



State of New Jersey

STATE AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
HEALTH/AGRICULTURE BUILDING  
PO Box 330  
TRENTON NJ 08625-0330

CHRIS CHRISTIE  
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO  
Lt. Governor

DOUGLAS H. FISHER  
Secretary

Susan E. Payne  
Executive Director  
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Douglas H. Fisher  
Chairman

*Celebrating 30 Years of Preserving Farmland  
and  
Protecting the Right to Farm*

July 8, 2014

Robert A. Abbatomarco, Administrator  
Bergen County Agriculture Development Board  
One Bergen County Plaza, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Hackensack, NJ 07601-7076

Mr. Ira Rothbaum  
07624

David Watkins, Esq.  
285 Closter Dock Road  
P.O. Box 304  
Closter, NJ 07624

Edward T. Rogan, Esq.  
07601

Re: Right to Farm Hearing  
Borough of Closter v. Metropolitan Farm, LLC  
Concerned Residents of Closter v. Metropolitan Farm, LLC  
Block 2102, Lot 55, Closter Borough  
SADC ID #1369

Gentlemen:

Enclosed please find a copy of the Hearing Officer's Report and Recommendations of the State Agriculture Development Committee in the above matters.

If you have any questions or need anything further, then please contact me.

Sincerely,

Brian D. Smith, Esq.  
Chief of Legal Affairs  
Enclosures

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STATE AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
SADC ID #1369

CONCERNED RESIDENTS OF  
CLOSTER, an unincorporated  
association of taxpayers,  
and IRA ROTHBAUM, JOSEPH  
SHPIGEL, ITZHAK N. PEARL,  
MICHAL MIKA, INCHOL YON,  
DAVID A. GARFUNKEL and  
DAVID HECHT, individually  
and as taxpayers and members  
of the Concerned Residents  
of Closter,

Complainants,

vs.

METROPOLITAN FARM, LLC, a  
New Jersey limited liability  
company,

Respondent.

**Hearing Officer's Findings**

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BOROUGH OF CLOSTER,

Complainant,

**Recommendations of the State  
Agriculture Development Committee**

vs.

METROPOLITAN FARM, LLC,

Respondent.

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**I. Hearing Officer's Findings**

**Statement of the Case**

This matter comes before the State Agriculture Development Committee ("SADC" or "Committee") as a result of complaints by Closter Borough in Bergen County and certain borough residents (collectively referred to as the "complainants") against Metropolitan Farm, LLC ("Metro Farm"). In January 2012 Metro Farm purchased Block 2102, Lot 55, an approximate 11 acre farm property preserved by Bergen County with SADC and USDA-NRCS cost share grants on June 29, 2004 pursuant to the Agriculture Retention and

Development Act, N.J.S.A. 4:1C-11, et seq. and the Federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program, 16 U.S.C. 3838h.

In or about April 2012 Metro Farm began tree clearing and soil disturbance to prepare the property for the construction of six (6) greenhouses and a farmstand for the wholesale and retail sale of horticultural products grown on the farm.

The complaints against Metro Farm were filed with the Bergen County Agriculture Development Board ("BCADB" or "board") in May 2012 as required by the Right-to-Farm Act ("RTFA"), N.J.S.A. 4:1C-10.1a. The complainants asserted that Metro Farm had undertaken activities detrimental to public health and safety, including importation, regrading and compaction of soil, clear-cutting of trees, noncompliance with the Uniform Construction Code and violation of the June 2004 farmland preservation deed of easement. The "Concerned Residents" also filed a complaint in May 2012 in the Superior Court, Law Division and obtained an order temporarily enjoining Metro Farm from any further tree clearing and constructing any permanent structures.

Since the activities complained of at the Metro Farm property did not involve agricultural management practices recommended in regulations promulgated by the SADC, the BCADB forwarded the dispute to the SADC in November 2012 for a hearing. N.J.S.A. 4:1C-10.1c; N.J.A.C. 2:76-2.10(c). Prior to forwarding the complaints, however, the BCADB determined that Metro Farm satisfied the "commercial farm" eligibility criteria set forth in N.J.S.A. 4:1C-3, as the farm's agricultural operation constituted

a farm management unit of no less than five acres producing agricultural or horticultural products worth \$2,500 or more annually, and satisfying the eligibility criteria for differential property taxation pursuant to the "Farmland Assessment Act of 1964," P.L.1964, c. 48 (C.54:4-23.1 et seq.).

The BCADB also confirmed that the Metro Farm property is located in the borough's "Residence Area A", a zone ordinance designation in effect since 1994 at Chapter 200, Article IV, §200-6F. that lists, as permitted uses, "[f]arms, nurseries or greenhouses, provided that said uses must reserve on site not less than one acre of open space".

The dispute between the complainants and Metro Farm implicated several important threshold issues necessitating disposition before the SADC could begin the hearing process.

The Right to Farm Act, N.J.S.A. 4:1C-1, et seq. (RTFA), provides that no commercial farm is entitled to the protections of the RTFA unless the agricultural operation is in compliance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

Compliance with federal law is further set forth in the deed of easement preserving the farm property. Paragraph 7 of the deed prohibits activities "detrimental to drainage, flood control, water conservation, erosion control, or soil conservation" by insuring that agricultural operations be conducted in a manner consistent with a conservation plan prepared in consultation with the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and approved by the local soil conservation district. On February 25, 2013, Metro Farm obtained the conservation plan as directed in the deed of easement.

State laws and regulations were implicated by Metro Farm's activities because in June 2012 the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection issued a notice of violation (NOV) in connection with tree clearing on the property allegedly within 300' of a riparian zone. However, on August 30, 2012 the department issued a letter rescinding the NOV.

On July 25, 2012, Metro Farm complied with applicable state law by obtaining a New Jersey Uniform Construction Code building permit from the borough's construction official for the installation of three (3) retaining walls on the property.

Metro Farm's proposed operation was reviewed for compliance with New Jersey stormwater management regulations. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:8-5.4(b) of the state stormwater rules, Metro Farm applied to the Bergen County Soil Conservation District (SCD) for an agricultural development meeting the definition of "major development" under N.J.A.C. 7:8-1.2. On January 14, 2013, the Bergen County SCD approved Metro Farm's stormwater management design for the proposed greenhouses and farm market.

In May 2012 SADC staff inspected the farm property along with representatives of the N. J. Department of Agriculture and USDA-NRCS pertaining to whether Metro Farm's activities complied with the deed of easement. The SADC also hired William E. Palkovics, Ph.D., a certified professional soil scientist and agronomist, who inspected the farm on August 7, 2013. Dr. Palkovics prepared a report dated October 29, 2013 concluding that the soil conditions within the disturbed areas on site were still suitable for tree/orchard production and that other types of agricultural production possible in the soils prior to disturbance were still possible in their post-disturbance condition. On November 14, 2013, the SADC adopted Resolution #FY14R11(10) determining, *inter alia*, that Metro Farm's land clearing and grading did not constitute a violation of the deed of easement. A copy of the SADC resolution is attached hereto as Exhibit "A".

Having found that Metro Farm was not in violation of the deed of easement and had complied with applicable federal and state laws and regulations, the undersigned held a pre-hearing conference at the Bergen County Administration Building on February 11, 2014. The purpose of the conference was to identify all of the participating parties and their attorneys, the precise issues to be resolved, the names of fact and expert witnesses, the proposed exhibits, the exchange of experts' reports, and available dates and times for the right-to-farm hearing.

