

MINUTES

Farmland Protection Program Durham Soil and Water Conservation District Hybrid Meeting

Meeting Number: 4 (Farmland Protection Advisory Board) Date: April 21, 2022

Advisory Board Present:

Nicole Connelly – Chair – Little River VAD
Mark Waller – Vice Chair – Farm Bureau Representative
Heidi Carter – County Commissioner
Neil Frank – At Large
Samantha Gasson – At Large
Matthew Eagle – At Large
Talmage Layton – Falls VAD
Nancy Herndon – Cape Fear VAD
Kenny Browning – Eno River VAD
David Heeks – At Large

Others Present:

Donna Rewalt – Cooperative Extension
Sherry Scully – Soil & Water
Lisa Marochak – Soil & Water
Celeste Burns – Open Space
Janel Ohletz – Cooperative Extension
David Harris – Soil & Water
Jane Korest – Open Space
Rickie White – Guest Speaker

The regular monthly meeting of the Farmland Protection Advisory Board was held on Thursday, April 21, 2022, and called to order at 6:08 pm by the Chair. The meeting was held in a hybrid manner from the Farm Bureau Meeting Room.

1. **Approval of February 2022 Board Minutes** – Motion made by Talmage Layton and seconded by Mark Waller. All voted in favor; motion passed to approve minutes.
2. **Financial Report** – Lisa Marochak presented financial update. Voluntary Ag District metal signs have been purchased. Wood for framing of signs will not be purchased in bulk as planned. This will prevent warping of treated wood during storage. Fasteners will be purchased in bulk. Samantha Gasson noted signs in the county that need to be replaced. Lisa asked those present to let District staff know if they see other signs that need replacing.

Fencing School lunch will be an additional expenditure from the budget. Not as many participants have signed up as hoped for.

Lisa presented tote bags and hats discussed in prior meeting. Motion was made to purchase four dozen hats and bags. Mark Waller seconded the motion. Motion passed with unanimous vote. County has not provided deadline to spend remaining funds in budget at this time.

3. **Presentation on Durham Environmental Coalition by Rickie White, Executive Director of Ellerbe Creek Association** – The DEC's goal is to bring groups together that have the same goal. Their mission is 1) To address the lack of recognition of the work of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color and their organizations in the environmental movement and the exclusion of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color from White-led activities and organizations, and to listen to and amplify voices of BIPOC led organizations and individuals; 2) To encourage and support collaboration with community stakeholders and institutions to create synergy and advocate for socially just environmental action, recognizing the critical importance of intersectionality; 3) To encourage and support the work of individual organizations in addressing equity, diversity, and inclusion within their organizations; 4) To provide a space for connection and relationship building between environmental groups and the sharing of information.

Rickie encouraged participation of the Farmland Board in DEC meetings and invited them to contact jordan@ellerbecreek.org to be provided with information for upcoming meetings held once a month.

4. **In-person Farm Tour** – Farm Tour Committee met on April 20. Nicole provided an update from the committee. The committee feels like the farming community has been resilient to the pandemic and wants to highlight farms that have shown optimism. It is the hope of the committee to highlight farms that allow for a compact route. A map is being created by Celeste Burns to aid in this decision. Proposed dates are October 11th or 6th. Program will run from 8-1:00, including lunch.

Talmage suggested that the tour highlight traditional row crop farming found in agricultural area in northern part of county.

Next hybrid planning committee meeting will be held on May 17th at 3pm.

5. **Easements and Open Space** - Celeste Burns provided update. Easement acquisition is still in process with several landowners. Alston Glenn, Cara Glenna and Douglas Daye all own land that was originally part of one of the largest black-owned farms in Durham County along Hampton Rd.
6. **Voluntary Ag District and Agriculture Economic Development Report** – provided by Sherry Scully. Jason Marbrey has applied to enroll 54 acres into the VAD program. This property is located on Redwood Rd. Mr. Marbrey’s property is enrolled in the Present Use Value program. He raises beef cattle and has a forestry plan. Mark Waller made motion to approve this application for VAD enrollment. Talmage Layton seconded. With no questions, motion passed unanimously.

Eight contracts have projects completed and payments made since start of FY22 Grant Program year-7 FY22 contracts and 1 FY21 contract. 3 contracts remain to be funded by June 30, 2022.

7. **Cooperative Extension Report provided by Janel Ohletz and Donna Rewalt - Upcoming Events**

- April 26th – online Forestry Workshop
- May 5th - Fencing School offered by Cooperative Extension and Soil and Water

Janel announced her resignation. Her last day will be April 29th. This position has been posted.

Next Meeting – May 19th at 6:00pm at Farm Bureau or online.

Adjourn – With no further discussion or business, Chair, Nicole Connelly adjourned the meeting at 7:08pm.

Nicole Connelly
Chairman

Sherry Scully
Soil and Water

May 19, 2022
Date approved