

## Agriculture, Seafood and Forestry Board (Thursday, June 8, 2023)

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, Ben Beale, Haley Carter (Soil Conservation District Representative) , Phil Dorsey, Kaitlyn Fraer, Donna Sasscer, Michael Sirk, Joseph Wood

## 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

Jessica McGlinsey, Southern Maryland Resource Conservation & Development

Viv Marek, Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust

Joan Bearden, St. Mary's County Farm Bureau

## C. Approval of the April 13, 2023 Minutes

I move to approve Minutes from April 13, 2023 Agriculture, Seafood & Forestry Board Meeting. Motion by Ben Beale, second Kaitlyn Fraer

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Stephen Reeves, Ben Beale, Haley Carter , Phil Dorsey, Kaitlyn Fraer, Donna Sasscer, Michael Sirk, Joseph Wood

## 3. PRESENTATION

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 now open Monday - Saturday from 9 am until 4 pm. Due to lack of vendor participation and customer support, the Sunday Market in the Value-Added Building has been suspended until the fall.

The Home Grown Farm Market is open Saturdays from 9 am until 1 pm year round (closed for Christmas and New Years). Starting June 21, 2023 the Home Grown Farm Market will be open from 9 am until 1 pm on Wednesdays through out the summer.

The California Farmers Markets is open on Saturdays from 9 am until 1 pm.

## B. Agriculture Land Preservation Advisory Board

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

The Subcommittee met at the conclusion of the Board meeting and approved a request to construct a special events barn on MALPF File #18-86-02e - Motion by Michael Sirk, second by Joseph Wood. The Subcommittee also approved the ranking of the FY2024 MALPF Applications - Motion by Joseph Wood, second by Michael Sirk.

## C. Agriculture Reconciliation Committee

Subcommittee membership includes Bonnie Browne, Phil Dorsey, Charles Mattingly, Alan Polk, and Steve Reeves.

No update.

## 5. OLD BUSINESS

## A. Seafood/Aquaculture Updates

Donna Sasscer told the Board about the Maryland Secretary of Agriculture's visit on May 30th which included a stop at Hollywood Oyster Company where there was a discussion about blue catfish. This furthers supports the Rural Maryland Economic Development Funds project in which Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission is moving forward with a study of processing this evasive species.

#### B. Forestry Updates

No update.

#### C. Maryland Agriculture Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF)

Nine (9) applications for the FY24 easement cycle were received from St. Mary's County landowners totaling 447 acres.

#### D. Rural Legacy

Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust (PTLT) – Viv Marek told the Board a 78 acre easement property in Huntersville Rural Legacy Area has been submitted to the State for review.

Southern Maryland Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) – Jessica McGinsley shared that RC&D is continuing to monitor existing easements and working to secure new properties.

#### E. Regional Agriculture Center (RAC)

Donna Sasscer updated the Board that the site plan for the RAC is currently undergoing agency reviews. There is concern that the Health Department may require an improved Best Available Technology septic system.

#### F. Lothian Grain Elevator

Donna Sasscer stated that Anne Arundel County had put out a request for proposals for this property but is unaware if any submittals were received.

### 6. NEW BUSINESS

#### A. Maryland Nutrient Management Program

Ben Beale updated the Board about an announcement from the Maryland Department of Agriculture to no longer fund the Nutrient Management Plan Writing Program through the University of Maryland Extension. As such University of Maryland Extension will no longer be able to fund the positions of Nutrient Management Plan Writers after August 31st. There is a current option for farmers to use private entities to write their plans or take a 2 day training class, that is to be renewed every 3 years, to write their own plans. The Board was very concerned about the impact this decision will have on local farmers as Maryland law requires all farmers grossing \$2,500 a year or more or livestock producers with 8,000 pounds or more of live animal weight to follow nutrient management plans when fertilizing crops and managing animal manure. Ben Beale stated the St. Mary's County Cooperative Extension Service, on average, wrote 410 plans covering 13,000 acres each year. Many of these plans are written for Amish and Mennonite farmers who do not participate in cost share and have complex operations with manure, vegetables, and small acreage. In St. Mary's County, 56% of planned acreage was written for producers with less than 50 acres. The Board voted **unanimously** to send a letter to the Commissioners apprising them of this action and the impact it may have on St. Mary's County farmers.

I move to send a letter to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County notifying them of the Maryland Department of Agriculture's announcement and the impact it could possibly having on St. Mary's County farmers.

Motion by Michael Sirk, second Joseph Wood

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Stephen Reeves, Ben Beale, Haley Carter, Phil Dorsey, Kaitlyn Fraer, Donna Sasscer, Michael Sirk, Joseph Wood

#### B. Board Member Open Comment Period

Ben Beale spoke about the effects of the draught and how it is affecting the crops, vegetables are at least 2 weeks behind growth expectations in the field. He also stated at the University of Maryland Extension office will be doing tomato trials again this year and he has narrowed down 18 varieties for this year's trials which have been distributed to local farmers. There continues to be an issue with Italian Rye Grass and Palmer amaranth control.

#### C. Partner Updates

Jessica McGinsley invited the Board to attend Sunday Eco School hosted by the Southern Maryland RC&D at the Barns at New Market. Classes will be held once a month from now through October once a month on Sundays from 1 pm until 2 pm. Classes will be advertised on RC&D's facebook page.

Donna Sasscer announced that she will retired from St. Mary's County Government on June 30, 2023.

#### 7. ADJOURN

I move to adjourn the June 8, 2023 Agriculture, Seafood & Forestry Board Meeting. Motion by Joseph Wood, second by Kaitlyn Fraer

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Stephen Reeves, Ben Beale, Haley Carter , Phil Dorsey, Kaitlyn Fraer, Donna Sasscer, Michael Sirk, Joseph Wood