



**OFFICE OF AGRICULTURE**

Isiah Leggett  
*County Executive*

Jeremy V. Criss  
*Director*

**MEMORANDUM**

September 16, 2016

**TO:** Agricultural Advisory Committee Members (AAC)

**FROM:** Jeremy V. Criss, Agricultural Services Manager  
Department of Economic Development

**SUBJECT:** September 20, 2016 Meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Committee

The Agricultural Advisory Committee will meet on **Tuesday, September 20, 2016 at the Up County Regional Services Center 12900 Middlebrook Road Germantown in Room A at 7:00 pm.**

The agenda is on the next page.

The other attachments for our meeting will be posted on the Agricultural Services web site.

I hope to see you on Tuesday evening.

\*Sign language interpreter services will be provided only upon request with notice as far in advance as possible but no less than 72 hours prior to the event. If you need other services or Aids to participate in this activity, please call 301-590-2810

e:aacSeptember(aac16)



## **Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda September 20, 2016**

1. Meeting called to Order and Introductions
2. Approval of the July 19, 2016 AAC meeting minutes
3. **Update on the Office of Agriculture-OAG:**

Jackie Arnold moved to the OAG on July 25, 2016.

Jackie Arnold is helping with the administrative details to transfer the data bases for listing staff computers, replacing old computers, ADA training, Data Montgomery Publishing, Renewal of Contracts for the Deer Donation program, Montgomery Weed Control Inc., Agronomy Educator-Doug Tregoning, the Mobile Science Lab-MAEF and MCPS.

### **4. Funding for Farmland Preservation**

The OAG staff conducted a tour of farmers on August 24, 2016 with DEP to show existing preservation and future opportunities using WQPC funding for Ag Pres.

The OAG/MSCD are working to quantify nutrient reduction on farms where BMPs are implemented below the baseline assessments.

Short term nutrient trading was discussed although DEP is now requesting longer term.

The OAG will not support nutrient trading terms of more than 5 years.

The following farmers have completed Baseline Assessments by the MSCD.

**Billy Willard, Pam Saul and Robert Butz**

The following farmers have requested Baseline Assessments by the MSCD

**Robert Butts, John Fendrick, Tom Hartsock, Linda Lewis and Jamie Jamison**

The OAG and DEP met on September 14, 2016.

The FY2018 Ag Land Preservation CIP submission was September 16, 2016.

DEP and OAG will report back to the Council T&E/PHED Committees on October 20, 2016.

### **5. New Improvements and Communication Systems at the AHFP**

The construction for Comcast Business Service is complete.

The cable was removed from the bridge foundation and ran under the creek.

The Federal networks for FSA and NRSC was down for weeks in July and August.

The Federal Government will now migrate to Fiber and replace their T-1 lines and phones.

All phone numbers for agricultural agency staff will be the same with the exception of FSA.

The existing Verizon T-1 lines will be replaced with Comcast for OAG, UM-Extension and the MSCD.

### **6. Update on the Sugarland Road Pilot Project for Broad Band**

The Comcast Company agreed to build the infrastructure in the pilot area for free.

The construction schedule is pending the review and approval for using existing poles.

The AAC and OAG will begin discussions with other Ag Reserve folks in need.

We need a group of neighbors in each community that are willing to make this happen. Robin Lechlinder worked to obtain signatures in the Laytonsville-Etchison area.

#### **7. ZTA 16-02 Agricultural Zone-Transferable Development Rights Requirements**

The ZTA has yet to be scheduled on the Planning Board agenda-**The MNCPPC staff has indicated they hope to have a draft ZTA distributed to everyone by mid-September.** *The OAG may be asked to provide recommendations to the DPS and the MNCPPC on all requests for farm tenant dwellings.*

#### **8. Bill 28-16 Solid Waste (Trash) Strategic Plan to Advance Composting, Compost Use and Food Waste Diversion:**

The July 19, 2016 public hearing went well with all speakers in support of the Bill. The T&E Committee work session is scheduled for October 27, 2016.

