



Steve Reeves., Chairman
Scott Bacon, Vice Chairman

Ben Beale
Lynn Klug
Michael Sirk

Colleen Corrigan
John K. Parlett, Jr
Charles Webb

Phil Dorsey
Alan Polk
Joseph Wood

Phil Langley
Patrick Russell
Bruce Young

Agricultural, Seafood, and Forestry Board
March 14, 2019
Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

The Agricultural, Seafood, and Forestry Board meeting was held in the Conference Room of the Agriculture Services Center. Members in attendance were Steve Reeves, Scott Bacon, Ben Beale, Colleen Corrigan, Phil Dorsey, Lynn Klug, Charles Mattingly, John Parlett, Michael Sirk, Joseph Wood, and Bruce Young. Also present were Lisa Ledman, Donna Sasscer and Bennett Wilson from the St. Mary's County's Economic Development Department. Guests in attendance at the meeting included: Dudley Lindsley from the Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust (PTLT); Bryan Thomas and Jamie Raley from the St. Mary's County Farm Bureau; and Bill Hunt, Director of St. Mary's County Land Use and Growth Management.

The meeting was called to order at 12:10 p.m. It was confirmed that there were enough members present to form a quorum. Minutes from the February 14, 2019 were read and approved by the Board, motioned by Mr. Wood and seconded by Ms. Klug.

New Business

Mr. Mattingly introduced himself to the Board and stated he owned a medical cannabis business in Mechanicsville and a potential grow facility on his family's farm in the Seventh District.

Old Business

Zoning Uses – Mr. Hunt advised the Board that any Zoning Ordinance must be written clearly so that anyone who reads it should be able to understand and interpret it the same way. Mr. Hunt told the Board there are 2 reasons to update a Zoning Ordinance

1. Now you can do a new activity – is the new activity a benefit to the County? Will the activity need provisions (setbacks, exceptions, etc...)
2. Now you cannot do an activity – is the activity detrimental to the County? Said activity would become illegal. For violations the activity would have to be reported, inspected and verified then a resolution would be determined (compliance or citation/court)

Mr. Dorsey stated he would like to see the Zoning Ordinance simplified and asked what the County's vision to move forward is. Mr. Hunt responded that he would like to have the Commissioners authority to have a dedicated staff member that would meet with a stakeholder group to look at the provisions. Mr. Parlett stated that there needs to be something in place to fix

misstates/things that do not work and suggested a local consultant be hired to work with a citizen advisory committee.

North St. Mary's County Farmers Market Relocation and Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission (SMADC) Regional Agriculture Center (RAC) – Ms. Sasscer updated the Board that on March 19th the Commissioners of St. Mary's County would review the county's RAC proposal for the \$1M SMADC Grant. It is being proposed to have 2 locations to serve the purposes of the RAC – a Meat Processing Facility will be constructed near the Charlotte Hall Convenience Center and classrooms and storage along with all other RAC components will be located in the Value Added Building at the relocated North St. Mary's County Farmers Market.

Maryland Agriculture Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) – Ms. Sasscer distributed 2 letters from the State MALPF Program Administrator to the Board. The first addressed legislation that was passed mandating that local Land Preservation Advisory Boards meet at least once a year with the local Forestry Board. The second letter stated there were timing issues with the FY19 MALPF easement offers being made after a potential deadline for FY20 easement applications to be submitted. This could be problematic if the state only accepts a limited number of applications from the counties because prior applicants may be committed to FY20 funds but actually receive a FY19 offer and payment.

Rural Legacy – Ms. Lindsley updated the Board that PTLT just closed on an easement in the Huntersville Rural Legacy Area and hope to finish another Huntersville area easement along with their last Mattapan Rural Legacy Area Easement in the summer. There has been a lot of landowner interested in the proposed Expansion Request for the Huntersville Rural Legacy Area. Ms. Greb had no update from Southern Maryland Resource and Conservation Development (RC&D).

