

**ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH HARRISON
FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE IN
THE TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH HARRISON, COUNTY OF GLOUCESTER, NEW
JERSEY**

WHEREAS, South Harrison Township officials wish to enact policies and regulations that advance the goals and objectives of the Township, support farming and the agricultural industry, and encourage the retention of diverse farming operations; and

WHEREAS, An active, representative Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) will play an important role in South Harrison's efforts to preserve farming within the community by enlisting the expertise and experience of the AAC members to provide advice and assistance to township officials in proactively planning for the retention of agriculture in the Township; and

WHEREAS, agriculture has long been the dominant land use and primary economic base in South Harrison Township; and

WHEREAS, the inventory of farmland has been reduced in size as a result of the conversion of farmland to residential subdivisions and the history and character of the Township have been shaped by the rural landscape and farming community; and

WHEREAS, the Township intends to prepare a Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan to compliment and expand upon the Gloucester County Farmland Preservation Plan and will look to members of the farming community and the community at large to participate in the planning process over the short and long term.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED AND ESTABLISHED by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of South Harrison, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey as follows:

SECTION I. Create a new Article V in Chapter 4 of the Township Code as follows:

Article V Agricultural Advisory Board

4-28 Establishment

There is hereby established within the Township of South Harrison an Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC), which will serve as an advisory committee to the Land Use Board and the Township Committee on matters of interest to the farming community. The Township has established that the benefits to society and the community which accrue as a result of home and commercial farming, including supplying present and future generations with the bounty of the farm, and the preservation of the rural countryside far outweigh the detriments. The establishment of an Agricultural Advisory

Committee will ensure an open line of communication between the farming community and the Planning Board and Township Committee.

4-29 Purposes

The Township Committee of South Harrison Township finds that the needs and concerns of farmland owners and operators within the community are important and must be understood by Township officials and residents. In order to protect and maintain the beneficial character of agriculture to South Harrison, farmland preservation planning must be complimented by establishing, protecting and maintaining within the region a positive business climate for agriculture. The interest of farmers in making reasonable economic use of their farms, whether preserved or not, must be taken into consideration when South Harrison considers new or revised land use plans, policies and ordinances.

The purposes of the Agricultural Advisory Committee shall be:

- A. To represent the needs and concerns of farmland owners and operators within the community and facilitate communication and understanding among Township officials, residents and the agricultural community.
- B. To encourage the growth, expansion and retention of existing agricultural businesses and farms in the Township and to encourage farmers to continue to engage in their trade.
- C. To attract new agriculture-related businesses, commerce and industry to locate or relocate in the Township.
- D. To partially meet eligibility requirements for Planning Incentive grants administered by the State Agriculture Development Committee pursuant to N.J.A.C. 2:76-17
- E. To serve as a channel for communication between the farming community and the local government relating to agriculture and farming practices, planning for the future of farmland and agriculture, considering plans and regulations impacting on the farming community and regarding development projects and issues.
- F. To ensure that the municipal Right-to-Farm ordinance is consistent with the State Model Right-to-Farm ordinance and that other municipal ordinances and development regulations reinforce that farmers operating under generally accepted agricultural practices are not a nuisance to the community.

4-30 Composition of the Committee

- A. Membership. The South Harrison Agricultural Advisory Committee shall be composed of five (5) members and two (2) alternate members, who are residents of South Harrison Township. The members shall be appointed by the Mayor with the advice and consent of the Township Committee, and shall

- not be an elected public official. One member may also be a member of the Planning/Zoning Board. A majority of the AAC members must be actively engaged in farming and derive their primary income from farming and own at least a portion of the land they farm. All members shall be residents of the Township and shall serve without compensation. One of the committee members will also serve as a township liaison to the Gloucester County Agricultural Development Board (CADB).
- B. Term of Office. Members shall be appointed by the Mayor and the Township Committee. Appointments for the initial committee shall be one 1-year term, two 2-year terms and two 3-year terms. Thereafter each appointed member shall serve a term of three (3) years. Members shall choose a Chair, who shall serve as liaison between the Committee and the Township Committee and Planning Board. The Chair, or a designee, shall keep notes of the meeting, which shall be deemed to be the property of the township and shall be submitted to the Planning Board, Township Committee and the County Agriculture Development Board (CADB) within 30 days of the meeting. The Chair shall serve as the spokesperson for the AAC in discussions with the Township Committee and Planning Board.
 - C. Resignation. Any member desiring to resign from the Committee shall submit a resignation in writing to the Township Clerk, who shall present the resignation to the Township Committee for acceptance.
 - D. Removal from Office. Upon three (3) consecutive unexcused absences of a member or upon an affirmative vote of a super majority of the Township Committee, and upon recommendation by the other members of the AAC, the Township Committee may remove a member and appoint a replacement.

