



## **Harford County Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board**

### **Meeting Minutes February 1, 2022**

#### **Opening**

The meeting of the Harford County Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board was called to order at 7:45 pm on February 1, 2022 at 220 South Main Street, Bel Air, Maryland 21014.

#### **Board Attendees**

Jeff Holloway, Jim Morris, Jackie Smithson and John Stump

Megan McMillian was unable to attend.

Staff: Bill Amoss & Jen Wilson

Guests: several members of the public were in attendance

#### **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Holloway moved to approve minutes from the November 2, 2021 meeting with Ms. Smithson seconding. The minutes were approved unanimously.

#### **New Business**

- Mr. Amoss provided an update on the County program. Nine (9) easement purchase resolutions were the subject of a public hearing immediately prior to the Board meeting. He anticipates the County Council will vote on the bills during the next Council meeting. Twelve (12) of the twenty-five (25) easements from the previous round remain to be settled. One (1) is scheduled later in the week, with six (6) others very close to settlement. The deadline to settle those easements is March 7, 2022 and he felt they were in good shape to meet the deadline. Mr. Stump asked if all the remaining easements would make the deadline. Mr. Amoss is concerned one (1) easement may not make the deadline due to the complexity of the survey work, but they would continue pushing toward settlement.
- Mr. Amoss provided an update on the MALPF program. The appraisals are complete for the nine (9) FY2022 applications that were submitted July 1, 2021. Offers for those easements should be coming out in March. FY2021 easements are working toward settlement. Baseline inspections were completed for two (2) of the farms and they should be going to settlement very soon. The

other are getting close. The Governor announced his proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year and MALPF is expecting to receive additional funds in the budget for this next round.

- Mr. Amoss updated the Board on the Rural Legacy program. DNR granted an extension for the previous year's funding, so there is additional time to utilize the grant money. One (1) farm is working on their survey in order to submit the package to DNR for review. The application for the next grant (FY23) was submitted along with DNR's new requirement to submit GIS data. DNR and Maryland Department of Planning staff will be completing calculations that were previously the responsibility of the RL area sponsors. This is in an effort to help sponsors that do not have the GIS capabilities that others may have, and to ensure consistency in the calculations across the RL areas.
- Ms. Wilson provided an update on compliance inspections. All required inspections were completed for 2021 and preparations are underway for the 2022 inspections for MALPF. Letters will go out to landowners in advance and inspections will likely occur in March or April. MALPF inspections are due June 30<sup>th</sup> and new easement applications are due the next day, so the goal is to complete the inspections well in advance. Rural Legacy inspections will likely be conducted later in the year.
- Other updates included the refreshing of the ALVIN (Agricultural Land Valuation Index) system. Soil data was updated based on information received from Tim Gerber, Soil Scientist with NRCS. Other upgrades were completed to help further streamline and simplify the reports created by the system. The Department is also investigating using iPads for inspections and mapping, similarly to the way the enforcement division utilizes the tool.
- Several members of the public were in attendance and asked questions about the program. Mr. Amoss explained how the program works and the Board's role. There was a brief discussion about the programs and development in general.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm