NJDEP to discuss possible paths forward to begin the decommissioning process for the dam. The District reiterated our position with respect to where we believe our responsibilities end regarding the administrative process to initiate the decommissioning of the dam.

POSTER CONTEST

The winning posters from the Mercer District as well as the others, which were forwarded to the District Office for judging, were picked up by the NJACD for statewide judging.

MOTION 3

A motion to approve the Director's Report was made by L. Huebner, seconded by T. Wang, carried unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE

The District received a letter and donation form from the Northeast Association of Conservation District Employees (NACDE). This is a volunteer organization that represents 13 states to engage in bringing together conservation district employees, partners, supervisors, and stakeholders throughout the region.

The Board did not approve donating to this organization.

CHAPTER 251

2022-6274-T	2022-6227-T	2022-6242-EW	2022-6266-H
2022-6267-H	2022-6239-HT	2021-6189-HT(R)	2022-6271-P
2022-6234-P	2018-5631-R	NJG0330159	2022-6146-WW

MOTION 4

A motion to approve plans recommended for certification by staff was made by G. Mount, seconded by L. Huebner, carried unanimously.

EXTENSION UPDATE

M. Melendez is involved with the Chesterfield Organic Orchards Farm on the corner of Harker Road and Crosswicks Ellisdale Road, that is sponsoring a compost workshop. M. Melendez will be conducting a presentation and T. Wang will be volunteering her services.

Last month M. Melendez wrote a Plant & Pest Advisory Entitled: The NJ Plastic Bag Ban and Your Retail Farm Market. She received an email from the New Jersey Association of Environmental Commissions. A staff person who also sits on the DEP Plastics Advisory Council, informed M. Melendez she was causing great confusion

among farmers and needed to change the guidance. M. Melendez was asked to talk to DEP and receive guidance from them. In the meantime, the staff person called M. Melendez back and indicated she was incorrect, and no changes are required. DEP provided a definition for 'carryout bags.'

M. Melendez wrote a post regarding the Cottage Food Law and how that impacts farms. The post addressed the removal of raw honey without additives, from the Cottage Food Law This is leaving the honey producers in limbo.

Rutgers produced a new fact sheet on what to look for if you are a new farmer and looking to buy a farm.

M. Melendez is working with the Dept. of Agriculture to conduct a post-harvest food safety video at the Research Farm in Salem County. They will be filming examples of what not to do in a packing house. When this is completed, it will appear on the Dept. of Agriculture's website and Rutgers.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

HUNT LAKE

S. Ellis discussed a meeting with Secretary of Agriculture, D. Fisher, F. Minch also from the Dept. of Agriculture, District Manager, and G. Mount regarding the ongoing issues with Hunt Lake Dam. Secretary Fisher asked for a letter outlining the issues. G. Mount felt the meeting went well and was a wonderful idea to have Secretary Fisher and the Dept. of Agriculture being engaged in this conversation and moving forward, keeping them informed. S. Ellis stated his concern that the District wants to be done with the maintenance responsibility for Hunt Lake Dam. Also, the District does not qualify as a Sponsoring Local Organization to decommission the dam.

L. Goldshore, District Council, reiterated the issues and the District's ongoing responsibilities with the dam maintenance. He also mentioned that another catastrophic event could be more than the District is able to handle (repairs and funding). L. Goldshore felt a letter thanking Secretary Fisher and outlining the dam issues, with decommissioning as the preferred option.

L. Goldshore discussed an email received from Paul Stofa, Chief Advisor, Office of the Deputy Commissioner Legal, Regulatory, and Legislative Affairs for the New Jersey Dept. of Environmental Protection. The email outlined the DEP proposed Memorandum of Agreement, regarding the District and/or the Dept. of Agriculture to move forward with decommissioning Hunt Lake Dam. L. Goldshore felt this was a traditional approach by Paul Stofa, and quite bizarre that DEP could possibly think an agency of the District's size and budget, could be responsible for decommissioning the dam. This is clearly above our capability.

L. Huebner brought up the issue of an insurance policy that covers the District Supervisors. L. Goldshore will look at the District's current policy. This will also be

looked into by District staff who will report back to the Board.

NEW BUSINESS

G. Mount mentioned getting the District Manager a new laptop. The Board agreed a new laptop should be purchased this month.

The next District meeting will be on July 14, 2022.

BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2023

The Board reviewed the Budget for Fiscal Year 2023. They discussed the increase in today's utility costs. T. Wang wanted to know how the current gas price increases are budgeted. Additional costs for computer maintenance and virus protection are included in this budget.

MOTION 5

A motion to approve the Budget for Fiscal Year 2023 was made by G. Mount, seconded by T. Wang, carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 1:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Schiariti

Paul Schiariti, P.E.
Secretary to the Board