

**Montgomery County Agricultural Advisory Committee-
November 17, 2020 Agenda-New Starting Time 5:00 pm**

1. Call the Meeting to Order-Introductions:
2. Approval of the October 20, 2020 AAC meeting minutes.
3. Update on the expanded Farm to Food Bank Program- Phase I. This program has been working well for the 6 farmers that are participating and almost 70,000 pounds of food has been delivered to Manna with expectations of another 10,000 pounds to be delivered through the end of December. The participating farmers are being paid competitive prices above the wholesale prices. A total of 22 farmers were approved for Capacity Building Grants totaling \$236K and these farmers will participate in the Phase II program for 2021 growing season *Please see the attached summary of the Farm to Food Bank Program.*
4. Update on the Solar ZTA 20-01. The Full County Council Work Session was conducted on October 13, 2020. The Council President Katz and Hans Riemer also conducted a Solar Town Hall Stakeholder meeting on November 5, 2020 attended by over 100 peopl. The Council has created an 8-member Stakeholder Working Group and the first meeting is November 17, 2020 at 6:30 pm. *The Office of Agriculture prepared the attached Agricultural Thoughts on the Solar ZTA that will help to expand discussion on many concerns, suggestions, and potential amendment. Please see the attached message outlining the members and the process for the Stakeholder Working Group.*
5. Council Member Evan Glass introduced the Composting ZTA 20-04 on October 27, 2020 and the Public Hearing is scheduled for December 1, 2020. The Office of Agriculture recommends the AAC should submit a letter of support to the County Council for this Composting ZTA 20-04 that will increase the amount of off-site materials used in the compost process from 20% to 50%.
https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2020/20201027/20201027_6A.pdf
6. The Maryland Farm Bureau and Montgomery County Farm Bureau will conduct a Legislative Webinar on December 3, 2020 at 9:00 am for members of the Montgomery County Delegation and County Council to attend virtually. The agricultural groups are working on a list of questions the panelist will present. Invitations to Legislators have been sent out. Stay tuned for more details.
7. Delegate Fraser Hidalgo has proposed MC 15-21 that would enable deer harvested under Deer Management Permits to be processed and commercially sold for venison-deer meat. MC 15-21 - Montgomery County - Deer Management Permit Pilot Program (*Please see the summary of the proposed MC 15-21 below*)

This bill establishes a deer management pilot program in Montgomery County, which would be created and regulated by the State. The purpose of the pilot program is “to

develop a commercial market for venison legally taken by a person holding a Deer Management Permit.” The bill would allow the holder of a Deer Management Permit to sell the meat or carcass of the deer within the State. The bill requires the Maryland Departments of Agriculture (MDA) and Natural Resources (DNR) to adopt regulations to implement the pilot program and “establish the requirements for the processing, inspection, labeling, and sale of wild venison in the State.” Under current law, the sale or purchase of meat from wild venison is prohibited in the State Natural Resources Article, §10-404 (e) and (g). A Deer Management Permit is issued by DNR. It allows a holder or the agent of the permit holder to hunt deer outside deer hunting season for the purpose of preventing damage to crops. To obtain a Deer Management Permit an individual must request the Wildlife and Heritage Service unit of DNR to investigate the damage caused by the deer population in the area. The investigator will consider type of damage, severity of damage, the time of year, and deer population surveys and estimates. The investigator will then issue a written recommendation whether action should be taken to reduce the deer population in the area. If reduction is deemed necessary, DNR will issue a permit describing the hunting device to be used as well as the number and type of deer that may be shot.

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) has authority to control intrastate requirements for venison. For example, MDH regulates deer meat donation programs. MDA reports that it does not currently have authority to enforce a deer meat inspection and enforcement program. In 2015, a similar Statewide bill (SB 748) was introduced to allow the holder of a crop damage permit to hunt deer outside hunting season for the purpose of preventing crop damage and sell or offer for sale in the State the meat or carcass of the deer in accordance with regulations adopted by DNR and MDA. The bill failed to advance from the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee. While the Maryland Horse Council testified in support of the bill, there was opposition from sportsman and wildlife conservation groups.

8. Next Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting December 15, 2020.

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

Montgomery County Agricultural Advisory Committee-November 17, 2020 5:00 pm.
Solar Stakeholder Work Group-November 17, 2020 @ 6:30 pm.
Montgomery County Farm Bureau Board of Directors- December 1, 2020
Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board-December 8, 2020
Montgomery Soil Conservation District-December 11, 2020