

Economic Development Agricultural Advisory Board

Date: Wednesday, May 15, 2019

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	X George Mayo – MAEF
Janet Archer – Harford County Farm Bureau	Juliet McGuirk – Grain
X David Boniface – Service	Harmony Miller – Dairy
Emmy Dallam – Retail	Greg Murrell – Member at Large
Charles Filburn – Deer Creek Watershed Assn.	Dawn Rigdon – Nursery
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	X Gene Umbarger – Member at Large
Reese Jones – Young Farmers	

Opening: The meeting was opened by Derek Hopkins, Chair. The minutes of the April 17, 2019 meeting were approved as written.

Old Business:

i. Barn Quilt Trail

The dedication of the Ag Center Barn Quilt, and kick off of the Harford County Barn Quilt Trail, will be held today (Wednesday, May 15) at 2:00 PM.

ii. Harford Community College (HCC) and Harford County Ag Partnership

This growing partnership has really great for Harford County agriculture! Dr. Sharon Stowers' position with HCC has been extended for the next academic year. Next year's Symposium will be held at North Harford High School on Saturday, March 7, 2020 (with a snow date of Saturday, March 14).

iii. Historical Society Presentation

There will be a presentation and tour titled "The Harford County Agricultural Center: Agriculture, Artwork, and Architecture" on Tuesday, June 11, starting at 12:30 PM.

iv. 2019 Agricultural Grant Program

This grant program is now on a fiscal year cycle, with 75% / 25% matching funds. To receive reimbursement, the applicant must submit a W-9 form, supplier form, and receipts. The deadline for submitting applications is Friday, June 21.

v. Legislation Regarding Agricultural Retail Sales

Reference the draft proposed legislation for an amendment to Subsection D(2) of Section 267-53, AG Agricultural District, of Article VII, District Regulations, of Part 1, Standards, of Chapter 267, Zoning, of the Harford County Code.

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There was extensive discussion about this legislation at last month's meeting. (Refer to the minutes of April 17, 2019.) There is a problem with interpretation of the current terminology of "20% area of the retail store dedicated to non-agricultural products." Namely, what is a non-agricultural product, and does the 20% include products from other producers (who are not the owner of the property). It was suggested that a definition of non-agricultural products and that perhaps a different percentage of store area is needed. Products sourced from other Harford County farms and cooperative markets must also be considered. The Ag Advisory Board will plan to address these questions and concerns before the legislation is introduced to the County Council in the fall. A meeting(s) about agricultural retail sales will be held over the summer in order to send a recommendation to the County Executive.

vi. Definition and Zoning for Public Utilities

As stated before, further discussion must wait until the pending cases are resolved.

vii. Regulation of Animal Transport

A public hearing on Bill No. 19-008 to amend the lower maximum outside temperature for unattended motor vehicles containing animals was held at last night's (Tuesday, May 14, 2019) County Council meeting. This bill should not pertain to livestock animals being hauled in trucks or trailers.

New Business:

i. Local Butcher Facility

Jason Gallion reported that Ewing McDowell is willing to talk to the Ag Advisory Board about the possibility of a local butcher facility. This would involve USDA and the Department of Commerce to obtain Maryland certification for processing. The recent opening of an Amish butcher facility in Southern Maryland and Rosetta (for kosher and non-kosher products) were mentioned. Harford County producers are experiencing backlogged facilities and small, specialized butcher shops (like Bowman's) that lead to traveling long distances or out of state to process their animals.

ii. Farmer's Markets

One of the rumors is that the Bel Air Farmer's Market is moving to the Ag Center – which is not true. The farmer's market building being planned at the Ag Center will allow for rental of spaces for retail sales and also use of incubator spaces for new producers. A briefing to the Ag Advisory Board should be scheduled with Erin Schaefer.

Concern was expressed about the new Sprouts Farmers Market coming to Bel Air. Of particular concern was the corporate name and commercial lease as a Farmers Market and whether this will hurt local farmers who have on-farm stores or who are vendors at the local farmer's markets. It was suggested that the Ag Advisory Board contact Harford County and Bel Air economic development departments to encourage shopping at local farmer's markets.

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Agency / Organization Updates

- i. **Harford Soil Conservation District (HCSD)**
Bill Tharpe announced that cover crop kill-down goes until June 5. HCSD will be celebrating their 75th anniversary on Sunday, September 8 at Swan Harbor Farm. Invitations will be issued in June.
- ii. **Harford County Extension**
Andy Kness announced that Breakfast on the Farm will be held on Saturday, June 22 in Frederick County. Registration is through EventBrite.
- iii. **North Harford FFA Alumni**
The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 22 at 6:30 PM at Geneva Farms. Andy also announced the Brew Bus event to local breweries and wineries on Saturday, June 15.
- iv. **Harford County Farm Bureau**
Emmy Dallam announced that the Miss Harford County Farm Bureau Contest will be held on Sunday, June 23 at 12:00 PM at Broom's Bloom Dairy.

Janet Archer mentioned that animal agriculture is under attack. PETA is placing billboards in the flooded states about animal welfare, and social media is rampant about meat and milk (especially plant-based beverages). Bob Tibbs also mentioned the tariffs starting on beef products.
- v. **North Harford High School Programs**
Greg Murrell announced that 1,600 2nd Graders learned where their food comes from and almost 3,000 children visited during the school year. A group from North Carolina visited North Harford; they would like to setup a similar school. Greg reported that 60% of the North Harford Ag Magnet/NRAS students are going into the STEM field and 40% are going into agriculture. He continues working with HCC on ag curriculum.
- vi. **Ag Land Preservation**
Bill Amoss announced that the Harford County program has been postponed, but 8 farms will be proposed in September. Applicants for the MALPF program are needed by June 1. Rural Legacy also has funding.

Next Meeting: If needed, the next meeting will be on Wednesday, June 19 at 8:00 AM at the Harford County Agricultural Center. There will be no meetings in July and August.

Adjournment: Motion was made and approved to adjourn at 10:20 AM.

Submitted by Alice A. Archer