At the prehearing conference, the borough stipulated that Metro Farm satisfied the "commercial farm" eligibility criteria set forth in N.J.S.A. 4:1C-3 entitling it to the protections afforded by the RTFA. Based on my review of Metro Farm's sales receipts in 2013 and for a portion of 2014, I conclude there is no question that Metro Farm produced horticultural products from the Closter Borough property generating income far in excess of the \$2,500.00 minimum set forth in N.J.S.A. 4:1C-3. In addition, the borough confirmed that there had been no amendments to the "Residence Area A" classification affecting §200-6F. of the zoning ordinance governing the property.

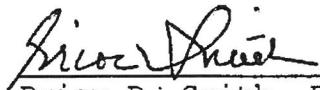
The first day of hearings was May 6, 2014 at the Bergen County Administration Building. A court reporter was present. The parties and counsel attending the hearing were: Frank Vastano, principal of Metro Farm; his

attorneys, David M. Watkins, Esq. and Marc A. Greenberg, Esq.; Edward T. Rogan, Esq., attorney for Closter Borough; and Ira Rothbaum on behalf of the "Concerned Residents".

Prior to commencement of the hearing, counsel and Mr. Rothbaum reported that the complainants' cases against Metro Farm had been settled. The terms of the settlement were placed on the record by Mr. Rogan, and a copy of the written settlement terms is attached hereto as Exhibit "B". The undersigned questioned Mr. Watkins, Mr. Vastano and Mr. Rothbaum, and they expressed their understanding of and agreement to the settlement terms.

This final report is prepared in accordance with N.J.S.A. 4:1C-10.1c and the former version of N.J.A.C. 2:76-2.10(c), as the case arose prior to the SADC's revisions to the RTFA procedural rules published on April 7, 2014. The report containing recommendations approved by the Committee will be submitted to the BCADB. However, since the cases against Metro Farm have been settled, there are no current complaints requiring a public hearing by the board contemplated in N.J.S.A. 4:1C-10.1(c).

I submit the above findings to the SADC for its recommended determination to the BCADB.

  
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Brian D. Smith, Esq.  
Chief of Legal Affairs

## II. SADC Recommendations to the BCADB

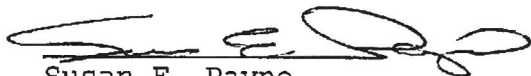
It is well-settled public policy that settlements are highly favored because amicable resolutions of disputes avoid the costs and risks of time-consuming litigation. Jannarone v. W.T. Co., 65 N.J.Super. 472, 476 (App. Div.), certif. denied 35 N.J. 61 (1961); Pascarella v. Bruck, 190 N.J.Super. 118, 125 (App. Div.), certif. denied 94 N.J. 600 (1983).

The terms of the settlement entered into by the parties in these matters are fair, reasonable, and not inconsistent with the deed of easement by which the Metro Farm property in Closter Borough was preserved. Each party to the action knowingly and voluntarily agreed to the settlement terms

and expressed their agreement on the record.

Accordingly, the SADC approves the settlement agreement, a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit "B", and recommends approval by the BCADB.

For the SADC:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan E. Payne", written over a horizontal line.

Susan E. Payne  
Executive Director

# EXHIBIT "A"

## STATE AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

### RESOLUTION #FY14R11(10)

#### Review of Activities Occurring on Preserved Farm

#### Metropolitan Farm, LLC

November 14, 2013

WHEREAS, Metropolitan Farm, LLC, hereinafter ("Owner") is the current record owner of Block 2102, Lot 55, as identified in the Borough of Closter, County of Bergen, as recorded in the Bergen County Clerk's Office in Deed Book 1016, Page 1701 by deed dated January 11, 2012, totaling 11.05 acres, hereinafter referred to as the "Premises," (Schedule "A"); and

WHEREAS, the development easement on the Premises was conveyed to the County of Bergen on June 29, 2004, by the former owner Ellen Brooks, pursuant to the Agriculture Retention and Development Act, N.J.S.A. 4:1C-11 et seq., P.L. 1983, c. 32, as a Deed of Easement, recorded in Deed Book 8699, Page 271; and

