

**Montgomery County Agricultural Advisory Committee -June 21, 2022, Minutes**  
Office of Agriculture- Jeremy Criss

Please note that everything in Bold below is from the agenda and the minutes are not bold.

Attendance: Doug Lechliden, Pete Driscoll, Jane Evans, Lori Larson, Amanda Cather, Debra Tropp, Patrick Jamison, Eleanor Leak, Russ Allnutt, John Brewer

Staff: Jake Alder-representing Greg Wims, Chuck Schuster

**Call the meeting to Order**-7:05 pm Doug Lechliden asked Jeremy to do a role call for everyone attending the meeting. Jeremy also reported that Aliza Silver could not attend the meeting because she is having a baby boy.

**Approval of the April 19, 2022, AAC minutes**-*Please note there was no meeting in May*  
Approved as corrected Evans/ Driscoll. Debra Tropp said she attended the press event to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Montgomery County Food Council and the Office of Agriculture and Jeremy were mentioned as one of the partner agencies with the Food Council.

**Bill 40-21- Individual Water Supply and Sewage Disposal Systems - Amendments (McCartney-Green)**

*All Agricultural Groups opposed the Bill 40-21 during the November 30, 2021, Public Hearing. The Transportation and Environment- T&E Committee work session is still pending. The Council approved the CIP and Operating Budgets on May 26, 2022, that the Council is on recess until June 13, 2022.*

Jeremy said there is no update, and he believes Bill 40-21 will be scheduled after the summer recess.

**Office of Legislative Oversight on the Status of TDRs and BLTs -**

*The OAG staff and MNCPPC are working together to review and update the status on the use of both TDRs and BLTs. The OAG is encouraged by the MNCPPC responses regarding their preliminary findings. We are getting closer to the number of remaining TDRs in both the Sending Area=Agricultural Reserve Zone and the TDR Receiving Areas = Overlay Zones. We learned there were internal reports from 2012 and 2015 from MNCPPC to County Council that were never sent. We believe these reports show that no new TDR/BLT Receiving Areas had been recommended by the Planning Board. This finding helps to further demonstrate that the County has deemphasized the use of both TDRs and BLTs.*

Jeremy said he continues to be encouraged with the progress of the OLO meetings and the updated data surrounding the 4,000 + TDRs remaining in the Agricultural Reserve that include (floating-unsold) TDRs and (un-serialized) TDRs still retained with properties. These 4,000 + TDRs will still need to be planned for use in one of the 131 TDR Overlay Zones. Please note that Montgomery County has approximately 50,000 acres encumbered by TDR Easements and most of

the properties have one TDR retained for each 25 acres associated with the density of the AR zone plus additional Excess TDRs that we do not know the actual number at this time. Title reports would be required on all the properties encumbered by TDR easements to determine this last bucket of TDRs that are still retained with the properties. Jeremy believes the timeline for the OLO Report on the status of TDRs and BLTs will be scheduled with the PHED Committee sometime after the summer recess and towards the end of the 2022 year.

**Introduction of Bill 13-22 Buildings-Comprehensive Building Decarbonation-Public Hearing July 26, 2022, at 1:30 pm.**

*This is another climate change bill similar to Bill 16-21 where the AAC requested all existing and new agricultural buildings should be exempt and the County Council ignored this recommendation.*

[https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2022/20220614/20220614\\_3E.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2022/20220614/20220614_3E.pdf)

**On the bottom of page (2) the Exemptions sections begins on line 27 and carries over to page (3).**

**27 (c) Exemptions. All-electric building standards do not apply to new  
28 construction, major renovations, or additions in:**

**29 (1) the emergency backup systems of buildings that require an  
30 emergency system and hence backup power;**

**31 (2) buildings primarily used by a utility regulated by the Maryland  
32 Public Service Commission for the generation of electric power or  
33 steam;**

**34 (3) applications for building permits submitted to the Department  
35 prior to the effective date of the regulation;**

**36 (4) district combined heat and powers facilities; and**

**37 (5) buildings used for the following uses, as defined in Chapter 59:**

**38 (A) Manufacturing and Production uses;**

**39 (B) Crematory;**

**40 (C) Life Sciences; and**

**41 (D) Commercial Kitchens.**

**42 (E) Agricultural Buildings including but not limited to agricultural buildings used for  
Agritourism and Farm Alcohol Production.**

Jeremy reviewed the history of Bill 16-21 Environmental Sustainability- Building Energy Use Benchmarking and Performance Standards that was approved by the County Government and existing and new agricultural buildings were not exempted. Doug Lechlinder said that since we did not have success with Bill 16-21, he recommends that Bill 13-22 should simply request that agricultural buildings be exempt and not include the language “including but not limited to agricultural buildings used for Agritourism and Farm Alcohol Production.” The committee

agreed with this recommendation. Jeremy said he would work with Doug to complete a letter from the AAC on Bill 13-22 and have it ready for approval during the July 19, 2022, AAC meeting.

