

STATE AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting

December 4, 2025

Secretary Wengryn called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m.

Mr. Roohr read the notice stating that the meeting was being held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, et seq.

Roll call indicated the following:

Members Present

Secretary Wengryn, Chairman
Martin Bullock
Scott Ellis
Jess Niederer- arrived at 9:10 a.m.
Richard Norz
Charles Rosen
Gina Fischetti
Lauren Procida

Members Absent

Tiffany Bohlin
Julie Krause
Brian Schilling

Charles Roohr, SADC Executive Director
Alexandra Horn, Esq., Deputy Attorney General

Minutes

Approval of SADC Open and Closed Session Minutes of October 23, 2025, and October 31, 2025.

It was moved by Mr. Norz and seconded by Mr. Ellis to approve the SADC Open and Closed Session Minutes of October 23, 2025, and October 31, 2025. Mr. Bullock abstained from the October 23rd meeting vote. The motion was approved.

Report of the Chairman

Secretary Wengryn reported that it's been a busy month for New Jersey's wine industry. There was a wine expo held at the Bell Lab Center in Howell, NJ where 26 NJ wineries participated in two viewing sessions open to the public.

Secretary Wengryn reported the Division of Travel and Tourism received approval to collaborate with the NJ Department of Agriculture on a \$5 million Agriculture Tourism Grant to help individual farms with ag tourism, marketing and development. There is a max grant, per farm of \$100,000. Secretary Wengryn encourages anybody who does agricultural tourism to participate. Secretary Wengryn stated the new Governor elect, Mikie Sherrill, is focusing her transition

process on areas of focus that include affordability, energy costs, and healthcare amongst other things. As the working groups develop and hold public meetings, people in agriculture are encouraged to attend and participate.

Report of the Executive Director

Mr. Roohr reported a tentative date of January 29th has been set for the fee simple auction for the Schmied Farm, in Holland Township, Hunterdon County. The auction will be held at the Holland Township Municipal building.

Mr. Roohr stated Bill S4690 will allow electrical infrastructure to cross preserved farmland to connect to the grid. Bill S4350 is related to Urban Ag and will allow the SADC to preserve parcels in urban areas. Lastly, legislation was passed which allows farmers to be awarded attorney fees in cases where right to farm cases were brought in bad faith.

Mr. Roohr reported SADC's 2025 budget request will be up for vote on December 8th which would provide a large allocation to our county partners with the expectation that the formula will increase interest at the county level.

Mr. Roohr stated the first Tax, Estate and Succession Planning workshop was held at D&R Greenway's Facility in Princeton. A presentation was given by a tax professional and Linda Meade from D&R Greenway. The second workshop will be held at the Salem County Ag Building on December 17th with Keith Dickenson, a consultant from Farm Credit East.

Mr. Roohr stated Alison Reynolds provided a Right To Farm presentation to the Mercer CADB on December 1st and staff will also be presenting in Sussex, Warren and Salem counties in January.

Mr. Roohr stated the approved Soil and Water regulation amendments were published in the NJ Register and are now effective. The amendments raise the maximum eligibility limit, reduce the number of acres needed to reach the cap, provide smaller farms with a minimum eligibility of \$50,000 and allows for farmers to hire their own private consultants if needed.

Mr. Roohr thanked the committee for its support and reviewed a number of 2025 accomplishments which included: the development and implementation of the Formula Value; a contractual agreement with three soil conservation districts to provide conservation planning and some level of engineering; a contract with the Department of Defense to participate in their SkillBridge Program where staff would assist veterans transitioning out of the military into farming occupations; the implementation of a farm incubator program; the Stewardship team closed out a number of violation issues; the GIS and Stewardship staff are working on developing a new database to handle post-closing actions and monitoring; and the legal department has greatly increased their Right to Farm outreach efforts as requested.

Mr. Roohr stated that none of these accomplishments would have been possible without the staff and the committee's support.

