

August 30, 1963

Special meeting on Friday.

Present: All commissioners, Mr. W. S. Donaldson, Mr. O. Guyther, Senator J. Frank Raley, Jr., Delegates Fowler and Briscoe, Mr. T. Venetoulis, Adm. Asst. to Rep. Sickles, Mr. Jonas Morris, Adm. Asst. to Rep. Lankford, Wm. Garvey, Charles County Agent, Wayne Cooper, Federal Land Bank, Mr. Fowler and Mr. Bowling, Federal Crop Ins. ARA, Capt. Leyte, Johns Dixon, Farm Bureau of St. Mary's County, Major Ellison, Civil Defense, Mr. M. C. Thompson, SRC, Messrs. Chapman, Barley, Briscoe, EDC, John Hodges, farmer, Sen. John Parran, B. Reeves, ASCC, Capt. Bussey, Dr. R. Sparks, State Planning & Zoning Dept., Mr. F. McCoy, FHA.

Meeting called to order by Mr. Burch, who then thanked those present for attending and introduced Senator Raley, who in turn mentioned names of people present. Mentioned that the county will have some real problems next year as a result of the drought, and this meeting was called in an effort to perhaps find some solution before the problems arise.

Mr. B. Smith stated that the situation is critical as crops will be running about 30 - 40% of normal output. Even the late tobacco cannot expect to be of any quality. Corn will run about 30% of normal output, and wheat and small grain will be best crops, but not nearly normal. Livestock feeding will be critical as feed will have to be brought in from the outside. Soybeans will not make a crop. Feed brought into the county is going to cost a tremendous price, and cattle will have to be put on the market if some relief isn't gotten.

Mr. Garvey, County Agent from Charles County, said the situation is the same in his county. He said that the cattle will have to be sold because the farmers cannot afford to buy hay.

Mr. Jonas Morris stated that he had been informed that St. Mary's and six other Maryland counties had been declared disaster areas. This action would make 3% loans available to the farmers. These low interest loans come from the Emergency Loan Program under the Farmers Home Administration. Farmers must have collateral and not be able to obtain credit from local sources. Some farmers might find this difficult.

Mr. F. McCoy mentioned possibility of soil conservation projects, construction of farm ponds, and reforestation projects. He stated that a number of applications for these projects could be approved locally if funds were available. The possibility of a public works program was also mentioned as a source of jobs for farmers. Assistance might be obtained from the Small Business Administration, Small Business Investment Corp., and the Area Redevelopment Authority. Unemployment figure for the county for August was 4%, which is not accurate as it does not include tenant farmers and others on whom no records are kept. County might qualify for assistance under Section 5B of the ARA if farm income is below the national average. Financial aid could also be obtained to use land for recreational purposes, such as cabins, etc. ARA has money available if projects involved will create employment.

A committee was appointed to gather ideas to be presented at another meeting on Wednesday, September 11th, at the courthouse. Members are F. McCoy, A. Briscoe, John M. Hodges, and B. Smith as chairman.

Meeting adjourned.

Approved,

F. Elliott Burch
F. Elliott Burch, President