

## MINUTES

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

Meeting Number: 2 (Farmland Protection Advisory Board)    Date: February 18, 2021

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

Nicole Connelly – Chair – Little River VAD  
Mark Waller – Vice Chair – Farm Bureau Representative  
Heidi Carter – BOCC Representative  
Nancy Herndon – Cape Fear VAD  
Neil Frank – At Large  
Talmage Layton – Falls VAD  
Jillian Riley – SWCD Board Representative  
Derrick Beasley – DOST Representative  
Matthew Eagle – At Large  
William Sparrow – Business Representative

#### **Others Present:**

Eddie Culberson – Soil & Water  
Lisa Marochak – Soil & Water  
Mike Dupree – Soil & Water  
Cherri Smith – Soil & Water  
Jane Korest – Open Space  
Celeste Burns – Open Space  
Ashley Troth – Cooperative Extension  
Janel Ohletz – Cooperative Extension

*The regular monthly meeting of the Farmland Protection Advisory Board was held on Thursday, February 18, 2021 and called to order at 8:04 am by the Chair. The meeting was held as a virtual Zoom meeting.*

1. **Approval of Board Minutes from January 2021** – Motion made by Mark Waller to approve the minutes, seconded by William Sparrow. Motion passes.
2. **FPAB survey meeting time and dates** – Lisa Marochak reported that based on the survey results from the 15 FPAB member responses, the third Thursday of the month at 6:30 pm worked for the most members. Motion made by Talmage Layton to approve a new meeting time of 6:30 pm on the third Thursday of the month., seconded by Jillian Riley. Motion passes.
  - Nicole Connelly reported that the ordinance governing the FPAB only requires a minimum of six meetings per year. After discussion regarding those months busiest for farmers, it was decided to keep 12 scheduled meetings with the option to cancel a meeting if it is not necessary in a particular month. Notifications to board members will continue as emails or, if preferred, by text message.
3. **Agriculture Economic Development (AED)** – Mike Dupree reported that six of the 13 projects awarded AED Grants have been completed and only one contract has not been executed but is anticipated to be finalized by the deadline of March 15, 2021. The Durham SWCD has requested that the BOCC increase funding for this program from \$50,000 to \$75,000.
  - Heidi Carter questioned whether \$75,000 is enough for this grant program and that maybe \$100,000 is a more appropriate amount to meet the needs of the farming community. Mike Dupree will send the FPAB the statistics from the past four years showing how the funding and demand for funding are aligned. This information will be distributed to the FPAB by Tuesday, February 23, 2021. Motion made by Neil Frank for the board to submit a letter of support to increase funding for the AED Grant Program to \$100,000, seconded by Matthew Eagle. Motion passes. Mike Dupree will draft a letter of support for the Chair to sign by Tuesday, February 23, 2021.

4. **Easements/Open Space** – Jane Korest reported that the second phase of Douglas Daye’s and Scotty McFarland’s easements are underway in addition to Len Needham’s and Michael Garrett’s.
5. **Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD)** – Cherri Smith provided an update on the VAD applications that have been received since the last meeting, and those applications are as follows:
  - Philip and Ellen O’Briant – 93.726 acres on South Lowell Road in Bahama.
  - James and Darleena Wolak – 28.898 acres on Orange Factory Road in Bahama.
  - Coy Berry – 68.647 acres on Red Mountain Road in Rougemont.
  - William Ellis – 18.165 acres on Ellis Chapel Road in Bahama.
  - James and Rose Woods – 26.394 acres on Patterson Road in Durham.

Motion made by Neil Frank to batch and approve the five applications as presented, seconded by Mark Waller. Motion passes.

- ❖ Cherri Smith requested that the FPAB provide money to purchase more VAD signs as well as lumber for the installation of the signs. Motion made by Neil Frank to provide \$900 in funding for the purchase of the signs and \$500 in funding for lumber for the installation of the signs, seconded by Mark Waller. Motion passes.

#### **New Business:**

- A. **Annual Report** – Mike Dupree reported that he is working on the annual report along with Celeste Burns and Cherri Smith. The report is due to the BOCC on March 1, 2021 so a draft will be available for review by the Board before the end of February 2021.
  - Mike Dupree reported that additional information needed for this report includes goals and priorities for 2021 as well as a letter from the Chair outlining accomplishments of the previous calendar year. Lisa Marochak will set up Zoom meeting so that those interested members on the FPAB can provide input on goals and priorities.
  - Mike Dupree recommended that increasing funding for the AED Grant Program should be a goal, and Nicole Connelly would like to have the FPAB conduct a virtual farm tour. Ashley Troth and Janel Ohletz volunteered to help with the video recording for the virtual tour.
- B. **Annual Planning for 2021** – Nicole Connelly recommended that a committee be formed to ensure that the priorities of the FPAB are being realized and the requirements of the FPAB Ordinance are being met. Mike Dupree, Neil Frank, and Nicole Connelly volunteered to serve on this committee.
- C. **FPAB Ordinance Review/Update** – Nicole Connelly recommended that a committee be formed to review and update the FPAB Ordinance. Eddie Culberson, Jane Korest, and Neil Frank volunteered to serve on this committee.
- D. **Roots Farmers Market Update** – Mark Waller requested an update regarding the Roots Farmers Market. Nicole Connelly recommended that this update be provided at the next FPAB meeting.

**Next Meeting** – March 18, 2021 at 6:30 pm. The meeting will be held as a virtual Zoom meeting.

**Adjourn** – With no further discussion or business, Chair, Nicole Connelly adjourned the meeting at 9:19 a.m.

Nicole Connelly  
Chairman

Cherri Smith  
Soil and Water

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Date approved