Mr. Norz commended staff for going to county meetings and asked for the local agriculture boards and other agriculture community members to be included so that they also be educated. He also thanked Mr. Roohr and Secretary Wengryn for increasing the committee's involvement on important topics.

Mr. Roohr announced Brian Wilson, Burlington CADB Administrator, as the new Deputy Director. Mr. Wilson comes with a deep knowledge of the SADC and staff is looking forward to him joining our team.

Public Comment

Mrs. Debbie Norz, Vice Chairman of the Somerset CADB, asked the SADC to rescind Naturally Nurturing Farm's pilot program since Mr. Patel has not been in compliance with the it, violations continue to exist, and the CADB is unable to begin enforcement actions until the pilot program is rescinded.

Ms. Katie Katzer, Somerset CADB administrator, provided a timeline of the violations and county involvement beginning in 2017. The pilot program provided Mr. Patel with definitive markers and those have not been followed. Ms. Katzer detailed a long history of issues and stated Somerset CADB would like the pilot program to be cancelled and proceed with taking Mr. Patel to court to remediate the various violations.

Ms. Patricia Springwell, Hunterdon County, requested the committee make good choices in accordance with the program's mission and that are not motivated by other influences not related to agriculture. She asked the committee to make choices that assist real farmers in land accessibility and agricultural production.

Ms. Ashley Kerr from the New Jersey Farm Bureau thanked the Next Gen program for coming to the NJFB convention. She thanked the SADC for all of their accomplishments over the last year and congratulated Mr. Wilson on his new position with the SADC.

Old Business

A. Stewardship

1. Resolution: Review of Activities

Randall and Laura Peck, SADC ID# 11-0006-FS, Block 43, Lots 1, 4, 4.01, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, East Windsor Township, Mercer County, 72.473 acres

Mr. Willmott stated the Peck Farm is in violation of the Deed of Easement (DOE) for overgrown fields, importation and dumping of fill material and trash material accumulation. The overgrown fields were cited in 2014 and there has been minimal progress with some areas now in dense overgrowth. During a site visit in mid-November, Mr. Willmott and Mr. Clapp observed a considerable amount of fill material. According to Mr. Peck, the fill material was to prevent flooding issues likely caused by beavers upstream but was unable to provide paperwork as to where the fill material came from. Staff noted that Mr. Peck has completed some tillage work in the overgrown areas recently. Staff recommends finding the farm in violation of the DOE for the overgrown areas as those areas are not being retained for agricultural use and production, the dumping of fill material, and the accumulation of waste material.

Mr. Peck, a life-long farmer in Monmouth and Mercer Counties, former President of the Monmouth County Board of Agriculture and current Monmouth County Director of the Farm Bureau provided the committee with history regarding the flooding and the unsuccessful efforts made by various entities to resolve the issue. Ultimately, he brought fill in to remedy the situation and did not realize it would be an issue since it was a way to alleviate an area of concern.

Mr. Peck stated that 50% of the overgrown areas have been cleaned up but acknowledged there is a lot of work needed. Mr. Peck apologized for the current condition of the farm but due to various economic issues over the last several years, he does not have the resources to complete the work in a timely manner.

Mr. Rosen suggested that there may be an opportunity for Mr. Peck to partner with the Next Generation Program to assist him in his endeavor. Mr. Norz agreed that the Next Gen program could potentially be helpful in resolving this violation.

Mr. Roohr stated the capabilities of the Next Gen staff could be used to figure out creative solutions, one being to utilize the Farm Link program to have another farmer trade their time in exchange for extra acres. Mr. Roohr stated that staff is not looking to go to court but would like a feasible time frame for remediation.

Mr. Norz suggested the committee not approve the draft violation resolution and instead provide a plan and timeline to remediate the problems. He stated Mr. Peck has shown good faith in attending today's meeting and he would like to see an agreement between Mr. Peck and the SADC to resolve the issue. Mr. Ellis stated these issues have been long-standing, SADC staff has been trying to work with Mr. Peck for many years and based on Mr. Peck's testimony, some of these problems are going to get worse. He made a motion to find Mr. Peck in violation of the DOE and if staff can find ways to assist him, that would be a positive thing. Mr. Bullock seconded the motion and stated the issues need to be documented.