### **Rustic Roads Master Plan Update-**

*The OAG is developing a power point presentation titled The Rustic Roads Through the Eyes of the Farmer that will feature pictures of Rustic Roads along with testimonials from farmers regarding their views of the Rustic Roads program and MCDOT maintenance and improvements. There are about 15 farmers that have responded so far. The APAB has prepared a very informative letter outlining the concerns the Board has with the Rustic Roads. The OAG remitted comments to the MNCPPC staff on the April 21, 2022, Planning Board Briefing document that contains recommends minimizing drainage ditches along the Rustic Roads and it provides recommendations and guidelines for foliage and tree maintenance along Rustic Roads. The OAG remitted to the Planning staff the days and times for all of the Agricultural organizations and as of now the Planning staff has only met with the Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board.*

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/RusticRoadsFunctionalMasterPlan1996ocr300.pdf>

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/transportation/highway-planning/rustic-roads/rustic-roads-master-plans/>

Jeremy said that MNCPPC staff met with the Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Board to review the Rustic Roads Master Plan update. The MNCPPC staff were given all the agricultural organizations dates and times for their monthly meetings, the MNCPPC staff has not followed up with them. Chuck Schuster asked what is happening to River Road. Jeremy responded that MCDOT has completed the work to replace all the old drainage pipes along the gravel section of River Road between Whites Ferry and Edwards Ferry Road. Chuck asked what the MCDOT did regarding the asbestos that was found. Jeremy said that MCDOT removed the legacy gravel at the locations where the asbestos was found. Jeremy said that he is copied on the email messages between Linda Lewis and the MCDOT that usually Frank Kingsley responds back to Linda.

### **FY 23 Operating Budget for the OAG-**

**The OAG is working with the Office of Human Resources to fill Cathy Yingling' s position. The OAG is working with Rick Walter UM-Extension to create a contract for Alga Piechocinski.**

**The OAG is working with Rick Walter UM-Extension to find a replacement for Santana Mays who is now working in Baltimore County Extension-4H. Santana will continue to us help us in MC for the spring show, 4H camps, and County Ag Fair to weigh in animals.**

**The OAG is working with Rick Walter UM-Extension to find a replacement for Linda Walters.**

**On July 1st, the OAG will begin working with the Office of Human Resources to:**

**Fill the BDS position that Kristin Fisher once held and prior to 2010.**

**Fill the MSCD Engineering Position-Technical assistance on small ponds etc.**

Jeremy said that Montgomery County Government has approximately 950 vacant positions to fill at this time and the Office of Human Resources-OHR that handles employee recruitment also has several vacant staff positions that is further compounding the challenges to fill vacant positions. Jeremy said that he received a message from his boss requesting that Jackie Arnold be temporarily assigned from the Office of Agriculture-OAG to the OHR to help them with these challenges. Jeremy said the OAG only has three full time staff, Jackie Arnold, Mike Scheffel and Jeremy Criss and this is the very busy time of year with the growing season in full swing, the farmers markets, annual farm tour, and County Agricultural Fair and we cannot afford to have Jackie assigned to OHR at this time. The OAG asked for Jackie Arnold to not be temporarily assigned to OHR until the winter months when our schedules are not so busy.

**County/State Staff updates-**

**Linda Walters-UM Extension-Master Gardeners retiring July 2022**

**Rick Walter, UM-Extension Director retiring October 2022**

Chuck Schuster said that the University of Maryland Statewide has 93 vacant positions that they need to fill.

**2022 Farm Tour- The OAG will be sponsoring the 2022 Farm Tour that will be held on Saturday July 23 and Sunday July 24, 2022, featuring a total of 19 farms. The Brochure is at the print shop and should be available next week. This year's Farm Tour will feature a New APP: where visitors can download Visit Montgomery's Adventure Planner App to access a special farm tour digital passport.**

Jeremy said the Office of Agriculture will be sponsoring the annual farm tour again after it was suspended for the past two years due to the Pandemic. There are 19 farms on the tour that will help to show case the diversity of farming in the County including opportunities for residents to spend some time on farms in the Agricultural Reserve.

**Next meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Committee- July 19, 2022-**

**Upcoming Meetings and Events:**

**Agricultural Advisory Committee-June 21, 2022**

**Montgomery County Farm Bureau Board of Directors- July 5, 2022**

**Montgomery Soil Conservation District-July 8, 2022**

**Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board-July 12, 2022**

**Agricultural Advisory Committee-July 19, 2022**  
**Montgomery County Farm Tour-July 23 & 24, 2022**  
**MCPS Summer Camps-August 2,3,4, 2022**  
**Montgomery County Agricultural Fair-August 13-20, 2022**  
**Agricultural Leaders Luncheon-August 15, 2022**  
**COG FARM Committee Tour of Ag Reserve-September 9, 2022**

Doug Lechliden asked if there was any further business for the Agricultural Advisory Committee. A question was raised about the new fertilizer grant assistance program in Frederick County due to the increasing costs of fertilizer. Jeremy said that there are some discussions at the County Council to consider an inflation assistance program in Montgomery County. Jeremy said he would send to everyone the string of messages surrounding this issue that originally started with Lisa Stanley asking if Montgomery County will implement a similar program like Frederick County's fertilizer assistance program.

Hearing no additional items, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm. Leak/Jamison