

County of Morris
Office of Planning & Preservation
PO Box 900
Morristown, NJ 07963-0900

ATTN: Mr. Joseph Barilla, P.P., A.I.C.P.
Morris County Planning Director

Re: Responses to Morris County Farmland Preservation Plan questionnaire

Dear Mr. Barilla,

The questions posed in your query of June 15, 2021 were discussed by the Township Committee and the following summarizes the Mendham Township response:

1. Preserving traditional farm operations is important. The Township notes with great dismay the proliferation of destination farms, amusement park farms, echo tourism farms, and venue farms. **These latter operations are something which Mendham Township believes should be regulated to preserve the overall low-density development of the municipality.**
2. **The Township Master Plan has emphasized open space and farmland preservation for many years.** The master plan is undergoing review and amendment at the present time. Consideration will be given to a goal of protecting open space (of which Mendham Township has over 38%) and traditional farmland.
3. The Township does not have an Agricultural Advisory Committee or Board.
4. In the rural community of Mendham Township, the zoning is almost exclusively residential, in which farming is a permitted use. There are no separate zones for “farms” per se. Local farms are not facing developmental pressure other than residential in nature. The fact that the zoning ordinances require large lot sizes has a tempering effect on the residential developmental pressure.
5. Mendham Township has not made a study of the local market for which locally grown agriculture products are **marketed**; however, it is believed to be primarily from farm stand associated with the farm rather than normal separate retail operations.
6. Agritourism operations, to the extent limited to “pick your own”, farm stands and limited hayrides/pumpkin picking are fine. The Township draws the line when the farm seeks to become a destination venue such as an amusement destination (e.g. petting zoo, amusement rides / facilities), a distillery, a gathering site or other large scale commercial attraction which is other than farming. (In this regard we invite your attention to the Alstede operation in Chester.)

7. Ground water conditions vary by location and the access to an aquifer with suitable capacity to provide the needed water. Some locations due to rock formations have limited or difficult access. Disposal of sewage, animal wastes, etc. are the subject of a recently completed nitrate dilution study which is currently being reviewed
8. There are no known soil health issues.
9. There are no known impacts on existing farmland or farmland assessed properties as a result of the Township's Fair Share Plan and Housing Element.
10. The Township of Mendham does have some ordinances regulating and supporting farming. Those ordinances are not as broad as the Right to Farm Act. See for example Ordinance 21-4.1 € Where agricultural uses are permitted in every residential zone provided they conform to the acceptable agricultural management practices. Equestrian farms are also permitted.

If you have any further questions or wish to discuss these responses, please feel free to contact the Township at your convenience.

Very truly yours,

Robert Casey, Administrator
July 6, 2021