WHEREAS, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provided a portion of the cost share funding associated with the preservation of this property through the Federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP); and

WHEREAS, Frank Vastano is the principal of Metropolitan Farm LLC, and also the owner of Metropolitan Plant Exchange, a chain of three retail garden centers in Bergen and Essex Counties; and

WHEREAS, upon acquiring the Premises, the Owner began expanding a field area on the west side of the property with the intent of installing six hoop houses for potted plant production and to grow outdoor perennials; and

WHEREAS, trees from an abandoned orchard and wooded area were removed and approximately 2.95 acres were re-graded to provide open areas to place the hoop houses and potted perennials; and

WHEREAS, shortly after commencing the tree removal/land clearing work a number of the adjacent neighbors expressed concerns over the project; and

WHEREAS, on May 3, 2012, SADC staff met at the farm with the Owner, Owner's attorney, Bergen SCD, NRCS, and Bergen County Agriculture Development Board (CADB) staff; and



WHEREAS, at this meeting, the Owner explained his plans to construct six hoop houses on the site, four 30' x 144' in size and two 30' x 96' in size, to grow perennials which will be sold from the Premises and at the Owner's three existing garden centers; and

WHEREAS, since that meeting the Owner described his intention to construct one additional 60' x 120' greenhouse, capable of being used as a farm stand, and a customer parking area, both of which would be used for on-site retail sales of products; and

WHEREAS, all necessary site preparation work associated with the proposed use of the site has been completed, and the Owner has yet to erect any hoop houses on the Premises; and

WHEREAS, at the May 3, 2012 meeting, the Owner agreed to have his engineer work with the appropriate agencies to develop a farm conservation plan and stormwater management plan for the Premises; and

WHEREAS, on May 4, 2012, the Borough of Closter filed with the Bergen CADB a Right to Farm Complaint against the Owner alleging the Owner had violated the farmland preservation Deed of Easement (DoE), had violated various municipal ordinances, and was posing a threat to the public health, safety and welfare; and

WHEREAS, on May 8, 2012, a group known as the Concerned Residents of Closter along with Ira Rothbaum, Joseph Shpigel, Itzhak Pearl, Michal Mika, Inchol Yon, David Garfunkel and David Hecht (hereinafter "Residents") filed with the Bergen CADB a Right to Farm complaint against the Owner alleging the Owner was engaging in nonagricultural activities, violating certain terms of the farmland preservation Deed of Easement (DoE) and not in compliance with the Right to Farm Act; and

WHEREAS, also on May 8, 2012, the Residents filed an Order to Show Cause against Metropolitan Farm in Bergen County Superior Court; and

WHEREAS, on May 8, 2012, the Superior Court of Bergen County ordered a temporary restraint against any additional tree removal or construction of permanent structures on the Premises until such time as the Bergen CADB conducts a public hearing on the matter and issues its findings as part of the Right to Farm process; and

WHEREAS, on November 15, 2012, the Bergen CADB met and certified that Metropolitan Farm, LLC qualified as a commercial farm pursuant to the Right to Farm Act and forwarded the complaint to the SADC for a hearing pursuant to N.J.S.A. 4:1C-10.1c; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Right to Farm Act a landowner must be in compliance with all applicable State Laws and regulations to be eligible to receive Right to Farm protection; and

WHEREAS, the Right to Farm complaint and hearing process cannot proceed if it is found that a violation of the Deed of Easement exists on the Premises; and

WHEREAS, on January 23, 2013, SADC, NJDA and NRCS staff met on site to review the site work and discuss the activities in relation to the Deed of Easement; and

WHEREAS, in order to understand the nature of the disturbance that has occurred onsite the SADC hired DeVal Soil & Environmental Consultants to perform a site assessment of the disturbed area of the Premises and to prepare a report (hereinafter "Report"), see attached Schedule "B"; and

WHEREAS, since acquiring the Premises, the Owner has installed a deer fence around the property, an irrigation well, underground irrigation mains in the newly cleared area and has approximately 20,000 pots of perennials growing on-site; and

