

Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC)

Minutes of November 20, 2012

Attendance: David Weitzer, Linda Lewis, Tim McGrath, Jane Evans, Drew Stabler, Paula Linthicum, Charlotte Ruppert, Debbie Benson, David Heisler, Woody Woodroof, Patrick Brown

Guests: Marc Hoffman

Staff: Jeremy Criss

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

Introductions: Everyone introduced themselves. Marc Hoffman-guest was representing the Montgomery County and State of Maryland Beekeepers.

Approval of Minutes October 16, 2012:

The Committee was asked if any changes or corrections were needed to the AAC minutes from October 16, 2012. Hearing no changes Tim McGrath motioned to approve the minutes as written, and Drew Stabler seconded the motion and it passed.

Orientation for new AAC Members

The Committee discussed the need to develop an orientation program for new AAC members. Woody Woodroof suggested this as a way for new members of the AAC to better understand the mission of the AAC and their role as a member. Woody Woodroof said the AAC Annual Report contains the section from the County Code that includes the legislative purpose and intent of the AAC along with the meeting agendas, but he suggested that a summary of terms would be helpful. There have been times that Woody Woodroof abstained from voting on specific issue because he was did not fully understand the issue being discussed and the summary of terms could be helpful to new members. Woody Woodroof suggested an orientation program could help new member participate in a shorter-up front period of time. Jane Evans suggested that new members could partner up with existing members to be there and answer any questions the new members would have. Charlotte Ruppert said she liked the idea of partnering up with existing members of the AAC to help her answer questions she has. After additional discussion the Committee was informed by staff that a first draft of the Summary of Terms-Glossary would be available for the December 18, 2012 meeting.

Marc Hoffman-County and State Beekeepers Associations:

The Committee was introduced to Marc Hoffman who is a member of the Montgomery County and State of Maryland Beekeepers Associations. Marc told the Committee that he has been monitoring the Zoning Rewrite Process and he questioned why beekeeping is included in the Zoning Regulations. Marc has been working to make sure the Zoning Regulations properly address the needs of all beekeepers. The original draft from

MNCPPC did not identify bees as permitted in residential areas of the County. The beekeeper organizations met with the MNCPPC to insure that beekeeping was identified as a permitted use. Also the organizations worked with MNCPPC to incorporate beekeepers in the Urban Farming Definition and the Animal Husbandry use to address the use of bees and the classification of structures-bee hives used for beekeeping. Marc said he was glad he attended the AAC meeting and that beekeepers want to support the AAC on agricultural issues.

Discussion on the Zoning Rewrite Process:

The Committee was updated on the correspondence to the Planning Board that Jane Seigler, Agricultural Representative on the Zoning Advisory Panel provided. The Committee learned that the Planning Board rejected the new term Agricultural Education/Tourism due to the conflicts on wording offered by Calleva that Montgomery Countryside Alliance opposed. This outcome was very unfortunate because the new term would have been helpful to the owners of on-farm markets where agriculture education and tourism activities are currently offered. Jane Evans asked if Calleva currently offers agriculture education activities. Linda Lewis answered yes and she explained to the Committee some of the activities that she has seen while visiting the operation. Tim McGrath said the haunted forest activity that Calleva offers has created real concerns in the community along Martinsburg Road due the increased traffic. Criss explained how he is trying to incorporate Agriculture Education/Tourism into the DED-ZTA for agricultural and horticultural uses in light the Planning Board rejected it.

Farming At Metro's Edge FAME Conference:

The Committee was informed regarding the recent development on the FAME conference scheduled for January 11-12, 2013. The Committee reviewed the Draft Program and discussed the panelists that have been suggested. The next Program and Planning Committees meetings are scheduled for December 10, 2012. The Committee discussed the on line registration has started and the registration fee of \$80.00 includes three meals and a reception. Jane Evans said the Montgomery County Farm Bureau has done a good job of working with the Program and Planning Committees on the FAME conference and she suggested the AAC members should all attend. Jane Evans said she want a voice in the Conference Final Report. David Heisler said he agreed to participate on panel #2 today. The Committee was informed that the Montgomery County Farm Bureau and the County DED each provided \$5,000 for the FAME conference.

Discussion on the DED-ZTA for Agricultural and Horticultural Uses:

The Committee learned that the DED-ZTA for agricultural and horticultural uses has been amended to not include landscape contractors at this time. This means that landscape contractors will continue to be permitted by special exception in residential and agricultural zones. The decision to exclude landscape contractors was made by the County Executive after he learned of the push back and opposition from the civic organizations and some representatives of the agricultural community. Linda Lewis

asked about Dogwood Hill Farm and whether the ZTA will impact them. Criss explained that this operation was considered a nursery that provided the installation and delivery of horticultural products they produce on the farm. Criss mentioned again how he is going to propose to incorporate Agriculture Education/Tourism into the DED-ZTA. Criss also said that the DED-ZTA already includes agricultural processing and on-farm animal slaughtering as permitted uses by right under certain conditions. The DED-ZTA also proposes defined terms like greenhouses and high tunnels as permitted structures in the agricultural zones. Tim McGrath asked for the time line for the DED-ZTA and how this relates to the timing of the Zoning Rewrite Process. Criss explained that the DED-ZTA must be presented to the Zoning Screening Committee and then it could be transmitted to the County Council for introduction. The Zoning Rewrite Process will begin sometime after the holidays and before the Council takes up the FY14 Budget.

Postponing the PHED Committee Work Session on Agricultural Services Funding:

The Committee learned the PHED Committee Work Session that was scheduled for December 3, 2012 will be postponed due to the Fiscal Year 2012 reports provided by the Department of Finance and the Office of Management and Budget not in line with the reports provided by the DED. Criss said he is working with Finance and OMB to make sure their reports reflect the actual costs and revenues projected for all of the agricultural land preservation programs.

Request for a Deer Forum including the Status of Lyme Disease:

The Committee was asked if they would like to participate in a Deer Forum and the status of Lyme Disease. The request originated in Takoma Park and it was distributed through Council member George Leventhal's office and the County Executive's office. Paula Linthicum suggested that we must involve the Department of Natural Resources-DNR. The Committee was informed regarding County Council discussions to reduce the safety distance requirement for Bow hunting from the current standard of 150 yards to 50 yards from a occupied dwelling. The Committee recommended that representatives from the Department of Health and Human Services need to be involved as they have the data on confirmed cases of Lyme disease. Debbie Benson and Woody Woodroof told the committee their experience in having Lyme disease. Paula Linthicum explained how her husband Tom Linthicum had Lyme disease and Linda Lewis explained the experience of her son having Lyme disease.

The next meeting of the AAC is December 18, 2012@ 7:00 pm in Germantown.
The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm.

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