

## MINUTES

### **Farmland Protection Program Durham Soil and Water Conservation District** Virtual Zoom Meeting

Meeting Number: 4 (Farmland Protection Advisory Board)    Date: August 20, 2020

#### **Advisory Board Present:**

Will Wilson – Chair – At Large  
Mark Waller – 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair – Farm Bureau Rep.  
Heidi Carter – BOCC Representative  
David Harris – SWCD Board Representative  
John Monroe – At Large  
Neil Frank – At Large

#### **Others Present:**

Eddie Culberson – Soil & Water  
Mike Dupree – Soil & Water  
Cherri Smith – Soil & Water  
Jane Korest – Open Space  
Celeste Burns – Open Space  
Donna Rewalt – Cooperative Extension  
Ashley Troth – Cooperative Extension  
Darnell Parker – Cooperative Extension

*The regular monthly meeting of the Farmland Protection Advisory Board was held on Thursday, August 20, 2020 and called to order at 8:01 am by the Chair. The meeting was held as a virtual Zoom meeting.*

1. **Approval of Board Minutes from June 2020** – The Board did not have a quorum, so no action was taken.
2. **FPAB Budget** – Cherri Smith reported that \$3,375 was allocated to the FPAB for FY 20/21. The board will need to brainstorm on how to spend the money since it is unlikely the Farmers' Breakfasts will be held.
3. **Durham Open Space & Trails Representative on the FPAB** – Jane Korest reported that the DOST did not have a quorum at their meeting on August 19, 2020 so no action was taken on appointing a representative to the FPAB. September is typically when officers are elected so hopefully action will be taken at their next meeting.
4. **VAD Update** – Cherri Smith reported that there were no new VAD applicants or renewals.
5. **Easements/Open Space** – Jane Korest reported:
  - The easement on Scotty McFarland's 81-acre tract is moving forward with anticipated closing this fall.
  - Survey work is underway for the easement on Len Needham's farm.
  - Jane expects to hear back from the NRCS by the end of September regarding federal funding for the easement on Michael and Tina Garrett's Farm.
  - September and October are good months to cultivate interest within the farming community for farmland easements for grant submittal in the beginning of 2021.
6. **Agriculture Economic Development** – Mike Dupree reported:
  - Agriculture Economic Development Grant – Virtual trainings are complete with a total of 20 participants. The deadline for applications is August 31, 2020. The Committee will meet virtually in September to decide awards, and approval letters will be sent by September 15, 2020 with projects starting November 1, 2020.
  - The District has applied for an NRCS Urban Agriculture Innovative Grant. If awarded, the District will receive a total of \$300,000 over a three-year period.
  - UNC-Chapel Hill has developed an Incubator Guide for businesses.

- The Hub Farm will soon have a greenhouse on its grounds.

## OTHER BUSINESS

1. **Federal Funding for Farmers** – There are several federal funding sources available for farmers, and Celeste Burns will request that Diana Irizarry with the NRCS provide an update on these programs at a future FPAB meeting.
2. **Farm Campus and Inter-Neighborhood Council** – Will Wilson reported that the Farm Campus members have not met in a few months but will meet in September 2020. As President of Durham County’s Inter-Neighborhood Council, Will has learned about funding for employee training grants. He inquired about the possibility of using this funding for work on farms.
3. **Cooperative Extension** – Ashley Troth reported that preliminary interviews have been conducted for the Agricultural Extension Agent position that will focus on working with small farms and local foods. Final virtual interviews consisting of presentations will be conducted on Monday, August 24, 2020. Ashley has sent out information regarding these interviews to interested parties and hopes to get feedback on the presentations.

Donna Rewalt reported that the Food Security Coordinator position funded by the county will be based at Cooperative Extension. In addition, the Visit NC Farms App will be launched this fall. She also reported that Cooperative Extension has been given face masks from the state for distribution to farm workers in Durham County.

4. **Camp Butner Cooperative Agreement** – Jane Korest reported that she and Celeste Burns have been working on a Cooperative Agreement with the National Guard. The Guard is interested in limiting residential development within a mile radius of Camp Butner to reduce conflicts in land use. This Agreement will be in place when funding for conservation easements becomes available.

**Next Meeting** – September 17, 2020 at 8 a.m. The meeting will be held as a virtual Zoom meeting.

**Adjourn** – With no further discussion or business, Chair, Will Wilson adjourned the meeting at 9:01 a.m.

Will Wilson  
Chairman

Cherri Smith  
Soil and Water

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Date approved