WHEREAS, the Owner rehabilitated a barn on the Premises for use as a chicken coop and has approximately 200 layer hens onsite; and

WHEREAS, the farm opened to the public for business in the spring of 2013 selling its potted perennials and eggs; and

**WHEREAS, the Committee finds the following related to the development of the site for agricultural production purposes on the Premises:**

1. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:8 (NJDEP Stormwater Management Rule) on July 12, 2012, the landowner submitted engineering plans to the Bergen SCD for the proposed project to address stormwater management concerns, and by letter dated January 14, 2013, the Bergen County SCD determined that the project is in conformance with the NJ Stormwater Management Rules;
2. The farm conservation plan for the Premises was finalized and certified by the NRCS District Conservationist on February 15, 2013, and by the Bergen County SCD on March 11, 2013;
3. The Owner cleared approximately 2.2 acres of woods and overgrown orchard area in addition to 0.7 acre field area historically in production for purposes of expanding the area available for agricultural production;
4. Within the cleared area the Owner re-contoured the production areas by splitting the area into an upper and lower field;

5. Topsoil removed from the area in preparation of the site has been retained on-site in one stockpile and two berms, and the cubic yard calculations accounting for the removed topsoil were reviewed and deemed reasonable by NRCS State Conservation Engineer and State Conservationist in a letter dated April 18, 2013;
6. On August 7, 2013, Dr. William Palkovics, of DelVal Soil & Environmental Consultants, visited the site and evaluated the soil conditions on various areas of the Premises which included four, approximately 10 feet deep, soil test pit excavations;
7. Dr. Palkovic's Report confirms that the soils on the site are the Dunellen Urban Land Complex type, as mapped in the NRCS soil survey; the Dunellen soil series is a very deep, very sandy/gravelly soil type capable of supporting various forms of agricultural production under a certain degree of management; and that except for the topsoil, the entire natural soil column is relatively uniform; and
8. The Report indicates that the Dunellen Urban Land Complex is not rated as Prime, Statewide, or of local importance in terms of its agricultural productivity; and aerial photography from the 1930's through the 1960's shows this area of the property in orchard production;
9. The Report indicates that within the disturbed area, where topsoil was stripped and stockpiled on site, the underlying soil still remains largely intact, does not differ from the upper soil mantle and even if the surface has been removed, the underlying material can similarly function as an agricultural soil; and the natural subsoil still had a depth greater than 10 feet;
10. The Report further indicates that the soil conditions on the disturbed area today are still suitable for its most recent use as tree/orchard production and similarly function as an agricultural soil due to the type and depth of the sandy parent material and relatively homogeneous soil layers associated with Dunellen soils; and that by replacing the topsoil with the stored material saved onsite, only a minimal amount of additional preparation would be required to put the site into crop production, and that the types of agricultural production that were possible in Dunellen soils prior to the disturbance are still possible in the post-disturbance condition;

**WHEREAS, the SADC finds the following related to the permissibility of the above described uses pursuant to the terms of the Deed of Easement:**

1. Pursuant to paragraph 2 of the Deed of Easement the use of hoop houses and outdoor growing areas on the Premises for perennial plant production is a production agriculture activity permitted by the Deed of Easement;
2. The use of the property for the wholesale and retail sales of the agricultural output of the farm is permitted by the Deed of Easement;

