

Agriculture, Seafood and Forestry Board (Thursday, February 10, 2022)
Generated by Lisa Ledman

Members present

Stephen Reeves, Bonnie Browne, Phil Dorsey, Katlyn Fraer, James "Bubby" Norris, Donna Sasscer, Michael Sirk, Joseph Wood, Bruce Young

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 12:10 PM

2. ROLL CALL

A. Confirmation of Quorum

Members present included Stephen Reeves, Bonnie Browne, Phil Dorsey, Katlyn Fraer, James "Bubby" Norris, Donna Sasscer, Michael Sirk, Joseph Wood, Bruce Young

B. Welcome Guests

Kellie Hinkle, St. Mary's County Economic Development

Lisa Ledman, St. Mary's County Economic Development

Sue Veith, St. Mary's County Economic Development

Caroline King, Southern Maryland Resource Conservation & Development

Viv Marek, Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust

Jamie Raley, St. Mary's County Farm Bureau

George Erichsen, Director, St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission

Harry Knight, St. Mary's County Land Use and Growth Management

B. Approval of the December 9, 2021 Minutes

I move to approve Minutes from November 9, 2021 Agriculture, Seafood & Forestry Board Meeting. Motion by Joseph Wood, second Michael Sirk

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Stephen Reeves, Bonnie Browne, Phil Dorsey, Katlyn Fraer, James "Bubby" Norris, Donna Sasscer, Michael Sirk, Joseph Wood, Bruce Young

3. PRESENTATION

A. METCOM Sanitary Sewer Overflow

George Erichsen spoke to the Board about METCOM Sanitary Sewer Overflow situations due to recent tidal surges. METCOM implemented a process to pump the affected area using trucks to transport 495,000 gallons of waste directly to the Marley Taylor Plant, however over the 3 day tidal surge, 28,000 of waste were leaked into the watershed area. Maryland COMAR states that anything under 10,000 gallons does not require a large public notice but further down in COMAR it states that all spills need notification. METCOM used the County Reverse 911 telephone feature and Facebook to notify the public when these spills occurred. Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) was also notified even though the spill was not large enough to require so. There appears to have been a communication breakdown between MDE the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Persons in Loudoun County who attended an event where oysters harvested from this area were served and got sick. The water in this area nor the oysters were ever tested. Since this incident all agencies. the Maryland Department of Health, have been in communication and protocols have been updated . METCOM is currently

in the process of fitting grinder pumps with enclosed caps. An Enclosed Pump Station has been researched but at this time is too expensive to implement.

B. Discuss Public Hearing to amend the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance for new uses Solar, Major and Solar, Minor

Harry Knight updated the Board on proposed changes to amend the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance in regards to Solar. There is the potential to support our current needs and export extra wattage without touching farmland. SMECO's regulations will not allow for community solar projects. Community Solar is smaller scale and serves 2 or more users. Accessory Solar serves only a principle use and can sell excess to the grid. Industrial/Utility Scale Solar is considered Solar, Major. The Board would like to see incentives for installing solar panels on commercial properties, rebates or credits could take pressure off other areas to be developed.

I move to draft a letter to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County to

Support your efforts to insure a viable energy source for our communities with a minimal carbon footprint

Request that Solar Major, Utility-scale solar generating systems designation for the Rural Preservation District (RPD) be classified as a "conditional" use (C), rather than as a "permitted" (P) one. A conditional use designation requires final approval by our board of appeals, and therefore allows authorities additional leverage in directing commercial solar utilities toward preferred areas and away from our prime agricultural soils and from Priority Preservation Areas as designated by the St. Mary's County Comprehensive Plan.

Request applications for all Solar Major, Utility-scale solar generating systems, in the RPD, begin with concept site plans presented to the St. Mary's County Planning Commission. Purpose is to provide public notice at the beginning of the process and to encourage comment throughout the application period.

Identify preferred locations in the ordinance as proposed by the St. Mary's County Bureau draft testimony.

Motion by Phil Dorsey, second Katlyn Fraer

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Stephen Reeves, Phil Dorsey, Katlyn Fraer, James "Bubby" Norris, Donna Sasscer, Michael Sirk, Bruce Young

Nay: Bonnie Browne, Joseph Wood

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Farmers Markets

Subcommittee membership includes Joe Wood, Phil Langley, Scott Bacon, and Phil Dorsey. The North and California Farmers Markets are closed until the Spring. The Home Grown Farm Market will be open year round with the exception of Christmas and New Years. A special Valentine Market is planned for February 12th.

B. Agriculture Land Preservation Advisory Board

Subcommittee membership includes Phil Langley, Alan Polk, Steve Reeves, Michael Sirk, and Joseph Wood.

Met at the conclusion of Board meeting to discuss 2 Child Lot Requests, 1 Owner's Lot Request and an Easement Violation. The following motions were made:

I move to approve the Child's Lot Request from MALPF File # 18-85-03. Motion by Joseph Wood, second Stephen Reeves.

Yea: Stephen Reeves, Michael Sirk, Joseph Wood

I move to approve the amended Child's Lot Request from MALPF File # 18-03-94-02A. Motion by Michael Sirk, second Joseph Wood.

Yea: Stephen Reeves, Michael Sirk, Joseph Wood

I move to approve the Owner's Lot Request from MALPF File # 18-11-04. Motion by Michael Sirk, second Stephen Reeves.

Yea: Stephen Reeves, Michael Sirk, Joseph Wood

I move to approve the curative action for the conveyance of the 4.53-acres with a dwelling be revised so that only 1.53 acres need to be conveyed to the property, and that the transfer of a development right is no longer necessary to cure the violation from MALPF File # 18-99-11. Motion by Joseph Wood, second Stephen Reeves.

Yea: Stephen Reeves, Michael Sirk, Joseph Wood

C. Agriculture Reconciliation Committee

Subcommittee membership include Bonnie Browne, Phil Dorsey, Charles Mattingly, Alan Polk, and Steve Reeves.

No update.

5. OLD BUSINESS

A. Seafood/Aquaculture Updates

No update.

B. The Barns at New Market

Caroline King updated the Board that the electrical panel has finally arrived and is installed. An opening of the Seasonal Market Building will happen close to Easter. The Boardwalk construction contract has been awarded.

C. Maryland Agriculture Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF)

Lisa Ledman informed the Board that FY2023 applications will be accepted until May 1st.

D. Rural Legacy

Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust (PTLT) – Viv Marek gave the Board a recap of PTLT's efforts during 2021. PTLT has submitted their FY23 Rural Legacy Grant.

Southern Maryland Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) – Caroline King shared that Cindy Greb is no longer with RC&D and Ms. King will serve as the interim director. RC&D is currently processing 5 Rural Legacy applications. RC&D has submitted their FY23 Rural Legacy Grant with a request to expand the Mattapany Rural Legacy Area.

E. Regional Agriculture Center (RAC)

Donna Sasscer stated that the County Commissioners and Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission (SMADC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in December. The County has committed an additional \$3.5 Million to this project.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Board Member Open Comment Period

On Farm Events and Election of Officers will be added to the April meeting agenda.

B. Partner Updates

None.

7. ADJOURN

I move to adjourn the February 10, 2022 Agriculture, Seafood & Forestry Board Meeting.

Motion by Michael Sirk, second Joseph Wood.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Stephen Reeves, Bonnie Browne, Phil Dorsey, Katlyn Fraer, James "Bubby" Norris, Donna Sasscer, Michael Sirk, Joseph Wood, Bruce Young