#### **9. AAC recommendation on proposed changes to the State of Maryland hunting regulations:**

The Montgomery Agricultural Producers-MAP has been working with the County Council and Executive staff to propose specific changes to the Maryland Hunting regulations.

The proposed changes were recommended by the CE and Council July 19, 2016:

[http://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view\\_id=136&clip\\_id=11997&meta\\_id=124701](http://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=136&clip_id=11997&meta_id=124701)

1. Reduced Archery Hunting Safety Zone from 100 yards to 50 yards (County)
2. Expanding Sunday deer hunting on private lands (Going beyond the current two Sundays during the deer hunting season-County bill)
3. Extending hunting season by one month through February (Statewide bill)
4. Adding an additional week for deer hunting with a shotgun (Statewide bill)

The AAC submitted a letter of support to the County Executive and County Council.

#### **10. Bill 31-16 Taxation-Urban Agricultural Tax Credit**

[http://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view\\_id=136&event\\_id=4564&meta\\_id=125072](http://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=136&event_id=4564&meta_id=125072)

Council member Tom Hucker sponsored this Bill 31-16 which was introduced August 2, 2016. The public hearing was scheduled today at 1:30pm.

The Bill can help reduce property taxes on small properties ½ acre up to 5 acres in urban areas that are also priority funding areas (Areas with public services).

The Bill defines urban agriculture, although the County Code Chapter 59 Zoning already defines Urban Farming.

The OAG has prepared comments to the Administration-DOF explaining there may be a minor reduction in property tax revenue.

## **11. July 2016 Revised Assessment Notices**

The OAG has received some questions from farmers (Ben Allnutt, Robert Beall) on their revised assessment notices and the property taxes for the farms have increased. The OAG is interested in knowing the percentage increase in your tax bill. The OAG is trying to compare the assessment increases for the land and improvement categories. We also need to better understand how the increase in property taxes (for both land and/or improvements?) has been applied geographically in the County. The OAG has not observed an increase in market values of farmland this year. The economics of farming today is very challenging as the increasing costs of production and lower commodity prices have created an environment of diminishing returns. Some of the farmers questioning the higher property taxes will probably appeal to the Department of Assessments and Taxation.

## **12. Follow Up from the County Agricultural Fair:**

The Agricultural agency tent including the MCFB, MSCD, UM-Extension and OAG won the Champion Agricultural Exhibitor Blue Rippon. This was a real team effort and many people contributed.

## **13. Governor Hogan's Commission on Regulatory Reform-Best Alternative Technology-BAT Septic Systems**

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/politics/bs-bz-hogan-septic-system-regulation-20160823-story.html>

## **14. Bill 37-16 Taxation-Development Impact Tax-**

[http://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view\\_id=136&clip\\_id=12170&meta\\_id=125879](http://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=136&clip_id=12170&meta_id=125879)

## **15. Councilmember Craig Rice is Hosting a Countywide Community Meeting about the Agricultural Reserve-Monday October 10, 2016 @ 6:30 pm Universities of Shady Grove 9360 Gudelsky Drive, Rockville Building II Bethesda/Gaithersburg Meeting Room**

**16. Next Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting** is October 18, 2016 @ 7:00pm. Please note that Heather Bruskin, Manager of the Montgomery County Food Council will be attending the October AAC meeting to review the Food Council Food Action Plan and Food Hub Study recommendations.

## **Upcoming Meetings and Events:**

September 17, 2016 Poolesville Day

MCFB Farm to Table Dinner-September 17, 2016 @ 5:00 pm

Public Hearing Bill 31-16 Urban Agricultural Tax Credit Sept 20, 2016 @ 1:30pm

Agricultural Advisory Committee-September 20, 2016 @ 7:00 pm

Montgomery County Farm Bureau Board of Directors-October 4, 2016 @ 7:00pm

Community Meeting on the Agricultural Reserve-October 10, 2016 6:30 pm

Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board-October 11, 2016 @ 7:00pm  
Montgomery Soil Conservation Board of Supervisors-October 14, 2016 @ 9:00am  
Montgomery Agricultural Advisory Committee-October 18, 2016 @ 7:00pm