4-31 Duties

- A. The Agricultural Advisory Committee shall meet on no fewer than three (3) occasions per year, and more if necessary, and shall report to the Planning Board and Township Committee at least once per year to report on the year's activities and important issues. The report may also include recommendations.
- B. The AAC shall assist the Planning Board and Township Committee by providing information about developments or changes in the farming community.
- C. The AAC will assist the Planning Board and Township Committee by reviewing proposed ordinances or regulations for impacts upon the farming community, including all ordinances affecting land use in the Agricultural Development Area (ADA). This may include recommending growth management strategies.

- D. The AAC will assist, through consultation, the Planning Board in the preparation of a Comprehensive Municipal Farmland Preservation Plan element of the Master Plan pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28 b(13) and/ or an agriculture retention plan in accordance with the guidelines provided by the State Agriculture Development Committee. The plan shall include the following sections at a minimum, but will follow the SADC's guide.
- (1) An inventory of farm properties in the entire municipality and a map illustrating what the community considers significant areas of agricultural land.
 - (2) A detailed statement showing that municipal plans and ordinances support and promote agriculture as a business.
 - (3) A plan for preserving as much farmland as possible in the short term by leveraging monies made available by the Garden State Preservation Trust Act N.J.S.A. 13:8C-1 et. seq. or other farmland preservation funding programs through a variety of mechanisms outlined in N.J.A.C. 2:76-17.6 (a)3.
 - (4) A statement of farming trends characterizing the types of agricultural production in South Harrison, and
 - (5) A discussion of plans to enhance the agricultural industry in South Harrison.
- E. The AAC will assist the Planning Board and the Township Committee in reviewing proposed adjustments and amendments to the Farmland Preservation and/or Agricultural Retention Master Plan Element and the list of farms to be included and targeted in the easement purchase acquisition program.
- F. To provide educational opportunities for residents to learn about the history of farming in South Harrison, ways to support the local farming community, and how to become involved in the agricultural industry.
- G. To review and recommend any changes to the Agricultural Development Area (ADA) to the Planning Board and CADB.

SECTION II. ADOPTION

Upon adoption this Ordinance will be incorporated into and become part of the Code of the Township of South Harrison.

SECTION III. REPEALER

Ordinances or provisions thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Ordinance shall be and are hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.

SECTION IV. INVALIDITY

If any section, paragraph, subdivision, clause or provision of this Ordinance shall be adjudged invalid, such adjudication shall only apply to the section, paragraph, subdivision, clause or provision and the remainder of this Ordinance shall be deemed valid and effective.

SECTION V. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Ordinance shall take effect upon adoption and publication according to law and the filing of same with the Gloucester County Planning Board in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-16.

TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH HARRISON

Robert S. Campbell, Mayor

ATTEST:

Nancy E. Kearns, RMC
Municipal Clerk

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing Ordinance was introduced at a Regular Meeting of the Township of South Harrison held on the 8th day of April, 2009 and will be considered for final passage and adoption at a meeting to be held on the 13th day of May 2009, at 7:30 P.M., at the South Harrison Township Municipal Building, 664 Harrisonville Road, Harrisonville, NJ 08059, at which time any person interested therein will be given an opportunity to be heard.

Nancy E. Kearns, RMC
Municipal Clerk

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing Ordinance was re-introduced as amended at a Regular Meeting of the Township of South Harrison held on the 13th day of May, 2009 and will be considered for final passage and adoption at a meeting to be held on the 10th day of June 2009, at 7:30 P.M., at the South Harrison Township Municipal Building, 664 Harrisonville Road, Harrisonville, NJ 08039, at which time any person interested therein will be given an opportunity to be heard.

Nancy E. Kearns, RMC
Municipal Clerk

ONLY

NOTICE

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NOTICE is hereby given that the foregoing Ordinance O-09-05 was finally adopted at a meeting of the South Harrison Township Committee held on the 10th day of June 2009 at 7:30 p.m. in the South Harrison Township Municipal Building, 664 Harrisonville Road, Harrisonville, New Jersey.

Nancy E. Kearns, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Information