It was moved by Mr. Ellis and seconded by Mr. Bullock to approve Resolution FY2026R12(1), as presented, subject to any conditions of said resolution. A roll call vote was taken. Ms. Niederer, Mr. Norz and Ms. Fischetti voted against the motion. The motion was approved. A copy of Resolution FY202612(1) is attached to and a part of these minutes.

B. Next Generation Farmer Program Update: Case Farm Incubator Project

Mr. Roohr stated that SADC staff plan to partner with Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) and Rutgers University to work on the Case Farm. The Fulper family has been a long-term tenant on the property with a 12-year lease. The Fulper family has been good stewards to the land, installed approximately \$130,000 worth of NRCS conservation projects and treat it like it is their own.

Mr. Kimmel reminded the committee they approved staff to proceed with an incubator farm project with Rutgers and NOFA to start a small grain operation. Since that time, it has been decided that an established farmer should begin the implementation process while NOFA sets up the marketplace to prove that this concept works on a small scale for any farmer. The business enterprise will be incubated using someone who knows how to farm along with NOFA assisting. NOFA would help with financing to eliminate that burden on the Fulper family. Mr. Roohr stated the Fulpers would benefit by having an additional revenue stream and NOFA benefits by working with an established farmer who knows the land and has the necessary equipment.

Mr. Rosen stated that he's in favor of this idea and is curious as to how involved the SADC will be. Mr. Roohr stated this arrangement would absorb a large amount of the SADC's responsibility and would allow SADC to focus on more traditional incubation efforts on a different piece of property. Mr. Ellis expressed concern that this new partnership with the Fulpers does not include

a new generation of farmers, but rather an investigation to see if this product and market would work. Ms. Brandeisky stated that part of the grant deliverables is for training people on the equipment involved so that's where the next generation education comes in. Mr. Rosen stated that the marketing and marketplace creation helps determine if there is economic value with growing and selling the grains.

It was moved by Mr. Norz and seconded by Mr. Rosen to approve the Case Farm Incubator Project, as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.

New Business

A. Stewardship

1. Soil and Water Cost-Share Grants Policy P-48 Revisions

Mr. Clapp stated the soil and water cost share amendments were recently published and now effective. As part of the rule writing process, large parts of the internal policy P-48 are no longer necessary. The revised Policy- 48 addresses the cost share rate and the need for a cost table for practices that do not have an NRCS equivalent rate. Staff will develop a cost table over time as data is collected, but in the short term they will need a mechanism to approve grants. Staff's recommendation is to have producers submit a cost estimate from a technical professional when they have a project that they are ready to implement. The rate would be approved and becomes part of the data to develop the table. Staff recommends that the cost share rate reimbursement remain at 50% until it's determined how much demand will occur and how the funding responds.

It was moved by Mr. Ellis and seconded by Mr. Norz to approve and adopt the revisions to Policy P-48 as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.

2. Resolution: Rural Microenterprise Permit (RME)

a. Creek View Farm, SADC ID# 03-0009-EP, Block 400, Lot 3.01, Chesterfield Township, Burlington County, 132.414 acres

Mr. Pizzio reviewed the NJ RME regulations with the committee. He stated there are two classes of RMEs: Class 1 are customary activities that rely on equipment and skill possessed by the agriculture community and Class 2 are agricultural support services that provide a direct impact on agriculture.

Mr. Pizzio referred the committee to an RME request for a Class 1 activity for a photography business that will use a portion of the original farm market for traditional and themed photography that often utilizes products used or produced on the farm. He reviewed the specifics of the request with the committee and stated that the staff recommendation is to grant approval.

