

## Montgomery County Agricultural Advisory Committee- August 18, 2020 Agenda

1. Call the Meeting to Order-Introductions:
2. Approval of the July 21, 2020 AAC meeting minutes.
3. Follow up from the July 28, 2020 meeting with Representative David Trone. Youth and Development Grants for 4H Children and FFA Students-Marty Srveck participated and explained the MC Ag Fair lost \$950,000 this year.
4. Follow up with meeting on July 31, 2020 with Senator Ben Cardin  
Unemployment enhancement \$600 per week  
How COVID-19 is impacting livestock producers and processing animals  
How “ ” is impacting The Bay WIP Goals resources and funding  
High Speed Internet should be a required utility by US Government-PSC  
Heroes/Heals Acts and the Grant Funding for farmers
5. The County has provided a total of \$264,058 in COVID-19 financial assistance to 25 agricultural producers in the County. Average Grant Payment = \$10,000.
6. The DHHS is inspecting restaurants, bars, and farm operations due to complaints of large gatherings of people above the 50-person limit. Lone Oak Farm Brewery was visited, and they submitted a waiver based on providing 400 feet per person on the 29-acre farm and this compares to retail level of 200 feet per person. The waiver was originally declined but then approved once they obtained the Moderate Level food license.
7. Update on MC 6-20 Deer Hunting-Rifles used with Deer Management Permits. Delegate Eric Luedtke’s office scheduled summer committee meetings on June 10, July 20, 2020. **The Montgomery County Delegation developed an online Deer Management Survey that you should have received ???**  
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdtK529rOH6iiw8O49oSBqCb9Q7tCgTIC3VR3jXEHLf6HY\\_VQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdtK529rOH6iiw8O49oSBqCb9Q7tCgTIC3VR3jXEHLf6HY_VQ/viewform) This is a confidential-anonymous survey with no personal information. **Here is some good news-** The DNR has released the Hunting Regulations for 2020-2021 season that includes a new straight walled- cartridge for all counties that allow rifles, and this will include Montgomery and Frederick Counties. This cartridge has a range of 250 yards, and it is more accurate than a shot gun and cheaper than shot gun shells.
8. July 31, 2020, eight Montgomery County farmers signed Memorandums of Understanding to produce local food for the Manna Food Center as part of an expanded Farm to Food Bank Program. This program will provide higher prices to farmers that grow food for Food Assistance Providers. This is another example of the Office of Agriculture continuing to partner with the Montgomery County

Food Council, the Food Security Task Force and Manna Food Center to expand local food production due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

9. Here is some challenging news-The Council conducted joint PHED/ T&E Committee Work Sessions on July 9, 16, and 22, 2020 to discuss the Solar ZTA 20-01. Here is the Council Staff packet for the July 22, 2020 Work Session [https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/cm/2020/20200722/20200722\\_PHEDE1.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/cm/2020/20200722/20200722_PHEDE1.pdf)

All agricultural groups reaffirmed their opposition to the Solar ZTA as introduced and no amendments will change their position. Amendments to the ZTA are pending- prohibit solar on Class I prime and soils, minimize the removal of topsoil, and encourage Agri-voltaic farming. The OAG is working on a communication proposal for each farmer (**See Attached**) to send to the County Council before this Solar ZTA 20-01 is scheduled the second week of September 2020. **Here are some messages from Hans Riemer.**

write a reply...

**Mary Kimm** The Agricultural Reserve was built for preservation of farmland not for "progress." Farmers there unanimously oppose this proposal.

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**Hans Riemer** Mary Kimm that's incorrect, I have spoken with many farmers who support it. But yes their political bodies oppose farm solar. Everyone wants someone else to make the changes necessary to stop climate change. But climate change is a dire threat to farming and there's no reason farmland should be exempt from supporting a strategy to save the planet.

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**Mary Kimm** This farmland already contributed its residential density to smart growth with TDRs. Someday soon we might need to feed most of Montgomery County's residents from that farmland, because of climate change among other reasons. Don't chip away at it.

Like · Reply · 1d

**Hans Riemer** Farming and solar can go well together, that is very clear from other communities that are blending the two goals together with success. Farmers can cultivate pollinator friendly flowers to support bee populations, graze sheep for local meat, and even grow vegetable crops. This can be a win-win if we make it so.

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10. The County-OAG executed the Ag and Hort. Contract with Chuck Schuster. The UM-Extension is filling Chuck's UME full time faculty tenured position and there were two candidates that provided presentations on August 5, 2020. Kelly

Nichols was one of the candidates and she did an excellent job demonstrating her understanding of Montgomery County Agriculture and the needs of the farmers.

11. Preliminary Draft Report Thrive 2050- <https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Final-staff-report-vision-goals-policies-and-actions-for-6-11-20-PB-.pdf> The agricultural groups OAG, APAB, MAP provided comments back to the CE and MNCPPC last week.
12. The County Council approved a 3.45% savings plan for FY21 Office of Agriculture budget. This equates to \$ 34,200 for the OAG. The proposed savings will come from a reduction in the MAEF Food Fiber and You- Mobile Science Lab.
13. The County Executive has formally requested the County Attorney to amend Chapter 50 Subdivisions that will exempt commercial buildings used for agritourism, farm alcohol production and on-site farm markets. The County Executive has also formally requested amendments to Chapter 52 Taxation to exempt these uses from the Development Impact taxes like how Biotechnology businesses are treated.
14. The OAG has partnered with the Montgomery Food Council, The US Compost Council, the Compost Crew, and the County Department of Environment Protection on a USDA-NRCS Grant for \$95,000 covering two years for a food scrap-on-farm composting pilot operation. We hope to learn in mid-September whether our application will be approved and funded.
15. The Office of Agriculture has been included in a Commerce Cabinet that conducted the first meeting on July 31, 2020. The Cabinet is supposed to meet quarterly, and they are charged with recommending how to expand the County's economy.
16. On August 4, 2020 (The last day before the summer recess) the County Council scheduled Introduction/Action on Resolutions-Proposed Charter Amendments Regarding Composition of the County Council: **Proposed Amendment to County Charter – County Council – Alter Council Composition to 9 District Members and No At-Large Members-THIS RESOLUTION DID NOT PASS**  
[https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2020/20200804/20200804\\_2.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2020/20200804/20200804_2.pdf)  
  
**Expand Council to 7 District Members and 4 At-Large Members, Sponsor-Evan Glass-THIS RESOLUTION DID PASS**  
[https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2020/20200804/20200804\\_3.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2020/20200804/20200804_3.pdf)
17. The Chief Administrative Officer Andrew Kleine resigned this week due to the comments from the County Council on the Ethics Report and Investigation. Richard Madaleno will become Acting CAO until he can be appointed by the

County Council. Jennifer Bryant will become the Acting Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

**Upcoming Meetings and Events:**

Montgomery County Agricultural Advisory Committee-August 18, 2020

Montgomery County Farm Bureau Board of Directors- September 1, 2020

Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board-September 8, 2020

Montgomery Soil Conservation District-Rescheduled to September 18, 2020