

Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC)

November 16, 2010

MINUTES

Attendance: David Weitzer, Tim McGrath, Eddie Kuhlman, Lois Stoner, Jane Evans, Gene Walker, Patrick Brown

Staff: Callum Murray, Jeremy Criss, Nancy Aldous

Meeting came to order at 7:45 pm.

Introductions: Not necessary

Approval of Minutes from October 19, 2010:

Criss asked if there were any corrections or additions to the October 19, 2010 minutes. After discussion, Eddie Kuhlman motioned to approve the minutes as corrected, Lois Stoner seconded and the motion passed approving the October 19, 2010 AAC minutes as corrected on page 3 which should have referenced the next AAC meeting scheduled for November 16, 2010 and not December 21, 2010.

ZTA 10-12 New Child Lot Standards:

The County Council approved the ZTA 10-12 for new Child lot standards on October 26, 2010. George Leventhal stated this ZTA was the last outstanding issue of the Ad-Hoc Agricultural Policy Working Group that worked from 2006-2007. Callum Murray said that a future policy surrounding the use of sand mounds is still outstanding. Criss said that he does not know the new Council's intent regarding the future use of sand mounds in the County. Criss said that the future use of septic easements also needs to be considered in light of the Maryland Department of Environment MDA proposed changes to COMAR to prohibit the future use of septic easements. David Weitzer said the septic easements were discussed at the October 21, 2010 meeting that Delegate Brian Feldman sponsored with Bob Cissel. Criss explained that he followed up with Delegate Feldman and Senator Garagiola on the proposed changes to COMAR. The proposed changes to COMAR will be presented to the Administrative, Executive, Legislative Review AELR Committee where a public hearing can be requested and scheduled. Criss said that he will be contacted regarding a date and time for the public hearing. Gene Walker asked for the current status on the future use of septic easements. Criss said that DPS is currently considering them.

Historic Preservation Amendment 09-01:

Criss said that he spoke with Council Member Mike Knapp at the annual Farm Bureau Banquet regarding the historic preservation amendments 09-01 that he introduced in the spring of 2009. Mike said that he was not sure if there would be enough votes on the council to reconsider it. Criss referenced everyone to the letter in the packet which was requested at the October meeting. Callum provided an update on the pending sale of the Rock Hill Orchard which is encumbered under the MALPF program.

New Appointments to the AAC:

Everyone turned to the summary of AAC members where their terms are expiring. George Lechlinder and Jim Clifford have served for two-three year farmer member terms and they are not eligible for reappointment. Randy Stabler and Robert Beall have served for one-three year farmer member terms and they are requesting to be reappointed for a second term. Eddie Kuhlman and Patrick Brown have served one year non-farmer terms and they are requesting reappointment. Lois Stoner has elected not to apply for another term as a non-farmer member. Criss said that he is working with several folks to find two new farmer members and one non-farmer member to serve on the AAC.

Green Economy Task Force-Farm Incubator:

A meeting is scheduled on Monday December 20 at the AHFP entitled Sustainable Food System Initiative. A graduate student worked with Bruce Adams over the summer and this meeting will provide an opportunity for the student-Andy Lowy to present his final paper. Also, the meeting will provide an opportunity to provide an update on the Farm Incubator that was recommended by the Green Economy Task Force. Criss asked if anyone was planning on attending this meeting that Bruce Adams is handling. Bruce is working to have 8-10 farmers attending that will represent all of the components of agriculture and regionally located to cover the whole county. After additional discussion, Jane Evans agreed to attend the meeting on behalf of the AAC.

Agricultural Reserve Conference:

Criss said that he was asked to participate in a planning committee for an Agricultural Reserve Conference that is planned for 2011. *Please note the conference is now planned for fall 2012 due to difficulty in receiving financial sponsors.* The first planning committee meeting was on July 15, 2010 and the committee has been meeting each month. A letter was sent to Ike Leggett requesting financial assistance in the amount of \$15,000. The County Executive responded back stating that he could not commit to any financial assistance until after the FY 2012 budget deliberations. There was additional discussion surrounding the recent state revenue projections which were higher than originally estimated. Eddie Kuhlman said the 2nd quarter revenues for the town of Poolesville are also up. Criss explained how he was working closely with the Montgomery County Farm Bureau Board of Directors and the Montgomery Soil Conservation District Board of Supervisors on a plan to reduce general funds for all agricultural agencies and identify alternative ways to fund staff and programs to maintain current staff capacity.

Montgomery County Delegation State Bills Public Hearing December 6, 2010:

Everyone turned to the summary of state bills where the Montgomery County Delegation is conducting a public hearing on Monday December 6, 2010. The MC8-11 Leghold and Body Gripping Traps-Prohibition was introduced by Delegate Kathleen Dumais. Lois Stoner stated that farmers are exempt from the prohibition and this is different than last year's bill that did not pass. Criss said that Delegate Dumais has been working closely with Pam Saul and other farmers to get an early bill introduced that will help to get ahead of the opposition that sponsored last year's failed bill. After additional discussion it was recommended that the AAC submit a letter of support for the MC8-11 as currently written.

Mobile Animal Slaughtering Project:

Lois Stoner announced that that article in the Gazette regarding the Animal Slaughtering project mentioned a deadline for submitting a grant application and this deadline is not correct.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Next scheduled Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for December 21, 2010.