It was moved by Mr. Ellis and seconded by Mr. Norz to approve Resolution FY2026R12(2) granting final approval, as presented, subject to any conditions of said resolutions. The motion was unanimously approved. A copy of Resolution FY2026R12(2) is attached to and a part of these minutes

b. Hart, John R. Jr., SADC ID# 11-0003-EP, Block 37, Lot 23.01, Hopewell Township, Mercer County, 58.821 acres

Note: Secretary Wengryn and Ms. Niederer recused from this discussion.

Mr. Pizzio referred the committee to an RME request for a Class 2 activity for a tractor and small engine repair shop that will use a portion of the existing machine shop. He reviewed the specifics of the request with the committee and stated that the staff recommendation is to grant approval.

It was moved by Mr. Norz and seconded by Mr. Bullock to approve Resolution FY2026R12(3) granting final approval, as presented, subject to any conditions of said resolutions. The motion was unanimously approved. A copy of Resolution FY2026R12(3) is attached to and a part of these minutes.

2. Review of Activities: Special Occasion Events

Silver Bit and Spur Farm, Inc., SADC ID# 10-0132-EP, Readington Township, Hunterdon County, 40 acres.

NOTE: Ms. Fischetti left the meeting.

Mr. Kimmel provided an overview regarding special occasion events (SOEs) held on Silver Bit and Spur Farm, a 40-acre county preserved equine farm located in Readington Township, Hunterdon County. This matter is being brought to the Committee regarding potential violations of the SOE law and farmland preservation deed of easement. The landowner has told staff that the farm has approximately 40 horses on the property and the operations include breeding, sales, boarding, ride lessons, trail riding and other events. Farmland assessment records from 2024 stated there were 35 to 40 horses and the farm generated \$3,900 in income and 2025 generated \$10,400 with the same number of horses.

The farm received approval in 2024 from Hunterdon County to hold SOEs on the farm. The county approval stated the landowner testified that Silver Bit and Spur Inc., is a commercial farm producing agricultural products worth \$10,000 a year; however, the SADC has not been provided with such documentation. In 2025, the farm did not initially return the statutorily required annual certification forms in 2025 in a timely manner. Mr. Kimmel stated that the farm held several SOEs in 2025 prior to receiving 2025 renewal approval even after the CADB and SADC reminded them of the requirement.

In April 2025, the CADB and SADC became aware of an SOE scheduled on the farm and jointly sent the owner a notice of potential violation; however, the farm held the event and additional SOEs. At its September meeting, the CADB approved 26 SOEs for 2025, including 13 that had already occurred prior to the approval.

Mr. Kimmel stated staff's recommendation is to initiate the process outlined in the SOE law regarding giving notification of the potential violation and notice of right to a hearing.

Mr. Roohr stated the SOE law explains the permitting process and the penalties for violations. If a violation is found, the landowner will be notified, and they have the right to request a hearing. Staff feels that one or more violations of the SOE law has occurred and is asking the committee to determine if they agree.

Mr. Norz asked if Hunterdon County took any action with their board. Mr. Roohr stated that Hunterdon County approved the events in 2025 but took no position on the violations. Mr. Norz

stated that if the farmers were told they were violating and they still held the SOEs they should be found in violation.

Mr. Eggemann stated that he is unsure of what the 13 violations are but is aware of the April violation and understands that the board has to do what it must.

Mr. Smith stated the purpose of today's meeting is to determine whether a notice of alleged violation needs to be issued to the farm owner and then allow the farm owner to request a full hearing. The discussion today is not to determine the violation but to provide a notice that a violation may have occurred.

It was moved by Ms. Niederer and seconded by Mr. Ellis for staff to draft a resolution citing the violations. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. Resolution: House Replacement

**Charles Hooker and Emily Snack, SADC ID# 21-0418-PG, Block 29, Lot 1,
Knowlton Township, Warren County, 33.296 acres**

Mr. Pizzio referred the committee to a house replacement request for the Charles Hooker and Emily Snack farm. He reviewed the specifics of the requests with the committee and stated that the staff recommendation is to grant approval for the one story, 5-bedroom, 3.5 bathroom, single family residence with a heated walkout basement and detached garage totaling approximately 5,200 square feet of heated living space as well as the temporary use of the RV provided that the conditions provided by the CADB and SADC resolutions are met.

