

Agriculture, Seafood and Forestry Board (Thursday, April 14, 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

Allison Burnett, Southern Maryland Resource Conservation & Development

Caroline King, Southern Maryland Resource Conservation & Development

Viv Marek, Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust

Jamie Raley, St. Mary's County Farm Bureau

Arthur Shepherd, Director, St. Mary's County Recreation & Parks

Christina Bishop, St. Mary's County Recreation & Parks

Barbara Sapato, Visit St. Mary's

B. Approval of the February 10, 2022 Minutes

I move to approve Minutes from February 10, 2022 Agriculture, Seafood & Forestry Board Meeting as amended with regards to the motion for Solar. Motion by Joseph Wood, second James "Bubby" Norris

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. On Farm Events

Barbara Sapato, Executive Director of Visit St. Mary's updated the Board on the status of events in the Rural Preservation District (RPD). Visit St. Mary's has been tasked with collecting complaints received by the County and is currently entering them in a database and quarterly reports are being submitted to the Commissioners of St. Mary's. July will mark an entire year since complaints have officially been tracked. County regulations state that for 50+ acres are allowed to have 20 events per year, properties less than 50 acres must apply for a permit for each event. Some of the properties have come together to form the St. Mary's County Farm Venue Wedding Association (SMCFVWA), which is attempting to self regulate with abiding by good neighbor practices including no events after 10 pm and not using amplified music. AT this time the SMCFVWA is not concerned with increasing the number of events they are allowed however they would like for the definition of agri-tourism to be changed to include

on farm events such as weddings. There is also concern of the property tax assessment of land and buildings where these events are taking place. The St. Mary's County Tax Assessor will be invited to the next ASFB meeting to discuss this issue.

B. Land Preservation Parks and Recreation Plan

Arthur Shepherd, Director of the St. Mary's County Recreation and Parks and Christina Bishop presented the Board with updated information to Section 5. Agriculture Land Preservation of the Draft St. Mary's County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan. The plan was last approved in 2017 and is required to be updated every 5 years. The same consultant that prepared the plan in 2017 was used this time as well. Mr. Wood questioned additional funding sources to cover the rising costs of easement purchase, Ms. Veith stated that the County is maintaining its commitment and looking for additional outside sources (such as using REPI funds for MALPF Easements). Mr. Young asked what happens to ag land when it is purchased by the Department of Recreation and Parks, Mr. Shepherd stated that if DNR Program Open Space or REPI funds are used then it will be used for passive recreation.

I move to draft a letter to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County to Section 5 of the St. Mary's County Land Preservation Park and Recreation Plan.

Motion by Joseph Wood, second Phil Dorsey

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

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

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Farmers Markets

Subcommittee membership includes Joe Wood, Phil Langley, Scott Bacon, and Phil Dorsey.

The Barns at New Market opened for the season on April 9th, vendors may open Monday through Saturday from 9 am until 4 pm. The California Farmers Markets will open for the season on April 30th on Saturdays from 9 am until 1 pm. The Home Grown Farm Market will be open year round with the exception of Christmas and New Years, on Saturdays only from 9 am until 1 pm. .

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 Lot Requests on MALPF Easement properties. The following motions were made:

I move to deny the Lot Request from MALPF File # 18-04-02-14 as it does not meet MALPF location guidelines. Motion by Joseph Wood, second Stephen Reeves.

Yea: Phil Langley, Stephen Reeves, Michael Sirk, Joseph Wood

I move to deny the Lot Request from MALPF File # 18-20-10 as it does not meet MALPF location guidelines. Motion by Michael Sirk, second Stephen Reeves.

Yea: Phil Langley, 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

Phil Langley updated the Board about a shell issue on the Potomac River above the 301 bridge, the water is too fresh, the fossilized shells need to be moved to a more salinity area for spawning.

B. The Barns at New Market

Donna Sasscer thanked the Board for coming to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County's Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at the North St. Mary's County Farmers Market. A larger Grand Opening Ceremony will be planned for the summer-time when the Value-Added Building opens. On April 12th, the Commissioners signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a management entity, in 2 weeks a lease agreement will be signed. The Seasonal Building opened for sales on April 9th. The Department of Public Works and Transportation has ordered equipment including freezer and refrigerator cases.

C. Maryland Agriculture Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF)

Donna Sasscer informed the Board that FY2023 applications will be accepted until May 1st. FY2022 offers have been made.

D. Rural Legacy

Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust (PTLT) – Viv Marek told the Board that PTLT has 1 easement settlement pending.

Southern Maryland Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) – Caroline King shared that RC&D has a new Executive Director and introduced Ms. Allison Burnett. RC&D is moving forward with 3 easements and has funding for new applicants.

E. Regional Agriculture Center (RAC)

There is no updated at this time.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Board Member Open Comment Period

Phil Dorsey informed the Board that the Commissioners of St. Mary's County approved the amendment to the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance for new uses Solar, Major and Solar, Minor.

B. Partner Updates

None.

7. ADJOURN

I move to adjourn the April 14, 2022 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

