

## MINUTES

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

Meeting Number: 2 (Farmland Protection Advisory Board)      Date: March 20, 2025

#### Advisory Board Present:

Nicole Connelly – Chair, Little River VAD  
Deborah Luecken – DOST Representative  
John Cowan – Cape Fear VAD  
Matthew Eagle – At large  
Samantha Gasson – At Large  
Mark Waller – Farm Bureau Representative  
Chris young – Business Representative  
Douglas Daye – Flat River VAD  
Kenny Browning – Eno River VAD  
Helena Cragg – At Large

#### Others Present:

Lisa Marochak – Soil & Water  
Sherry Scully – Soil & Water  
Celeste Burns – Open Space & Real Estate  
Brittany Eagle  
Neil Frank  
Carolyn Rose-Seed  
Alan Toney – Foothills Regional Council

*The regular monthly meeting of the Farmland Protection Advisory Board was held on Thursday, May, 2025 at Durham Farm Bureau. This meeting was called to order at 6:06pm by the chair, Nicole Connelly.*

1. Nicole Connelly opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.
2. **Approval of January Board Minutes** – Motion made by David Harris to approve the January meeting minutes as submitted. Talmage Layton seconded the motion. Nicole called for vote; motion passed.
3. **Guest Presentation** - Durham City/County Planners, Robin Schultze and Bo Dobrzanski, presented information on Durham's New UDO. They shared three important components of this proposal: District Standards, Use Table and Zoning Map. The Comprehensive Plan considers and supports agriculture. Changes to agricultural allowances have been updated due to previous public input. Planners encouraged public comments to be made through their online interactive map and through Open Office Hours. Updates to the UDO have been made based on engagement.

Planners will share presentation, documentation, and links shared during the meeting that will be shared to group following the meeting.

4. **Membership Update** – Lisa Marochak announced the resignation of Neil Frank who serves in an At-Large position. The board, therefore, currently has two At-Large positions vacant. Applications have been received by Heidi Grable and Helena Cragg. Samantha Gasson moved to Accept Helena Cragg in At-Large position. David Heeks seconded the motion. Discussion (Helena left the meeting room during discussion and vote.) Nicole asked for a vote. All voted in favor; motion passed.

Nicole asked board members to consider others in the ag community who may be interested in the vacant position. All applicants will be considered at the next meeting.

5. **Financial Report** – Lisa provided balance of account and the changes in expected costs in the past two months. Three hundred dollars were allocated to cover the costs of the FPP Community Engagement Event. The Foothills Regional Commission covered these costs. Lisa requested that these funds be allotted to the cost to provide a pizza lunch to the Southern High School Construction Class building the VAD signs. David Harris stated this request in the form of a motion; David Heeks seconded. All in favor, motion passed.

Lisa requested additional funding be allocated to cover the cost of VAD sign replacement. David Harris made a motion to increase the funding amount of VAD construction costs. David Heeks seconded the motion. All in favor of this motion; motion passed.

RN Harris submitted a request for her gardening needs of shovels and seed starting soil and pots in the amount of \$161. David Harris and David Heeks made a motion and seconded to support this request by RN Harris. Nicole called for a vote. Motion approved by unanimous vote.

6. **FPP/Ordinance and Community Engagement Event Recap** – Sherry Scully reported that the FPP Community Engagement Event was held on March 6 at 6pm at the Bahama Ruritan Club. There were 44 people in attendance. This event was led by contractor, Magnolia Long with Foothills Regional Commission. She and two colleagues made a presentation on the Farmland Protection Plan and its purpose. They then led a discussion in three breakout sessions to discuss agriculture in Durham. A Post Station Questionnaire was also provided to participants.
7. **VAD Update** – Sherry Scully reported that one application was received this past month from Kerry and Donna Stainback. Their 31-acre property has a forestry management plan and is located at 4809 Rogers Rd. Motion was made to approve this application for the VAD by David Heeks. Second made by Mark Waller. The vote in favor was unanimous. (Donna Stainback present at this meeting and excused herself from this item of business.)
8. **Easements/Open Space** – Celeste Burns provided information on a new conservation easement project on the property owned by Robin Davis. Celeste plans to apply for funding through the City of Durham Water Protection Program to establish this easement of 19.24 acres on Mason Road. The majority (88%) of its soils are considered Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Celeste requested the support of the board for this project. Deborah Luecken made a motion to support this request. Mark Waller seconded the motion. All members in attendance were in favor of the motion; motion passed.

Celeste Burns provided a “Farm Easement Summary” that summed up all Durham County Farm Easements on 2,422 acres acquired since 2001. She also spoke of those properties that are currently “In Process.” These amount to 226 acres on 7 farms.

Documentation provided to the board of Robin Davis’s property and Farm Easement Summary.

9. **Soil & Water Conservation District Update** – Lisa Marochak made Board aware of the District’s upcoming events and opportunities:
  - Annual [Pond Clinic](#) scheduled for May 17<sup>th</sup> from 9am-1pm.
  - [Bookmark Contest](#) submissions for their 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade Contest
  - [Resource Conservation Workshop](#) – Applications are being accepted from high school students interested in attending NCSU camp learning about natural resources
  - Ant Spreader available for rent
10. **Cooperative Extension Update** – Donna Rewalt, Rain Bunnag Goldstein, John Lyttle and Cheralyn Berry contributed to the update and can be contacted for further information on the events below:
  - [Master Gardener Plant Sale](#) – April 5<sup>th</sup>, 10am
  - [Briggs Community Garden Plant Sale](#) – April 12<sup>th</sup> 10am-2pm
  - [CEFS lunch webinar](#) – April 15<sup>th</sup>
  - Poultry Processing Workshop – April 23<sup>rd</sup>
  - DPS Hub Farm Partnership Pollinator Educational Workshop coming up
  - Final feasibility Study for Farm Campus will be presented to BOCC Work Session on April 7
  - Capital Planning Process for Orange Factory Rd is starting

Contact Cooperative Extension staff for more information on all events

**Adjourn** – With no additional business, Chair Connelly adjourned the meeting at 7:51 pm.

Nicole Connelly  
Chairman

Sherry Scully  
Soil and Water

May 15, 2025  
Date approved