

URBAN AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MODEL ORDINANCE

Disclaimer: This model ordinance is not intended as a substitute for legal advice. Municipalities should consult with their attorney(s) before adopting an ordinance to ensure compliance with all aspects of federal, state, and local law.

Intent.

[Municipality] recognizes that urban agriculture plays a vital role in strengthening the local food system, promoting community health and wellness, and fostering neighborhood connectivity by providing residents with access to fresh, locally grown food. [Municipality] further acknowledges that expanding urban agriculture opportunities can generate meaningful economic benefits, reduce food insecurity, support environmental sustainability, and build community resilience by transforming underutilized spaces into productive agricultural areas.

Establishment.

There is hereby established within [municipality] a committee to be known and designated as the “[Municipality] Urban Agriculture Advisory Committee” (hereinafter called the "Committee"). The Committee shall serve as an ad hoc advisory committee to the Planning Board.

Definitions.

A. Urban Agriculture:

Membership.

- A. The Committee shall consist of five persons appointed by the Mayor with the consent of the Governing Body. The members of the Committee shall consist of:
 - a. A member of the [municipality] Planning Board.
 - b. Four members of the general citizenry of the municipality, with a requirement that a majority of the citizens on the Committee be actively engaged in urban agriculture.
- B. A Committee member appointed from the [municipality] Planning Board will be disqualified from Committee membership if he or she shall not remain a member of the [municipality] Planning Board.

- C. On an annual basis, the Mayor may appoint, with the consent of the Governing Body, a member of the Body to serve as a liaison to the Committee. The appointed liaison shall have no voting power and shall serve as an advisor to the Committee.

Organization.

- A. The Committee shall elect from among its citizen members an individual to serve as Chairperson.
 - a. The Chairperson, or his/her appointed designee, shall serve as the spokesperson for the Committee to the Governing Body and Planning Board.
- B. The Committee shall elect from among its citizen members a Vice Chairperson to serve as a presiding officer in the absence of the Chairperson.
- C. The Committee shall at its first regular meeting each year appoint a Chair and Vice Chair, each of whom shall hold office for a period of one year until a successor has been appointed, and each shall have and carry out duties normally attributed to such office.
- D. The Committee shall elect a Secretary, who shall record and maintain the minutes of the Committee's meetings and the records of proceedings of the Committee.

Term of Office.

- A. A member of the Committee who is also a member of the *[municipality]* Planning Board shall serve a term of one year.
- B. All other Committee members first appointed shall serve for the following terms:
 - a. One appointee for a term of one year.
 - b. One appointee for a term of two years.
 - c. Two appointees for a term of three years.
 - d. Thereafter, all appointments shall be for terms of three years.
- C. A vacancy in membership occurring otherwise than by expiration of term shall be filled for the unexpired term only.
- D. The members of the Committee shall receive no compensation for their services.

Initial Organizing Meeting.

- A. The Committee shall hold its initial organizing meeting within 60 days after the final adoption of this ordinance.

Meetings.

- A. The Committee shall hold public meetings at least twice a year in accordance with the Senator Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, et seq.
- B. At all meetings a majority of the full authorized membership of the Committee shall constitute a quorum.

Responsibilities and Duties.

- A. The Committee shall:
 - a. Become fully aware of all land in *[municipality]* currently used for or have a strong future potential for agricultural and/or related purposes.
 - b. Alert local officials to issues in the urban agriculture community that should be considered when exercising municipal regulatory and land use authority.
 - c. Determine existing problems facing the urban agriculture community in *[municipality]* and recommend reasonable and desirable solutions, including but not limited to ordinance amendments, economic development strategies, or municipal programs, to the Governing Body that will have a positive effect on the urban agriculture community.
 - d. Make an annual report to the Governing Body and Planning Board setting forth and detailing the activities and operations of the Committee during the preceding year, with a summary of the issues it has discussed and the positions it believes should be advanced on behalf of the urban agriculture community as a whole in the municipality.
 - e. Recommend to the Governing Body reasonable and desirable changes to the responsibilities set forth in this section.

Cooperation by other agencies.

- A. The Committee shall receive from all officials, employees, consultants, and all authorized boards, departments, and offices of the *[municipality]* such assistance as may be required by the Committee in performing its responsibilities.

Limitations of the Committee.

The Committee's powers are specifically limited to making recommendations to the Governing Body. The Committee shall advise the Planning Board of its findings and recommendations on land use and land management.