

Agriculture, Seafood and Forestry Board (Thursday, December 8, 2022)

Generated by Lisa Ledman

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 12:10 PM

2. ROLL CALL

A. Confirmation of Quorum

Members present included Stephen Reeves, Scott Bacon, Bonnie Browne, Kaitlyn Fraer, James "Bubby" Norris, Alan Polk, Donna Sasscer, Michael Sirk, Joseph Wood, Bruce Young

B. Welcome Guests

Kellie Hinkle, St. Mary's County Economic Development

Lisa Ledman, St. Mary's County Economic Development

Sue Veith, St. Mary's County Economic Development

Allison Burnett, Southern Maryland Resource Conservation & Development

Caroline King, Southern Maryland Resource Conservation & Development

Viv Marek, Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust

Jamie Raley, St. Mary's County Farm Bureau

B. Approval of the October 13, 2022 Minutes

I move to approve Minutes from October 13, 2022 Agriculture, Seafood & Forestry Board Meeting. Motion by Bruce Young, second Alan Polk

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Stephen Reeves, Scott Bacon, Bonnie Browne, Kaitlyn Fraer, James "Bubby" Norris, Alan Polk, Donna Sasscer, Michael Sirk, Joseph Wood, Bruce Young

3. PRESENTATION

A. None.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Farmers Markets

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

The Barns at New Market seasonal building is open on Saturdays from 9 am until 4 pm. The Holiday Market is open in the Value Added Building on Saturdays from 9 am until 4 pm as well until December 17, 2023. Mary Della Trossbach has been hired as the part time Market Manager. She is working to put together a Winter Market in the Value Added Building that will be open Saturdays from January through March. The Home Grown Farm Market is open Saturdays from 9 am until 1 pm year round (closed for Christmas and New Years). SMADC applied for a grant from Berkshire Hathaway Energy on behalf of the Home Grown Farm Market for Maryland Money Market matching funds, \$15,000 was awarded. The California Farmers Markets is closed for the season.

B. Agriculture Land Preservation Advisory Board

Subcommittee membership includes Phil Langley, Alan Polk, Steve Reeves, Michael Sirk, and Joseph Wood.

The Subcommittee met at the conclusion of the Board meeting to discuss dissolving a released Child Lot (MALPF File #18-94-02Ae) and to approve a Pre-existing Dwelling Release Request (MALPF File # 18-97-03A).

The Agriculture Land Preservation Advisory Board voted unanimously to approve both requests.

Bruce Young stated that the Soil Conservation Office is having trouble with getting a response from a few MALPF land owners. This is delaying updating their conservation plans (against MALPF policy) and not allowing his office to get credit for completing the plans.

C. Agriculture Reconciliation Committee

Subcommittee membership include Bonnie Browne, Phil Dorsey, Charles Mattingly, Alan Polk, and Steve Reeves. No update.

5. OLD BUSINESS

A. Seafood/Aquaculture Updates

The Board discussed several recent news articles about the State Attorney General fining METCOM for sewer overflow. Bonnie Browne questioned where the fines collected would go to which Sue Veith responded the Maryland Clean Water Fund (loans and grants to fix problems and monitoring). Alan Polk would like to know the timeline. Bruce Young asked if METCOM will be forced to replace the failing system.

B. The Barns at New Market

Donna Sasscer updated the Board that the stove has finally been received however is not installed yet. The County is working with RC&D to update the parking between the seasonal and value-added buildings.

C. Maryland Agriculture Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF)

Sue Veith distributed a copy of the Recertification Report to the Board for review and approval. There has been no change to the County's Priority Preservation Area or goal of 60,000 acres preserved, however GID is now used for better tracking including density reserve, forest conservation easements, and other protected lands. Certified Counties keep 70% of the collected Agriculture Transfer Tax, non certified Counties only receive 35%.

I move to approve St. Mary's County's Recertification Report. Motion by Joseph Wood, second Michael Sirk
Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Stephen Reeves, Scott Bacon, Bonnie Browne, Kaitlyn Fraer, James "Bubby" Norris, Alan Polk, Donna Sasscer, Michael Sirk, Joseph Wood, Bruce Young

D. Rural Legacy

Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust (PTLT) – Viv Marek told the Board that PTLT recently closed on a 133 acre parcel in the newly expanded Huntersville Rural Legacy Area using REPI Funds. This easement is the first in the County with a Mennonite landowner.

Southern Maryland Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) – Caroline King updated the Board that RC&D is completing a grant agreement, once executed by DNR they will start settlement on FY23 Easements.

E. Regional Agriculture Center (RAC)

Donna Sasscer shared that the SMADC Board met today to discuss the Regional Agriculture Center Project. St. Mary's County continues to work with the SMADC Executive Committee and have a building design for 8,900 square feet, available funding will only allow for 6,200 square feet. SMADC would like the larger square footage however the County Commissioners will not increase their funding of this project.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Lothian Grain Elevator

Perdue Farms has announced plans to close the Lothian Grain Elevator in Southern Anne Arundel County. This will have a major impact on all of Southern Maryland grain producers. SMADC has reached out to the local Agriculture Marketing Professionals and Cooperative Extension Agents. Legislators have been approached to determine if Anne Arundel County can purchase and hold title to the Lothian Grain Elevator. There is currently funding available through MARBIDCO and the Farm Service Agency for farmers for grain storage.

B. Board Member Open Comment Period

Bruce Young invited Board members to the St. Mary's County Soil Conservation District Dinner on February 17, 2023 at the Bay District Volunteer Fire Department Social Hall.

C. Partner Updates

Kellie Hinkle updated the Board about the Tax Assessment Review Work Group, the Attorney General did not sign off on the Work Group's report. Localities have the authority to exempt improvements.

Jamie Raley invited the Board to attend an information session from Colonial Farm Credit that is being hosted by the St. Mary's County Young Farmers. This event will be held at the Barns at New Market on December 20, 2022. Mr. Raley also told the Board that at the Maryland Farm Bureau Convention he was elected as First Vice President of the Maryland Farm Bureau. He will be stepping down as the President of the St. Mary's County Farm Bureau after their December meeting.

7. ADJOURN

I move to adjourn the December 8, 2022 Agriculture, Seafood & Forestry Board Meeting. Motion by Joseph Wood, second Michael Sirk

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Stephen Reeves, Scott Bacon, Bonnie Browne, Kaitlyn Fraer, James "Bubby" Norris, Alan Polk, Donna Sasscer, Michael Sirk, Joseph Wood, Bruce Young