

Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board

Regular Meeting Minutes

February 8, 2022

7:00 p.m.

Attendance: John Fendrick, Margaret Giblin, Chuck Gingrich, Michael Jamison
Staff: Mike Scheffel

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm.

1. Approval January meeting minutes

Fendrick made a motion to approve the January meeting minutes as submitted, Jamison seconded, motion passed.

2. AEP Easement Program

a. Grateful Gardeners-

Scheffel updated the Board on the status of the easement process. Tom and Sarah will have two separate settlements – one between them and the landowner, the other with MARBIDCO to finalize the easement. Settlement on the easement is scheduled for April 1.

3. Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation

a. FY23 funding level

Scheffel reported the email sent Michelle Cable of MALPF showed their FY23 budget of \$73 million. This is a huge level of funding, and it will be challenging for the state to spend it all in a single year. MALPF is asking for any and all suggestions on how to spend the money. There was discussion from the board on how properties/landowners in the County could be notified of this opportunity to gauge interest and how we can structure applications to the state.

4. RLP Easement Program

a. FY20 Funds extension request

Scheffel received confirmation from DNR for approval of the FY20 funds. We will use these funds to acquire a RLP easement on the #1 priority property in the UPRRW RLA from the FY22 RLP application.

b. FY23 Application

Scheffel submitted the application to DNR on 1/26/2022.

5. Legislative activities

- a. Scheffel went over the legislative spreadsheet that John Z from the SCD puts together. He highlighted some of the important legislation thus far.

6. Other business

- a. FY22 Supplemental Appropriation

The supplemental funds include the FY22 RLP grant award and the payment from MNCPPC for the termination of the Beverly Farm AEP easement. The public hearing and action took place on 2/8/2022, the Council approved the supplemental. As part of the supplemental process, each one receives a racial equity impact assessment (REIA). The REIA for the supplemental stated it is unlikely to advance racial equity and social justice in the County. This is a similar finding to the REIA of Bill 5-21 which directs business personal property taxes collected by the County from community solar installations in the AR zone to the ag preservation funds.

There was much discussion on how we could inform citizens and County officials on all benefits of farmland preservation, not just owning land. The Office of Agriculture's website contains information on programs available for grants. However, if people do not know we exist, it is unlikely they will be able to find the information. One idea was to put out information in areas such as libraries, community centers etc., where people who may not know about the Office of Agriculture could find the information and reach out.

The Office of Agriculture could host informational meetings where people could sign up to learn more about the office and what resources we may be able to provide.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.