

Agriculture, Seafood and Forestry Board
Meeting Date: Thursday, June 13, 2024
Generated by Lisa Ledman
Approved August 8, 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 12:10 PM

2. ROLL CALL

A. Confirmation of Quorum

Members present included Scott Bacon, Bonnie Browne, Justine Cheseldine-Gass, Kaitlin Fraer, Phil Langley, Priscilla Leitch, James Moore, Richard Polk, Stephen Reeves, Joseph Wood

B. Welcome Guests

Kellie Hinkle, St. Mary's County Economic Development
Lisa Ledman, St. Mary's County Economic Development
Caroline King, Southern Maryland Resource Conservation & Development
Viv Marek, Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust
Joan Bearden, St. Mary's County Farm Bureau
Shelby Watson-Hampton, Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission

C. Approval of the April 11, 2024 Minutes

I move to approve Minutes from April 11, 2024 Agriculture, Seafood & Forestry Board Meeting. Motion by James Moore, second Richard Polk

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Scott Bacon, Bonnie Browne, Justine Cheseldine-Gass, Kaitlin Fraer, Phil Langley, Priscilla Leitch, James Moore, Richard Polk, Stephen Reeves, Joseph Wood

3. PRESENTATION

A. None.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Agriculture Land Preservation Advisory Board

Subcommittee membership includes Phil Langley, Alan Polk, Stephen Reeves, Michael Sirk, and Joseph Wood. The Agriculture Land Preservation Advisory Board met at the conclusion of the Board meeting and approved the request to relocate a previously approved MALPF Family Lot Exclusion for the Mulford Property (MALPF File Number 18-06-15).

Motion by Phil Langley, second Joseph Wood

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Phil Langley, Richard Polk, Stephen Reeves, Joseph Wood

The Agriculture Land Preservation Advisory Board also approved the request of a MALPF Family Lot Exclusion for the Burch Property (MALPF File Number 18-03-00-21A). This lot is located outside of the Critical Area and there are 2 locations requested conditional upon obtaining a perc.

Motion by Phil Langley, second Stephen Reeves

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Phil Langley, Richard Polk, Stephen Reeves, Joseph Wood

The Board reviewed and approved the ranking for seven (7) FY2025 MALPF Easement Applications using the Land Evaluation Site Assessment (LESA) Ranking System.

Motion by Phil Langley, second Richard Polk

Yea: Phil Langley, Richard Polk, Stephen Reeves, Joseph Wood

C. Agriculture Reconciliation Committee

Subcommittee membership includes Kaitlin Fraer, Stephen Reeves, Michael Sirk, Joseph Wood, and Vacant Member of the Real Estate Community.

There are no updates at this time. The Agricultural Reconciliation Committee will meet in August to establish rules and procedures.

5. OLD BUSINESS

A. Seafood/Aquaculture Updates

Phil Langley told the Board of results from a winter dredge survey that shows the number of male crabs is down and the number of mature female crabs are also down but the number of juveniles are good.

B. Forestry Updates

None.

C. Maryland Agriculture Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF)

None.

D. Rural Legacy

Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust (PTLT) – None.

Southern Maryland Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) – Caroline King shared that she is leaving RC&D for a position at St. Mary's College. RC&D is in the process of hiring her replacement.

E. Farmers Markets

The 3 County sponsored Farmers Markets are open for the Season. The Barns at New Market Seasonal Vendors are open Monday – Saturday from 8 am until 5 pm and the Value-Added Building is open on Saturdays from 9 am until 3 pm. There is also a vendor selling live crabs at the Barns at New Market on Saturdays and Sundays. The California Farmers Market is open on Saturdays from 9 am until 1 pm. The Home Grown Farm Market is open on Saturdays from 9 am until 1 pm and will also be open on Wednesdays during the summer from 9 am until 1 pm.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Board Member Open Comment Period

James Moore stated that the Motor Vehicle Administration is now asking farmers for proof such as a Schedule F when applying for or renewing Farm Tags. He is concerned with this added layer of bureaucracy.

Priscilla Leitch told the Board of the Department of Economic Development's new marketing campaign, St. Mary's County Around the World which features local St. Mary's County businesses that do business outside of the county.

Scott Bacon questioned the number of farms growing tobacco, Ben Beale can provide more information at the next meeting.

Priscilla Leitch also informed the Board that there is a new manager for the US Oyster Festival which is sponsored by the Lexington Park Rotary. The Board would like to invite the new manager to the next Board meeting. Phil Langley also announced that there was a good turn out for the Crab Festival which was held on June 8, 2024. Local crabs were used for this event.

D. Partner Updates

Shelby Watson-Hampton invited the Board to the Buy Local Challenge Celebration on July 29, 2024 from 5 pm until 8 pm at Serenity Farms in Benedict. There will be over 50 vendors, pony rides and dinner. Tickets for the event will go on sale on June 24, 2024.

SMADC is hosting a workshop series:

Finances on the Farm – 6/26/24

Urban & Suburban Farm Workshop – 6/27/24

Food on the Farm: Adding Food Sales to your Farm Plan – 7/17/24

The Regional Agriculture Center plans are still being reviewed by the St. Mary's County Health Department.

All Board Members and Partners were encouraged to sign up for the SMADC newsletter.

Joan Bearden announced that the St. Mary's County Farm Bureau's Agriculture Education Initiative is still on track. Shelby Watson-Hampton stated that in May, SMDC and the 5 Southern Maryland Counties and the Rural Maryland Council. The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland submitted a request for funding to inform Career Counselors of Agriculture Education Opportunities. Awards will be announced in August/September. Phil Langley questioned if there were Agriculture related apprenticeships available in St. Mary's County for students. Bonnie Browne told the Board of a James A. Forrest Technology Center opportunity for students to earn Technical Attainment and Articulated and or Transcribed College Credits. Kellie Hinkle spoke to the Board about TechJobs Rule, a pilot program with the James A. Forrest Technology Center (Forrest Center), The Strategic Education Office of NAWCAD, The Patuxent Partnership, and local companies where talented high school students who are interested in skilled work in manufacturing and STEM fields are given paid apprenticeship opportunities with local industry and the government.

Stephen Reeves questioned the status of the Lothian Grain Elevator. Shelby Watson-Hampton stated that Anne Arundel County will be selling the facility with stipulations on future use.

7. ADJOURN

I move to adjourn the June 13, 2024 Agriculture, Seafood & Forestry Board Meeting.

Motion by Richard Polk, second by Bonnie Browne

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Scott Bacon, Bonnie Browne, Justine Cheseldine-Gass, Kaitlin Fraer, Phil Langley, Priscilla Leitch, James Moore, Richard Polk, Stephen Reeves, Joseph Wood