

Economic Development Agricultural Advisory Board

Minutes of Meeting

Date: Wednesday, January 15, 2020

Location: Harford County Agricultural Center

Attendance:

(X Indicates Absence)

Bill Amoss – Ag Land Preservation	Andy Kness – University of Maryland Extension
Alice Archer – Member at Large	George Mayo – MAEF
Janet Archer – Harford County Farm Bureau	Juliet McGuirk – Grain
David Boniface – Service	X - Harmony Miller – Dairy
Emmy Dallam – Retail	Greg Murrell – Member at Large
X - Charles Filburn – Deer Creek Watershed Assn.	Dawn Rigdon – Nursery
X - Jason Gallion – Agricultural Specialist	Chad Shrodes – Harford County Council
Derek Hopkins – FFA (Chair)	Bill Tharpe – Harford Soil Conservation District
Michelle Jennings – Equine	Bob Tibbs – Livestock
Allison Jones – Vegetable/Fruit	Gene Umbarger – Member at Large
Reese Jones – Young Farmers	

Guests Attending:

Peggy Eppig – MAEF
Frank Richardson – Harford Soil Conservation District
Leslie Zink – Harford Soil Conservation District

Opening: The meeting was opened by Derek Hopkins, Chair.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The minutes from November 20, 2019 were approved as presented.

Membership on Agricultural Advisory Board

Replacements are needed for George Mayo of MAEF (who retired) and for Bill Tharpe of Soil Conservation District (who transferred to MDA). Nominations will be submitted for appointment by the County Executive.

Upcoming Events

- i. **Farm Trucking Forum – Thursday, January 30**
Maryland Farm Bureau will host this event at the Baltimore County Ag Center. Representatives from the State Highway Administration, Maryland State Police, and Maryland Vehicle Administration will be present. (The Trucking Forum flyer was distributed.)
- ii. **Taste of Maryland Agriculture – Thursday, February 6**
A table for 10 has been purchased by Harford County Government and the Ag Advisory Board. Additionally, Harford County Farm Bureau purchased 4 tickets. Bill Amoss will be driving the County van to this event.
- iii. **Midwinter Agronomy Meeting – Tuesday, February 11**
Extension will be holding this event at Deer Creek Overlook. It will include pesticide and nutrient management training. (The flyer was distributed.)

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Farmers & Community Partnership of Harford County

This group, led by Dr. Sharon Stowers of Harford Community College, now has a newer name and a revised Mission Statement: *Gathering farmers and the community to address issues facing local agricultural producers and consumers.* The last meeting was held at Harford Glen on Thursday, December 12, and the next meeting will be held at MAEF on Thursday, February 13. Planning continues for the upcoming Symposium at North Harford High School on Saturday, March 7. (The Symposium flyer was distributed.)

Alice Archer also discussed the USDA Event on Monday, April 6 and the Harford County Tour for NSDOAF (the National Society of Descendants of American Farmers) on Tuesday, April 7. The list of 25 attendees from Harford County going to the USDA in Washington, DC, will be finalized soon. Those who are on the list will be contacted to confirm their attendance and to request security information.

Old Business:

i. HCPS 2020-2021 School Calendar

The Harford County Board of Education approved the start of the 2020-2021 school year after Labor Day. Letters of support for this decision should be sent by the Ag Advisory Board, by Harford County Farm Bureau, and by 4-H. People who “live” agriculture should have a voice on the calendar committee. If this is an issue next year, the agricultural community should partner with local restaurants and with the Chamber of Commerce on the advantages of starting school after Labor Day.

It was noted that the County Council is accepting letters of interest to fill the vacancy on the Board of Education for District C. There was discussion about who resides in District C and who might represent the agricultural community. The deadline for letters is Tuesday, January 28.

ii. “The Grove” Market

Vendor applications are available. Erin Schafer will be asked to attend the next meeting(s) to provide an update on The Grove.

iii. Definition and Zoning for Public Utilities

As of now, the zoning code allows commercial solar only on GI zoned property. The Fielder case is now going to the Public Service Commission (PSC).

iv. Local Butcher Facility

Such a facility needs to be a partnership, as there are many regulations and hurdles. Bill Amoss suggested that there might be a tour to the facility in Southern Maryland. There may need to be a subcommittee established to consider existing facilities, such as Bowman’s, and what can be done to meet local producers’ needs. We should also keep aware of the work of the study group and/or pending legislation about Local Foods for Maryland Institutions.

New Business

i. Harford County Census 2020 Complete Count Committee

Alice Archer is serving on the Census 2020 committee, representing the agricultural community. Farmers and rural residents, particularly in northern Harford County, are in the

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“hard to count” group. It is hoped that more information will be sent to the public, including flyers through the schools. Greg Murrell is very interested in hosting an event at North Harford High School, giving the FFA students an opportunity for service hours by helping with computer access in filling out the census survey.

ii. **USMCA Trade Agreement**

Janet Archer informed the group that the new U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement is 1,809 pages long! She called Congressman Harris’s office and others to ask whether anybody is actually reading the document to determine what is included in the agreement.

iii. **AIR Forms**

David Boniface asked whether a “tutorial” can be held at the Ag Center on the new information needed for the Nutrient Management Annual Implementation Reporting (AIR) forms. Andy Kness will coordinate this with Darren Alles.

iv. **Access to the Agricultural Center**

Gene Umbarger asked whether access to the Ag Center will ever be available from Route 136. Once again, the need for a pole light at the current entrance (next to the Joesting-Gorsuch House) was brought up.

v. **Health Department Regulations**

Allison Jones questioned the interpretation of regulations between State and County health departments. She also brought up the need to possibly expand seasonal farm markets from the current 6 months to 9 months. This also relates to regulations for local farmers markets and for vendors at The Grove.

Agency / Organization Updates

- Andy Kness reminded the group about the North Harford FFA Dinner Dance to be held on Saturday, February 29 at Norrisville Fire Hall. Tickets are available through Eventbrite, with 100% of the proceeds going to the FFA students.
- It was mentioned that grain exports to China should increase for use as plant-based fuels, such as ethanol.
- David Boniface and Andy Kness will check on a letter from Perdue sent through Ma & Pa Farms regarding glyphosate (Roundup).
- The Harford County Farm Bureau Bull & Shrimp Roast on Saturday, February 22, 2020 is sold out, except for some sponsor tickets.
- Greg Murrell provided an update on the Ag Magnet program at North Harford High School. Enrollment is down; out of 124 students tested, the class size is only 80-90 students. There will be schedule changes for the schools in order to tie in with class hours at Harford Community College (HCC). HCC classes may also pull some seniors out of Capstone projects. Career Technology Education (CTE) is piloting additional industry-based certifications. North Harford High School is a priority school for enrollment at SUNY-Cobleskill. This will tie in with both students and teachers.

Adjournment: Motion was made and approved to adjourn at 9:45 AM.

Submitted by Alice A. Archer