Mr. Norz expressed concern about the size and location of the house since the previous house was approximately 2,000 square feet and located in a spot that did not disrupt the agricultural fields. Mr. Pizzio provided construction plans which depict the contours of the house and advised the footprint of the house replacement would be approximately 2,600 square feet. Ms. Neiderer commented that her concern is that the size of the proposed house will cause affordability issues for future farmers. Mr. Bullock noted that landowners should be able to have the house that they can afford to live in. Mr. Hooker stated that he wants to have space to grow a family and intends to use the lower level as unfinished until it is needed. Mr. Ellis stated the size is not unreasonable but feels the location takes too much land out of production. It was discussed that there were constraints on this property affecting house location, including a stream buffer and the topography.

It was moved by Mr. Bullock and seconded by Mr. Ellis to approve Resolution FY2026R12(4) granting final approval, as presented, subject to any conditions of said resolutions. Mr. Norz voted against the motion. The motion was approved. A copy of Resolution FY2026R12(4) is attached to and a part of these minutes

B. Resolutions: Final Approval – Municipal Planning Incentive Grant Program

Ms. Mazzella referred the committee to two requests for final approval under the municipal planning incentive grant program. She reviewed the specifics of the requests with the committee and stated that the staff recommendation is to grant approval.

It was moved by Mr. Norz and seconded by Mr. Ellis to approve Resolution FY2026R12(5) and FY2026R12(5) granting final approval, as presented, subject to any condition of said resolutions.

1. Truster, Gerald J., (Lot 5), SADC ID# 17-0264-PG, FY2026R12(5), Block 28, Lot 5 Upper Pittsgrove Township, Salem County, 38.25 gross acres.
2. Truster, Gerald J., (Lot 9.02), SADC ID# 17-0265-PG, FY2026R12(6), Block 28, Lot 9.02, Upper Pittsgrove Township, Salem County, 20.83 acres.

The motion was unanimously approved. A copy of Resolutions FY2026R12(5) and FY2026R12(6) is attached to and part of these minutes.

C. Resolutions: Final Approval- Direct Easement Purchase Program

Ms. Mazella and Ms. Siessel referred the committee to six requests for final approval under the direct easement purchase program. They reviewed the specifics of the requests with the committee and stated that the staff recommendation is to grant approval.

It was moved by Mr. Norz and seconded by Ms. Niederer to approve Resolutions FY2026R12(7) through FY2026R12(12) granting final approval, as presented, subject to any condition of said resolutions.

1. Tighe, Carol R., SADC ID# 17-0412-DE, FY2026R12(7), Block 18, Lots 6 and 8 and Block 28, Lots 22 and 26, Oldmans Township, Salem County, 154.28 gross acres.
2. Tighe, Daniel and Anne, SADC ID# 17-0413-DE, FY2026R12(8), Block 18, Lots 4.01, 5 and 12, Oldmans Township, Salem County, 45.31 gross acres.
3. Todd, Rose, N., SADC ID# 17-0408-DE, FY2026R12(9), Block 19, Lot 2 and Block 22, Lot 9, Oldmans Township, Salem County, 141.88 gross acres.
4. Keris, Joseph and Margaret, SADC ID# 13-0091-DE, FY2026R12(10), Block 12, Lots 8 and 8.05, Upper Freehold Township, Monmouth County, 23.48 gross acres.
5. SFJT Agricultural Enterprises, LLC, SADC ID# 10-0316-DE, FY2026R12(11), Block 18.01, Lots 50 and 62, Alexandria Township, Hunterdon County, 112.34 gross acres.
6. Stipes, Douglas, SADC ID# 06-0097-DE, FY2026R12(12), Block 20, Lot 10 and 10.03, Stow Creek Township, Cumberland County, 42.38 gross acres.

