

Agriculture, Seafood and Forestry Board (Thursday, March 11, 2021)

Generated by Lisa Ledman

Members present

Stephen Reeves, Scott Bacon, Ben Beale, Bonnie Browne, Phil Langley, Charles Mattingly, Alan Polk, Michael Sirk, Joseph Wood, Bruce Young

Meeting called to order at 12:05 PM**1. CALL TO ORDER****2. ROLL CALL****A. Welcome Guests**

Kellie Hinkle, St. Mary's County Economic Development
Sue Veith, St. Mary's County Economic Development
Casey Guidry, St. Mary's County Economic Development
Donna Sasscer, St. Mary's County Economic Development
Lisa Ledman, St. Mary's County Economic Development
Kwasi Bosompem, St. Mary's County Land Use and Growth Management
Jamie Raley, St. Mary's County Farm Bureau
Shelby Watson-Hampton, Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission
Cindy Greb, Southern Maryland Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D)
Caroline King, Southern Maryland Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D)
Vivian Marek, Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust
Nicole Basenback, University of Maryland Extension
Merl Evans, Citizen
Amelia Farrell, Citizen

B. Approval of the March 11, 2021 Minutes

I move to approve the Minutes from the March 11, 2021 Agriculture, Seafood & Forestry Board Meeting. Motion by Phil Langley, second Alan Polk.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Stephen Reeves, Scott Bacon, Ben Beale, Bonnie Browne, Phil Langley, Charles Mattingly, Alan Polk, Michael Sirk, Joseph Wood, Bruce Young

3. PRESENTATION

None.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS**A. Farmers Markets**

The Home Grown Farm Market is currently opening weather dependent on Saturdays from 10 am until 1 pm for a special Winter Market due to customer demand, currently there are 9 vendors participating. The California Farmers Market vendors held a vendor meeting on March 10th and voted to open for the season on May 1, 2021 (Saturdays, from 9 am until 1 pm). The North St. Mary's County Farmers Market will open April 3, 2021, operating Wednesdays and Saturdays from 8 am until 5 pm for the month of April, and will move to Monday - Saturday sales starting in May.

Subcommittee membership includes Joe Wood, Phil Langley, Scott Bacon, and Phil Dorsey.

B. Agriculture Land Preservation Advisory Board

No update.

Subcommittee membership includes Phil Langley, Alan Polk, Stephen Reeves, Patrick Russell, and Joseph Wood

C. Agriculture Reconciliation Committee

No update.

Subcommittee membership include Stephen Reeves, Patrick Russell, Alan Polk, Michael Sirk, and Charles Mattingly.

5. OLD BUSINESS

A. Maryland Agriculture Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF)

Donna Sasscer stated that a press release soliciting applications for FY2022 has been issued. Staff continues to assist interested landowners with submitting FY2022 MALPF Application submissions.

B. Rural Legacy

Southern Maryland Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) - Caroline King shared that RC&D is currently working with interested landowners in the Mattapany Rural Legacy Area. RC&D recently submitted 3 packages to the State for easement consideration. RC&D also met with County Government staff to identify an expansion area in the Mattapany Rural Legacy Area for FY2023.

Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust (PTLT) - Vivian Marek updated the Board that the PTLT has submitted their application to the the state for funding consideration in the Huntersville Rural Legacy Area. PTLT has been working with owners in Hollywood, however the property recently sold and the new owners are hessitant to move forward with an easement. PTLT is also meeting with landowners in the Great Mills area that would utilize REPI funding and consist of a partial donation.

C. Regional Agriculture Center (RAC)

Donna Sasscer informed the Board that the County has sent out a Request for Proposal for site work design with construction costs.

D. Relocation of North St. Mary's County Farmers Market

Cindy Greb shared that the project is moving along. Site work has begun and the property has been staked with Soil Conservation signs placed. RC&D is continuing to receive donations from the community.

Donna Sasscer updated the Board that the County has been in initial talks with both RC&D and SMADC to gauge interest in management of the new Market.

I move to send a letter to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County requesting a Request for Proposal for additional entities interested in managing the Market. Motion by Joe Wood, second Phil Langley.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Stephen Reeves, Scott Bacon, Ben Beale, Bonnie Browne, Phil Langley, Charles Mattingly, Alan Polk, Michael Sirk, Joseph Wood, Bruce Young

E. Department of Economic Development Strategic Plan Update

Stephen Reeves updated the Board that he and Phil Langley had met with members of the St. Mary's County Farm Bureau to review the Department of Economic Development Strategic Plan. Further review of Recommendation #6 may need to be explored due to the closing of the Lothian Grain facility.

F. Definition of a Farm

Donna Sasscer told the Board that every State and County agency and document has a different definition of agricultural land. St. Mary's County needs a definition that is consistent and easy to interpret. The Ag Board would like to see the definitions of "Agricultural Land" updated as follows (underlined is addition to existing definitions):

Right to Farm Ordinance

Agricultural Land means all real property within the boundaries of St Mary's County that is assessed by the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation as agricultural; and all other land that is currently used for agricultural operations and has been used, or is under preparation for use as an agricultural operation continuously for at least one (1) year and meets the criteria to be eligible for "Agricultural Use Assessment" as defined by the Maryland Department Assessments and Taxation.

SMC Zoning

Agricultural Land-Land carried on the tax rolls of the State Department of Assessments and Taxation as agricultural, or which is used for the purpose of conducting agriculture and meets the criteria to be eligible for "Agricultural Use Assessment" as defined by the Maryland Department Assessments and Taxation.

I move to send a letter to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County requesting a moratorium/hold on new agriculture alcohol production facilities until a cohesive definition of a farm has been identified. I also move that we include the above definitions of "Agricultural Land" .

Motion by Joe Wood, second Charlie Mattingly.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Stephen Reeves, Scott Bacon, Ben Beale, Bonnie Browne, Phil Langley, Charles Mattingly, Alan Polk, Michael Sirk, Joseph Wood, Bruce Young

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Guided Hunting

Phil Langley told the Board that the County hired a consultant to look at tourism. As a result, several new tourism industries were identified. On the Eastern Shore, Guided Hunting is a profitable business. This could be a chance for farmers to come together to offer off season events.

B. Open Comment Period

None.

7. ADJOURN

I move to adjourn the March 11, 2021 Agriculture, Seafood & Forestry Board Meeting. Motion by Joe Wood, second Charles Mattingly.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Stephen Reeves, Scott Bacon, Ben Beale, Bonnie Browne, Phil Langley, Charles Mattingly, Alan Polk, Michael Sirk, Joseph Wood, Bruce Young

