

MINUTES

Farmland Protection Program Durham Soil and Water Conservation District

Meeting Number: 6 (Farmland Protection Advisory Board) Date: November 21, 2024

Advisory Board Present:

Nicole Connelly – Chair, Little River VAD
Heidi Carter – County Commissioner
David Heeks – At Large
Talmage Layton – Falls VAD
Chris Young – Business Representative
Kenny Browning – Eno River VAD
Deborah Luecken – DOST Representative
Douglas Daye – Flat River VAD
David Harris – SWCD Board Representative
John Cowan – Cape Fear VAD

Others Present:

Lisa Marochak – Soil & Water
Sherry Scully – Soil & Water
Celeste Burns – Open Space & Real Estate
Raina Goldstein Bunag – Cooperative Extension
John Lyttle – Cooperative Extension
Donna Rewalt – Cooperative Extension
Nancy Herndon
Sandra Layton

The regular monthly meeting of the Farmland Protection Advisory Board was held on Thursday, November 22, 2024 at Durham Farm Bureau. This meeting was called to order at 6:10 pm by the Chair, Nicole Connelly.

1. Nicole Connelly opened meeting and welcomed everyone.
2. **Approval of September Board Minutes** – Nicole Connelly requested approval of the September meeting minutes submitted. Motion was made by Kenny Browning and seconded by Talmage Layton. Nicole called for vote; motion passed.
3. Nicole Connelly recognized Nancy Herndon and thanked her for her years of service as the Cape Fear Representative to the board. Heidi Carter was in attendance for her last meeting as the BOCC representative. Nicole thanked Heidi for her continued support over the years.
4. **Financial Report** – Lisa Marochak provided financial report. Sherry requested funds be pre-approved to cover the cost of two upcoming breakfasts. Kenny Browning made motion to approve \$250 be set aside to cover costs of breakfasts. David Harris seconded the motion. Motion passed.
5. **Membership Update** – Lisa Marochak reminded Board that there is still a vacant at-large board appointed position. If members know someone they would like to recommend, please let Nicole, Lisa or Sherry know.
6. **Farmer Breakfast Update** – Sherry Scully presented the logistics of the upcoming winter farmer breakfasts.
 - December 12 @ 8am at Farm Bureau; insurance will be topic of presentation
 - January 16 @ 8am at Farm Bureau; farm law will be topic of presentation
7. **FPP Community Engagement Event** – This event postponed to February due to contractor for the Farmland Protection Plan being detailed to Western Carolina FEMA work.
 - February 20 @ 6pm at Bahama Ruritan Bldg – this event will be led by contractor, Foothills Regional Commission.

This conversation led to topic of Community Engagement Phase of draft of UDO. Celeste Burns provided background of the UDO and encouragement of board to provide input. Sherry Scully will follow up with

email to board members with details and opportunities to learn more. Durham County/City Planner will attend the January Board meeting to aid in further discussion on how current and future agriculture are addressed in the UDO.

8. **Easements/Open Space Update** – Celeste Burns notified board of three fully funded conservation easement projects that are planned for closing in the first quarter of 2025. These include Clara Glenn, Bill Sparrow, Jr. and Neil Frank, Phase 2. She reported that two USDA-NRCS ACEP-ALE easement proposals submitted in October are looking optimistic on properties owned by Ken Wolfe and Cliff Teasley. Additionally, Camp Butner National Guard funding is also looking optimistic for Tilley Farm, Phase 4.

Celeste continues to stay abreast with UDO updates as they relate to both farmland protection and general land conservation.

9. **Ag Economic Development Grant Update** – Sherry Scully provided progress of the AED Grant program. FY 2024 only eight contracts are outstanding of the thirty-two approved. The majority of the FY 2025 contracts have been written and fully signed with 5 remaining applicants not yet contracted with. Two applicants of this current year have begun work and requested partial payment.

10. **VAD Update** – Sherry Scully received two applications for VAD renewal.

- 28.70 acres on N Roxboro Rd owned by Patsy Andrews
- 159.2 acres on N Roxboro Rd owned by Pope Farm C 1987, LLC

Kenny Browning made a motion to approved these applications for renewal. Samantha Gasson seconded the motion. Chair called for a vote; motion passed.

11. **Ordinance Revision** – Sherry Scully reported that Eddie Culberson, Lisa Marochak, Celeste Burns and herself have been working on the Farmland Protection Ordinance and have met with the Board subcommittee to work make progress on this update.

12. **Cooperative Extension Update** – Raina Goldstein Bunnag and John Lyttle provided presentation of the Farm Campus Community Engagement Report that was recently completed in partnership with CoSperra Consulting. They outlined the components investigated during the outreach process and the findings from surveys and focus groups. This report will be utilized when moving forward with the plans of Farm Campus.

New Business

Next Meeting – December 12th at 10:15am at the Durham Farm Bureau office or online.

Adjourn – With no additional business, Chair Connelly adjourned the meeting at 7:56 pm.

Nicole Connelly
Chairman

Sherry Scully
Soil and Water

December 12, 2024
Date approved