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Agriculture Advisory Board

Minutes

Agriculture Advisory Board Meeting

October 14, 2014

Called to order at 7:05 pm

Present: Esta Cohen, Sharon Day, Sam Groce, Cathy Jones and Robin Kohanowich. Also present: Tandy Jones, invited member of the public. Absent: Joseph Wachs and Justin Brooks.

Old Business:

Previous minutes: approved

New Business:

VAD application:

Larry W. Harris, farms 27 acres, chicken, cattle and hogs. Cathy Jones motion to approve; Sharon Day second. Unanimous approval.

New member applications:

Dr. John Dykers, Tandy Jones, Thomas (Chip) Price, Ronnie Vaughn, Larry Harris.

Will submit applicants names to BOC for approval at next BOC meeting.

Ag Advisory Board seeking new members for full county representation. 4 spots remain vacant.

Report from Ag Advisory Board chair: Esta Cohen has been attending BOC and Planning Board meetings on behalf of the AAB. Has also met with Jason Sullivan (*Planning Dept Chair*), and Angela Birchett (*Land Use Administrator/Zoning*) of the County Planning Office to insure that we are not working at cross-purposes with the County, as well as to make sure that Agriculture is not forgotten in zoning protections.

Discussion:

Per County Planners: county does not 'zone' for agriculture.

Why did the R40 (Ag/Res) disappear into only R1 (residential)

Continue working on updating VAD map

Easement maps from TLC and Piedmont

Encourage those farms that qualify for inclusion in the VAD to make application

Issue with Raleigh rule change which allows for obtaining a farm ID # without proof of agricultural status (change in Federal law?)

How can the AAB effectively assist Chatham County in the projected upcoming zoning discussions?

What parts of the Farmland Protection Plan are best suited for inclusion?

Farmland status- what qualifies as a bonafide farm?

Present use value, farm sales tax receipt, property tax listing, schedule F. Farm ID # issued by USDA.

Tandy Jones- (guest) try to designate areas of low density / high density - trade-offs, landowners need to be compensated for loss of development rights; action limited by available funds.

Esta- look to at other county zoning plans that protect Ag.

How can we (AAB) keep agriculture needs and value in the discussion as projected development proceeds in Chatham?

Water issues: Chatham Park was OK'd by the Town of Pittsboro to develop under urban development allowance of 70% impervious surfaces;

Long term effect on underground water supply...known or unknown? State may have the information.

Water quality and water sourcing. Built-out development will exponentially increase water demand.

Resources: VAD maps can help visualize what land area is in agriculture. 20-25% of Chatham County farms are in VAD (leads the state in included farms).

Forestry acreage and agriculture take up a considerable quantity of Chatham County land.

How do we encourage more VAD participation?

Articulate the value of VAD to current farmers/ forestry land owners

Can protect from "takings"

Farms included in VAD are entitled to have public hearing before land can be taken by eminent domain

VAD is tied to title, so those buying neighboring properties will see VAD farm on title search

AAB continue to work with BOC to keep agricultural values and needs in full view.

Meeting adjourned: 8:45 pm

Next meeting Tuesday, November 11th, **6:30 pm** (note time change). This is Veteran's Day.