

**Meeting Minutes  
Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting  
September 17, 2013**

**Attendees:** David Weitzer, Linda Lewis, Jane Evans, Paula Linthicum

**Guests:** Tom Hartsock, Sarah Miller

**Staff:** Jonathan Casey (MNCPPC), Jeremy Criss

The meeting was called to order at 7:10-PM.

**1. Introductions:**

Brief introductions were given.

**2. Approval of AAC Minutes from August 20, 2013:**

The minutes from August 20, 2013 will need to be approved in October since there were so few AAC members in attendance and no quorum.

**3. FAME Report Presentation by Tom Hartsock:**

Tom Hartsock thanked the AAC for inviting him to review the FAME final report which he handed out. Everyone in the room attended the FAME conference. Approximately 250 people attended the FAME and about 200 people were active participants in the round table discussions. About one third of the attendees were farmers that were assigned tables to make sure they did not sit together. The attendance was lower on Saturday when compared to the attendance on Friday. Several of the recorders and facilitators did not follow the instructions for reporting the discussions and taking notes. Kathleen Host was a tremendous help as she took all the recorders notes and prepared a word file that was forwarded to the writing committee-Caroline Taylor, Crystal Townsend, and Tom Hartsock. The writing committee had a very good working relationship and they were committed to writing what was actually presented during the two day conference. Tom reviewed the Panel Sessions and the themes that came forward from the round table discussions. Big agriculture is not liked by the general public. Consumers love local farmers but dislike big corporate ag. Paula asked how is big defined? Many people did not know the 70 percent of production in the region is devoted to grain. They learned that most of agriculture is family based operations and that all the agricultural agencies are located in the same building in Derwood. During the Roll out of the final report Council Vice President Rice suggested a full Council work session sometime after the holidays to discuss the recommendations of the FAME report.

**4. New Farmer Pilot Update by Sarah Miller:**

Sarah Miller thanked the Committee to update them on the progress for the New Farmer Pilot. Sarah explained how 18 applicants were reviewed for the pilot and she outlined the process for reviewing them. The sub-committee reviewed the applicants and they recommended 6 of them should be introduced to landowners that offered portions of their property for long term leases to grow table food. A total of 4 applicants actually landed on properties and executed leases 3-5 years issue. Sarah explained how the mentoring opportunities has worked for the following farmers-Woody Woodroof, Tyler Butler, John Fendrick, and David Weitzer. Sarah said the DED plans to continue the New Farm Pilot for another year and we are looking for new properties.

#### **5. Follow up from the T&E Committee on Pesticides Ban:**

The T&E committee conducted a discussion with representatives from Washington DC and Takoma Park where they have recently passed legislation that would ban the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes-lawn care-etc. The members of the T&E Committee did not know that Pesticides is the term that also includes herbicides and fungicides etc. The AAC Committee discussed this issue in detail and they wanted to know the definition of cosmetic purposes for banning pesticides. There were several questions as follows: How will the application of herbicides to control Johnson grass be impacted by the ban? What if someone wants to spray pesticides on their tomatoes to control sting bugs? How will deer repellent sprays be interpreted under this ban? Stay tuned for an update as no legislation has been introduced at this time.

#### **6. Food Recovery Work Group Report:**

The AAC learned about the final report of the Food Recovery Work Group that was presented to the County Council. The Work Group identified many ways for food to be gathered and provided to people in need before the food spoils. Criss explained how the recommendation of the Work Group can help to advocate the need for flexibility in the Zoning Rewrite ZTA13-04 to provide food to feed livestock and food scraps that could be composted on farms. Each year the County has 19 percent of the total solid waste consisting of food scraps that could be recycled into organic soil amendments.

#### **7. Clarksburg Limited Master Plan Amendment-Ten Mile Creek Watershed:**

The AAC reviewed the letter that David Weitzer presented to the Planning Board on September 10, 2013 regarding the Clarksburg Limited Master Plan Amendment on the Ten Mile Creek Watershed. David explained that Gus Bauman represents Pulte Homes because they have a TDR receiving site in the Watershed zoned RE1/TDR. David said that Gus did a good job of explaining the imbalance of TDR supply and demand that still exists 33 years since the TDR program began. Jonathan Casey explained that Development Review Committee is seeing a pick up of development projects scheduled. Criss suggested that Jonathan needs to talk with Callum Murray regarding the Planning Board's recommendation to use Excess TDRs for mixed use development. Criss said that MNCPPC needs to make sure this recommendation is incorporated into the Zoning

Rewrite 13-04 where 1 TDR will equate to 3,500 square feet of mixed use space. This will help to create new demand for Excess TDRs and also address the imbalance of TDR supply and demand.

#### **8. Continued Discussion on University of Maryland-Extension funding**

The AAC reviewed the letter that was drafted by Gary Marx and addressed to the U of MD Board of Regents. The AAC continues to be unhappy with the lack of financial support for Extension Services. The AAC letter questions the foundation of the U of MD Land Grant College for Agriculture and Extension that should be valued more. Criss said that when he spoke to Rick Water about the AAC letter and Rick said that Dean Wei would be assigned to respond back to the AAC. Tom Hartsock said the Land Grant College is not mandated to treat agriculture or Extension with greater importance.

#### **9. Council member Marc Elrich- Minimum Wage Discussion:**

Several people spoke with Marc Elrich during the MSCD Cooperators Dinner about his desire to increase the minimum wage in Montgomery County. Marc said the proposed bill would not impact part-time seasonal employees. Paula Linthicum shared her understanding of the Federal Wage Fact Sheet # 12 that establishes the criteria for part-time employees. Linda Lewis said that seasonal H2A workers may not fall under the criteria of the Fact Sheet and it is her understanding she may need to increase the minimum wage for her H2A workers if County legislation is approved to increase the minimum wage. Linda Lewis asked how the proposed legislation would impact horse barn people, people working at McDonalds for a second job, and people working in Landscape businesses.

#### **10. High Tunnel Listening Session: November 7, 2013:**

The AAC learned that DED-Agricultural Services, UMD-Extension and the MSCD are working the USDA –Agricultural Research Center-ARC to schedule a listening session on November 7, 2013 to discuss the benefits of high tunnels.

**Next meeting of the AAC is October 15, 2013 at 7:00PM.**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 pm#