Mr. Rosen was absent for this vote. The motion was unanimously approved. A copy of Resolutions FY2026R12(7) through FY2026R12(12) are attached to and part of these minutes.

D. Resolutions: Preliminary Approval – Direct Easement Program

Ms. Siessel referred the committee to two requests for preliminary final approval under the direct easement purchase program. She reviewed the specifics of the requests with the committee and stated that the staff recommendation is to grant approval.

It was moved by Mr. Bullock and seconded by Ms. Niederer to approve Resolutions FY2026R12(13) and FY2026R12(14) granting preliminary final approval, as presented, subject to any condition of said resolutions.

1. Mecouch Farms 2, LLC (Cook Rd), SADC ID# 06-0103-DE, FY2026R12(13), Block 21, Lot 5 and Block 20, Lot 5, Stow Creek Township, Cumberland County, 63.77 gross acres.
2. Pier Road Farmland Partnership, SADC ID# 06-0102-DE, FY2026R12(14), Block 20, Lot 6.01, Greenwich Township, Cumberland County, 35.39 gross acres.

Mr. Rosen was absent for the vote. The motion was unanimously approved. A copy of Resolutions FY2026R12(13) and FY2026R12(14) are attached to and part of these minutes.

Public Comment

Mr. John Hart advised the committee that finding agricultural labor is problematic and suggested allowing additional homes to be built on farms so that family members can live on the farm and assist with the labor. He stated nonagricultural real estate is too expensive. He explained his proposal could attract more young farmers and asked for the committee to discuss this topic further.

Ms. Springwell from Hunterdon County commented that she appreciates those that support Mr. Peck and hoped the committee could find a way to assist him. She also expressed her concern with the size of the house replacement that was discussed today and stated that this would make the farm unaffordable to future farmers.

Ms. Christina Chrobokowa from 360 Earthworks acknowledged the courage and vulnerability expressed with the Peck Farm. She continues to work with partners for creative scientific methods to improve soil conditions.

Member Comment

Ms. Neiderer asked when the committee will get follow-up from the Outreach Subcommittee. Mr. Roohr explained staff's goal is to provide a summary to the committee at the January meeting.

Ms. Neiderer asked when the committee will consider the request that was made by Somerset CADB regarding the cancellation of the pilot program on Naturally Nurturing Farm. Mr. Roohr stated the committee has the authority to terminate the pilot. He reminded the committee that previously Mr. Patel was provided a timeline to accomplish a list of tasks and advised him the pilot may be terminated if he did not comply. Mr. Patel has gone well beyond the 60-day timeline and Mr. Roohr suggested staff provide the committee with a status update at the January meeting.

CLOSED SESSION

At 12:35 p.m. Mr. Roohr read the following resolution to go into Closed Session:

In accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-13, it is hereby resolved that the SADC shall now go into executive session to discuss the certifications of values of farm properties in Lumberton and Tabernacle Townships in Burlington County; in Glassboro Borough and Elk, Harrison, and Franklin Townships in Gloucester County; Hopewell Township, Mercer County; and in West Amwell Township, Hunterdon County; attorney-client privileged communications regarding deed terms upon the SADC's sale of a fee simple property in Hopewell Township, Mercer County; and any other matters under N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) that arose during the public portion of the meeting. The minutes of such meeting shall remain

confidential until the Committee determines that the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

It was moved by Mr. Bullock and seconded by Mr. Norz to go into closed session. The motion was unanimously approved.

Action as a Result of Closed Session

A. Real Estate Matters – Certification of Values

It was moved by Mr. Norz and seconded by Mr. Rosen to approve the certification of values as discussed in closed session. The motion was approved.

It was moved by Mr. Bullock and seconded by Ms. Niederer to approve Resolution FY2026R12(15) granting the Patricelli Resale authorization. The motion was unanimously approved. A copy of Resolutions FY2026R12(15) is attached to and part of these minutes.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:27 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Charles Roohr".

Charles Roohr, Executive Director
State Agriculture Development Committee