

Chapter 2. Administration

SECTION 2-31. Agricultural Advisory Committee

[1] *Editor's Note: See also Ch. XXIX, Right to Farm.*

§ 2-31.1. Purpose.

[Ord. #1776, 12-28-2004, added]

The purpose of this section is to establish a municipal Agricultural Advisory Committee to advise the Township Committee on matters pertaining to the preservation and ongoing operation of agricultural activity in the Township of Bernards.

§ 2-31.2. Establishment; Members; Responsibilities; Powers.

[Ord. #1776, 12-28-2004, added]

- a. Committee; Personnel; Appointment; Organization. There is hereby established in the Township of Bernards a permanent committee to be known and designated as the "Bernards Township Agricultural Advisory Committee" which shall consist of five residents or resident farmers of the Township of Bernards to be appointed by the Township Committee. At least one Committee member shall also be a member of either the Bernards Township Planning Board or the Bernards Township Environmental Commission. A member appointed as a member of either of the said two bodies will be disqualified from Committee membership if he or she shall not remain a member of either of the said two bodies. The members of the said Committee first appointed shall serve for terms as follows: two appointees for one-year terms; two appointees for two-year terms and one appointee for a three-year term. Thereafter, all appointments shall be for terms of three years, and vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired term only. The members shall serve until their respective successors are appointed and qualified. The members of the Committee shall receive no compensation for their services. A majority of the members shall be actively engaged in farming and shall own a portion of the land that they farm. The Committee shall annually select from among its members a Chairman and such other officers as it may deem necessary. Said Committee may establish rules of order and meet at least quarterly and from time to time as its rules of order might provide. The Agricultural Advisory Committee shall report to the Planning Board.

[Ord. #1858, 3-14-2006, amended]

- b. Alternate Members.

1. The Committee shall also include two alternate members who shall be residents of the Township of Bernards and who shall be appointed by the Township Committee. The two alternate members first appointed shall serve for terms as follows:
 - (a) One alternate for a term of two years effective as of January 1, 2005; and
 - (b) One alternate for a term of three years effective as of January 1, 2005.
2. Thereafter, all alternate members shall serve for a term of three years, and alternate members shall serve until their respective successors shall be appointed. Vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired term only of such alternate member. The alternate members shall be designated at the time of their appointment as "alternate number 1" and "alternate number 2."
3. Alternate members may participate in discussions of the proceedings but may not vote except in the absence or disqualification of a regular member. A vote shall not be delayed in order that a regular member may vote instead of an alternate member. In the event that a choice must be made as to which alternate member is to vote, alternate number 1 shall vote first.

- c. Liaisons. The Agricultural Advisory Committee shall maintain as liaisons the Township Engineer, a professional planner, a member of the Somerset County Agriculture Development Board, a member of the Rutgers University Cooperative Extension and a Township Committee member. Any member of the Township Committee appointed as liaison to the Agricultural Advisory Committee shall no longer be eligible to serve as such liaison upon expiration of his

term of office on the Township Committee, and another member of the Township Committee shall thereafter be appointed to serve in such liaison position. The Agricultural Advisory Committee shall establish other liaison positions as deemed appropriate, such as Jersey Fresh, other state agencies and publications to promote local farms, products and services.

[Ord. #1858, 3-14-2006, amended]

d. Responsibilities of Committee. The responsibilities of the Committee shall be as follows:

1. To become fully aware of all land in Bernards currently used for agricultural and/or related purposes and compile, update and maintain an inventory of those lands.
2. To recommend planning and implementation of a Farmland Preservation Plan element to the Planning Board and make recommendations as to land use policies regarding farming and farm land preservation to the Township Committee.
3. To analyze how the Township Committee can best protect the continuance of the aforesaid uses while acting as an advocate for farming and farm preservation within the Township.
4. To determine existing issues facing farmers and those in related endeavors in the Township of Bernards and to recommend reasonable and desirable solutions to the Township Committee.
5. To determine future issues which will face farmers and those related to farming in the Township of Bernards and to recommend reasonable and desirable solutions to the Township Committee.
6. To encourage existing farmers to continue in active agricultural operation.
7. To communicate with Township farmers that the Agricultural Advisory Committee exist and can offer direction and assistance in many cases.
8. To assist in continuing the sustainable use of economically viable farmland for agricultural production by making the flow of information from the local, county and state and federal branches readily accessible and to offer technical assistance where possible.
9. To provide education were possible to farmers for the purposes of farming and meeting the challenges the industry faces.
10. To help preserve large, contiguous and economically viable tracts of agricultural land.
11. To assist in minimizing conflicts between agricultural uses and adjacent and nearby agricultural, natural resource based, rural, residential and commercial activities.
12. To promote compliance with the Farmland Assessment Tax program.
13. To encourage and assist applications to farmland preservation programs.
14. To encourage appropriate conservation strategies and agricultural activities.
15. To formulate strategies and objectives with regard to any present or future local, county, state or federal farmland regulations.
16. To promote interest in Township children in 4-H and other related agricultural activities.
17. To recommend to the Township Committee reasonable and desirable changes to this listing of responsibilities.
18. To make an annual report to the Township Committee setting forth and detailing the activities and operations of the Board Committee during the preceding year.
19. To accomplish any other tasks referred to it by the Township Committee having to do with agricultural related activities.
20. Promote local farming through municipal avenues, such as web sites, municipal cable channel, guidebooks, community events, schools, etc.

e. Cooperation with Committee. The Committee in performing its aforesaid responsibilities shall receive from all officials, employees, consultants and all authorized boards, departments and offices of the Township of Bernards such assistance as may be necessary.

f. Powers of Committee. The Committee's powers relative to regulation of any activity are specifically limited to its making recommendations to the Township Committee as to its adoption of the same.