3. The clearing of woods and a formerly planted orchard in order to put additional land into agricultural production is not prohibited by the Deed of Easement;
4. Site preparation and development of agriculture-related infrastructure conducted in the manner described herein does not constitute a violation of Deed of Easement provisions related to soil conservation and activities detrimental to the continued use of agriculture on the Premises because the types of agricultural production that were possible in Dunellen soils prior to the disturbance are still possible in the post-disturbance condition. The topsoil has been stockpiled on site. Due to the very deep, homogeneous sandy/gravelly subsoil of over 10 feet in depth associated with Dunellen soils, the subsoil remains largely intact today and similarly functions as an agricultural soil. By replacing the topsoil with the stored material saved onsite, only a minimal amount of additional preparation would be required to put the site into crop production.
5. The NRCS has determined that the site work that has occurred on the Premises is not a violation of the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, for the reasons set forth herein, the SADC finds that the activities which have occurred on the Premises related to land clearing and grading on the subject property as described herein do not constitute a violation of the Deed of Easement; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Owner shall implement and otherwise remain in compliance with the NRCS farm conservation plan, which includes but is not limited to appropriate topsoil storage; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Owner shall seek approval from the Bergen CADB, SADC, and NRCS prior to conducting any additional earthmoving work on other portions of Premises; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this approval is considered a final agency decision appealable to the Appellate Division of the Superior Court of New Jersey; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this action is not effective until the Governor's review period expires pursuant to N.J.S.A. 4:1C-4f.

11-14-13

DATE



\_\_\_\_\_  
Susan E. Payne, Executive Director  
State Agriculture Development Committee

VOTE WAS RECORDED AS FOLLOWS:

Douglas H. Fisher, Chairperson	YES
Cecile Murphy (rep. DEP Commissioner Martin)	YES
Gina Fischetti (rep. DCA Commissioner Constable)	ABSENT FOR VOTE
Ralph Siegel (rep. State Treasurer Sidamon-Erstoff)	YES
Brian Schilling (rep. Executive Dean Goodman)	YES
Jane R. Brodhecker	YES
Alan A. Danser, Vice Chair	YES
James Waltman	ABSENT
Peter Johnson	YES
Denis C. Germano	YES
Torrey Reade	YES

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EXHIBIT "B"

**SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT**

Borough of Closter/Concerned Citizens of Closter v. Metropolitan Farm, LLC;  
Preserved Farm - Block 2102, Lot 55 Closter Borough  
SADCID #1369

This Settlement Agreement (the "Agreement") entered into on May 7, 2014 by and between the Borough of Closter, 7000 Closter Road, Closter, New Jersey 07624, Concerned Citizens of Closter by its Representative, Ira Rothbaum of Closter, New Jersey 07624 and Metropolitan Farm, LLC of Closter, New Jersey relative to complaints filed before the Bergen County Agriculture Development Board Right to Farm Conflict Resolution process, thereafter transferred to the State Agriculture Development Committee.

**WHEREAS**, complaints were filed by the Borough of Closter and an entity known as the Concerned Citizens of Closter with the Bergen County Agriculture Development Board under its Conflict Resolution process regarding certain proposed farm activities by Metropolitan Farm, LLC; and

**WHEREAS**, the Concerned Residents of Closter filed a separate action in the Superior Court of New Jersey, Chancery Division, bearing Docket No. C-143-12 against Metropolitan Farm LLC; and

**WHEREAS**, certain temporary restraints were put into place by the Court pending resolution of this matter; and

**WHEREAS** The Bergen County Agriculture Development Board transferred the matter to the State Agriculture Development Committee; and

**WHEREAS**, a hearing was scheduled to occur at 1 Bergen County Plaza, Hackensack, New Jersey before the State Agriculture Development Committee by its Hearing Officer, Brian D. Smith, Esq., Chief of Legal Affairs; and

**WHEREAS**, the parties wish to amicably adjust the differences between them.

**IT IS THEREFORE**, agreed to, in consideration of the several and mutual promises, agreements, representations and covenants outlined below as follows:

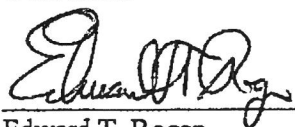
1. The size of the Metropolitan Farm, LLC proposed farm stand footprint will be within the range of 4,000 to 5,500 square feet with a proportionate reduction in proposed parking, if applicable;

