

RESOLUTION OF THE
MIDDLESEX COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
RECOMMENDATION FOR A SITE SPECIFIC
AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT PRACTICE
SIMONSON FAMILY FARM

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Right to Farm Act, N.J.S.A. 4:1C-1 et seq. and State Agricultural Development Committee (hereinafter "SADC") regulations, N.J.A.C. 2:76-2.3, a commercial farm owner or operator may make a request to the County Agriculture Development Board (hereinafter "Board") to determine if his or her operation constitutes a generally accepted agricultural management practice; and,

WHEREAS, on May 10, 2003 Mr. Jeff Applegate and Mrs. Carol Applegate two of the owners of a farm at Block , Lot , Dey Road in the Township of Plainsboro made a request in writing to the Board for its review of the ability to replace an existing trailer which acts as a sales structure for the Christmas tree operation; and

WHEREAS, on July 17, 2003 Mrs. Applegate made a formal request to determine if the replacement of the trailer is a generally accepted agricultural operation or practice; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 2:76-2.3(c) the Board advised, in writing, the SADC and the Township of Plainsboro of Mrs. Applegate's request; and,

WHEREAS, on July 7, 2003, Mr. Applegate and Mrs. Applegate on behalf of all of the owners provided to the Board the commercial farm certification including supporting documentation, attached hereto; and,

WHEREAS, the Board is aware that Mr. Applegate and Mrs. Applegate were unable to replace the trailer under the current zoning of the Township of Plainsboro; and

WHEREAS, on August 12, 2003, the Board sought the advice of the New Jersey Christmas Tree Growers' Association, the Township of Plainsboro, the United States Department of Agriculture/Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Service and on August 26, 2003 conducted a site inspection with Mr. Applegate and Mrs. Applegate, two of the Simonson Family owners of the property; Mr. Michael La Place, Community Development, Plainsboro; Ms. Janice Reid, District Conservationist, USDA/NRCS; Mr. William Hlubik, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Service; and Ms. Linda Busch, CADB Administrator to determine the appropriateness of replacing the trailer; and

WHEREAS, at a Public Hearing on September 17, 2003, the Board unanimously agreed to review and make a determination on the request for a SSAMP for the Simonson Family Farm after making the following findings of fact:

1. Mr. Jeff Applegate and Mrs. Carol Applegate are two of the owners of a 4.5 acre farm located in Plainsboro Township;

2. The property is a commercial farm, as defined by N.J.S.A. 4:1C-3 and N.J.S.A. 2:76-2.1, which produces a field crop worth \$2,500.00 or more annually and is part of a single enterprise farm which constitutes a management unit within the unit known as Simonson Farms consisting of Block , Lot , Cranbury Township; Block , Lots , Cranbury Township; and Block , Lots , Plainsboro Township;
3. The land has been in farm operation since at least 1997, agriculture is a permitted use under the Plainsboro zoning ordinance and is consistent with the municipal master plan; and,

WHEREAS, at its Public Hearing on September 17, 2003, the Board reached the following conclusions based on information provided by the farm operator and by the participants of the site inspection:

1. The existing trailer which is used as a sales structure on this site for Christmas trees that are grown on various Simonson Family farms is in deteriorating condition;
2. The Christmas tree operation under the current zoning for the property, PCD (Planned Development Zone) , is a nonconforming use; and therefore, the trailer cannot be replaced or altered;
3. A sales structure is a critical part of the farming operation during the Christmas tree sales season and throughout the year for storage;
4. Sales buildings are a very important component of the farm operation and without them many growers could not operate efficiently and effectively;
5. There are no significant concerns related to soil and water resources associated with the proposed replacement and potential relocation of the seasonal sales trailer;
6. The replacement trailer may be larger than the current 10' x 32' trailer and may be relocated to a site parallel to Dey Road which is west of the current location. This position would allow the existing trees and gazebo to help shield the trailer;
7. The Township of Plainsboro is interested in working with the Simonson Family in the replacement of the sales trailer, by offering suggestions to help integrate the structure on the property, recognizing its close proximity to nearby residences.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board hereby determines that the proposed new trailer situated on the land so as to maximize the agricultural use of the land and minimize negative agricultural impacts, is integral to the farm operation, and constitutes a generally accepted agricultural management practice. The proposed trailer must conform to relevant Federal, State, and municipal rules, regulations, and statutes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board determines that the owners of the Simonson Family Farm have a legitimate farm-based reason to replace the existing trailer; and

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board shall forward a copy of this Resolution and supporting documents to the owners of the Simonson Family Farm, the SADC, the Township of Plainsboro and any other individuals or organizations deemed appropriate by the Board within 30 days of the recommendation.

I certify that the above Resolution was unanimously adopted at a regular meeting of the Middlesex County Agricultural Development Board on September 17, 2003.

Adopted: September 17, 2003
MIDDLESEX COUNTY AGRICULTURE
DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Peter A. Cantu, Chairman

Attest: _____
William J. Kruse, Assistant Planning Director
Middlesex County Planning Department

LRB:lak

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