Legislative Update – Mr. Dorsey updated the Board on SB 876, establishing that a riparian property owner or lessee shall have the right of first refusal to apply for and, if approved, obtain a water column lease, or an aquaculture lease for use in the water column. He was pleased with the group of supporters that showed up to Annapolis to testify on behalf of the legislation; however the Committee was not favorable of the legislation. Ms. Sasscer told the Board that she testified on behalf of House Bill 527 (same as Senate Bill 290) pertaining to altering the definition of "cottage food product" to include nonhazardous food, as specified in regulations adopted by the Maryland Department of Health, that is sold in the State in accordance with certain provisions of law and regulations adopted by the Department to retail food stores, including a grocery store, or food cooperatives. The Heath Department is against increasing the sales limit to \$40,000 but was favorable to allowing commercial sales of cottage foods if certain requirements are met. Ms. Sasscer also updated the Board on Senate Bill 99, to add certain counties to the list of counties that exempt agricultural buildings used for agritourism from certain building performance standards; and exempting a building used for agritourism in certain counties from a building permit requirement under certain circumstances. St. Mary's County has been added to this legislation as requested.

Sub-Committee Reports

Farmers Markets Sub-Committee

Members – John Parlett, Colleen Corrigan, Patrick Russell, and Charles Webb

North St. Mary's County Farmers Market will open for the season on April 3rd. During the month of April the North Market will be open on Wednesdays and Saturdays only. May – November the North Market will be open Mondays – Saturdays.

The California Farmers Market will open on April 20th and be open Saturdays until Thanksgiving from 9 am – 1 pm.

The Home Grown Farm Market will open on April 6th and be open Saturdays until Christmas from 9 am – 1 pm.

Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Board

Members – Phil Langley, Alan Polk, Steve Reeves, Patrick Russell, and Joseph Wood

No update at this time.

Agricultural Reconciliation Committee

Members – Colleen Corrigan, Phil Dorsey, Steve Reeves, Michael Sirk, and Joseph Wood

No update at this time.

Open Comment Period

Mr. Parlett told the Board of his vacation in Henry, Florida, the largest orange producing County in the Country. He was interested in taking an agricultural bus tour that was sponsored by the equivalent to the Extension Office in that area. He would love to see a similar opportunity offered here locally.

Mr. Beale invited the Board to attend the St. Mary's County 4-H Banquet on Saturday, March 16th.

Mr. Dorsey mentioned an article he read in the Daily Record about hemp farmers working with the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Mr. Beale stated that this was a pilot program released just 2 days ago, the deadline to apply through the University of Maryland is March 20th.

Mr. Beale informed the Board that Southern Maryland Tobacco Farmers were notified that the current Contractor will no longer be purchasing burley tobacco. Most farmers have already ordered seed and were planning for the coming growing season. University of Maryland Extension is working with these farmers to find alternatives. There are currently 5 companies offering contracts/offers for tobacco in Southern Maryland. Demand for MD Type 32 (MD 609) continues to be strong and Mr. Beale understands that Lancaster Leaf (Pennsylvania), Ideal Leaf (Pennsylvania) and Golden Leaf (Pennsylvania) are all offering contracts for MD 609. Prices vary by contract and are in the 1.90-2.00 per pound range. The Extension office has MD 609 certified pelletized seed available for those farmers interested. There is also strong demand for Type 51 Connecticut Broadleaf tobacco in the region, Mr. Beale is aware of three companies who have recently offered contracts. These include Hail and Cotton (Tennessee); Lancaster Leaf

(Pennsylvania); and Dunn and Foster (Connecticut). Prices and grading requirements vary, with prices being offered around \$6.00 per pound for #1 wrapper, \$3.50 for #2 wrapper or binder and \$0.60- \$1.50 for trash or filler. In conversations with other states, growers are averaging around \$3.20-\$3.40 per pound with yields of 1800 pounds per acre. Mr. Beale stated that all companies with the exception of Dunn and Foster will receive tobacco in Pennsylvania. Dunn and Foster is coordinating a local delivery if they get acres.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:00 p.m., motioned by Mr. Wood and seconded by Mr. Parlett. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 11, 2019 at noon in the Conference Room of the Agriculture Services Center.