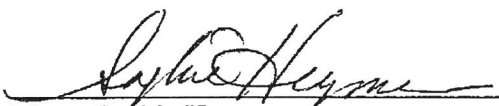
2. The farm will be opened to the general public from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., seven (7) days per week. The hours may be increased depending on holiday seasons but in no event past 8:30 p.m. in the evening during a holiday season;
3. Any lighting or illumination shall be retained on the property and will not interfere with the use and enjoyment of the surrounding properties. Any future lighting plan will be submitted for Borough Engineer review only, to ensure no lighting spillage onto adjacent properties in conformance with applicable lighting standards;
4. Buffering of berm/trees in and around the back portion of Metropolitan Farm, specifically in the area of lot 15 located on Susan Drive, will consist of ten (10) evergreen type trees which are indigenous to the area, at a height of six to eight (6 to 8) feet similar in nature to trees planted by Metropolitan Farm on the border of the Rothbaum property. Metropolitan Farm to assume cost and undertake the planting of such trees;
5. There is no anticipated modification of any existing signage at this time. Metropolitan Farm reserves the right to increase the signage in accordance with business activities. Nothing in this agreement shall prohibit the Borough and/or other interested parties from exercising any rights under statutes of the state of New Jersey requesting a review by the applicable farm board if such additional signage were to occur;
6. The drainage report of Metropolitan Farm previously submitted has been revised to correct mathematical errors. The Borough Engineer will review, subject to Farm Board jurisdiction, any future drainage construction and installation in accordance with standard engineering practices;
7. Ira Rothbaum, as representative of The Concerned Residents of Closter will execute a Stipulation of Settlement with Prejudice for any court action(s) filed by the Concerned Residents of Closter in Superior Court.
8. Metropolitan Farm, LLC has inquired as to a no left turn sign being eliminated at the corner of Piermont Road and Hickory Lane. The Borough takes no position in this matter and it specifically is not part of any settlement before the State Agriculture Development Committee.
9. Both the Borough of Closter and the Concerned Residents of Closter acknowledge that Metropolitan Farm has met the requirements to establish itself as a commercial farm under the applicable laws and statutes of the State of New Jersey. All parties retain their future rights to appear before the Bergen County Agriculture Development Board, if applicable.


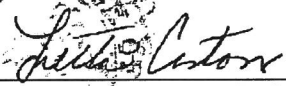
Each party agrees that this Agreement is fair, reasonable and is a memorialization of terms and conditions of a settlement placed on the record before Brian D. Smith, Esq. Hearing Officer, on May 7, 2014.

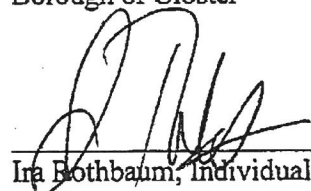
DATED: May 23, 2014

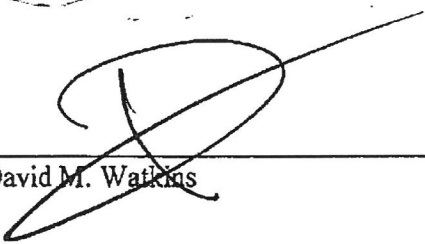
WITNESS:

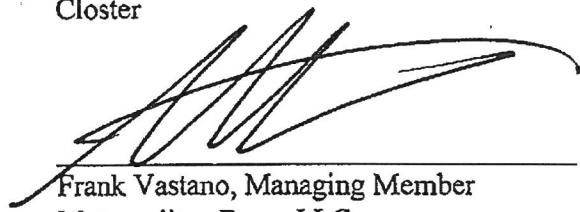
  
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Edward T. Rogan

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Sophie Heymann  
Borough of Closter

  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Loretta Castano, RMC  
Borough Clerk

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ira Rothbaum, Individually and as  
representative of Concerned Citizens of  
Closter

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
David M. Watkins

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Frank Vastano, Managing Member  
Metropolitan Farm, LLC