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## *Agriculture Advisory Board*

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### **Minutes**

Agriculture Advisory Board  
November 11, 2014

**Called to order, 7 pm**

**Present:** Esta Cohen, Sam Groce, Cathy Jones, Ronnie Vaughn, Larry Harris, John Dykers, Joseph Wachs, Tandy Jones, Chip Price, Sharon Day

Introduction and welcome of new members was given by Esta.

A quick review of the back ground information about Voluntary Agriculture Districts (VAD) was given. Article 61 of the North Carolina Legislative Statutes gives counties the right to establish VADs, and provides for county ordinances establishing VAD boards. Chatham County's ordinance, following the guidelines of GS 106-739 confers upon Chatham's VAD board the ability to advise the Board of Commissioners on agricultural issues, as well as hold public hearings on public projects likely to have an impact on agricultural operations.

### **Old Business**

The minutes of the last meeting were corrected and approved.

### **New Business**

1) Several new members were approved by the BOC and were in attendance.

2) Esta read a portion of the annual Environmental Review Board report to the BOC in which it was stated that the ERB will take into consideration the impact projects coming before them for review will have on agriculture. The report was included in the BOC consent agenda, and approved.

3) We discussed contacting other committees to share our concerns about Chatham county agriculture in an effort to coordinate efforts and understanding between county committees and our board.

4) The BOC have been reviewing zoning in Chatham County. Esta has attended several zoning meetings and inquired about how agricultural areas and the county's commitment to "preserve the rural and agricultural nature" is being dealt with.

As a board we discussed our desire to be a part of zoning discussions. We reviewed a county map of VADs and plan to review and discuss the existing farm preservation plan for the next meeting.

The board members talked about ways to increase VAD membership and to encourage agricultural infrastructure within the county. The importance of the Land Use Tax rules were discussed and a need to keep the system honest and true to its purpose was emphasized.

Board members agreed to encourage farming neighbors to apply for VAD approval.

Sam will work on reprinting explanation fliers for the public.

5) The new agriculture building is scheduled to break ground the week of Nov. 17<sup>th</sup>. Sam told the group about the excellent bond rating, and the nearly full building budget approval.

6) VAD applications- John Hessey's application was approved.

7) Jeremy Poss's resignation was announced. The position has been posted.

8) The board expressed a desire to talk to with the EDC about the importance of Ag. related businesses and farms to the County's future. We will pursue inviting an EDC member to one of our meetings to share our thoughts.

**Next Meeting (Jan. 13<sup>th</sup> at 7pm ) Agenda**

1) What can be done to increase the VAD in number and acreage?

2) Review of Farm Preservation Plan

3) Updates on the new Agriculture building

4) **Possible moving of January meeting to Siler if appropriate meeting place can be found.**

**Suggestions?**

**Meeting Adjourned**