

## MINUTES

### Farmland Protection Program Durham Soil and Water Conservation District

Meeting Number: 1 (Farmland Protection Advisory Board) Date: January 15, 2026

#### Advisory Board Present:

Nicole Connelly – Chair, Little River VAD  
John Cowan – Cape Fear VAD  
Carolyn Rose-Seed – At Large  
David Harris – SWCD Board  
Helena Cragg – At Large  
Mark Waller – Farm Bureau Representative  
Kenny Browning – Eno River VAD  
Talmage Layton – Falls VAD

#### Others Present:

Lisa Marochak – Soil & Water  
Sherry Scully – Soil & Water  
Jill Fusco – Open Space & Real Estate  
Celeste Burns – Open Space & Real Estate  
John Lyttle – Cooperative Extension  
Dustin Brewer – Soil & Water  
Robin Schultze – Durham City/County Planning  
Bo Dobrzanski – Durham City/County Planning  
Sylvia Williams  
Donna Stainback  
Pam Watkins  
Gary McLean

*The regular monthly meeting of the Farmland Protection Advisory Board was held on Thursday, January 15, 2026, at Redwood Ruritan. This meeting was called to order at 10:30 am by the chair, Nicole Connelly.*

1. Nicole Connelly opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.
2. **Presentation by Durham Planning and Development Department** provided by Robin Schultze and Bo Dobrzanski concerning UDO updates and timeline.
3. **Approval of December Board Minutes** – Motion made by Kenny Browning to approve the December meeting minutes as submitted. Mark Waller seconded the motion. All in favor; motion passed.
4. **Financial Update** – Lisa Marochak provided update of account expenditures for past month. Sherry Scully requested board to fund the purchase of more swag for VAD and Conservation Easement participants. Board requested that cost estimates be provided in February.
5. **Breakfast Recap** – Sherry Scully announced that 50 people registered for January breakfast. There were 27 in attendance.

February breakfast will be held on February 12 at Cooperative Extension. The topic will be ‘control of fire ants and other invasive species.’ Breakfast will be prepared by Cheralyn Berry and her Master Gardeners group. Reimbursement of breakfast expenses will be provided by the NC Foundation of Soil & Water Conservation, utilizing funds provided by NC Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund.

6. **Farmland Protection Plan Update** – Staff is hoping to receive all data collected by contractor soon. Sherry Scully notified board that she will be reaching out to Farmland Plan Subcommittee soon to hold a meeting to start the process with new contractor, Gerry Cohn. There is \$10,000 in grant funds remaining to complete the plan.
7. **Easements/Open Space** – Celeste Burns provided monthly update. Celeste reminded board that the first Conservation Easement was put into place in 2001 on the Herndon property. This year marks 25 years that the program has been in place in Durham County.

Celeste is working with Durham City/County Planning & Development Department to create and complete a county-wide Open Space Plan.

8. **Soil & Water Conservation District Update** – Sherry Scully provided update on the Ag Economic Development Grant Program.
9. **Cooperative Extension Update** – John Lytle provided details of upcoming events:
  - Jan 21-Mar 18 – Small Farm Boot Camp
  - March 2-June 15 – NC Farm School
10. **Durham Open Space and Trails Commission Update** – No report.

**New Business** – Mark Waller provided an update from the Environmental Affairs Board.

**Adjourn** – With no additional business, Chair Connelly adjourned the meeting at 11:15am.

Nicole Connelly  
Chairman

Sherry Scully  
Soil and Water

February 12  
Date approved