



*Agriculture Advisory Board*

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Agenda

Agriculture Advisory Board

October 11, 2016 7:00PM Ag Building.

Call to Order

Approval of Minutes:

From September 13, 2016

Old Business

Answers to strategic map questions

Hall of Fame

New Business

VAD applications

Ag Focus Group

Adjournment





*Agriculture Advisory Board*

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**Approved Minutes**

Agriculture Advisory Board

September 13, 2016 7:00PM Siler City Town Hall Building

**Called to order, 7:10pm**

**Present:** Esta Cohen (Chair), Sam Groce (NCCES), Ronnie Vaughn, Tandy Jones, Sharon Day, Joe Wachs, Bobby Tucker, Thomas "Chip" Price, Dr. J. Dykers, Joe Wachs,

**Absent:** Larry Harris, Terrill Ellington, Cathy Jones, Walter Petty (BOC liaison)

**Approval of Minutes**

Changes to June 14 2016 minutes:

- Add "Dr. J. Dykers" to absent.

Motion to approve by Sharon Day with aforementioned changes. Second by Joe Wachs. Unanimous approval.

**Old Business**

**Review of County GIS Maps:** Esta requested that board members provide notification of known discrepancies.

**Farmer Hall of Fame:** Spring Banquet. Sam mentioned the need to set a firm date for the spring. Applications sent to the general community. County is adding a new online form for electronic submission. Members of Ag Advisory Board can also submit recommendations prior to voting to induct. Notice of applications to be sent within two weeks with closing deadline of January 1, 2017.

**Status of the Building.** Possible March date for ribbon cutting for the new building in conjunction with Farm Bureau sponsored ag-education events. The new building is likely to be opened to the public for rental starting in January.

**New Business**

1. **VAD Applications-** Two new applications to be sent via email by Sam for board approval; he did not have them present for approval. They will be brought to the next meeting.
2. **County Comprehensive Plan:** Tandy reported on the Ag focus group sub-committee meeting with the County Planning Department and the consultants. The intent of the meeting was to get input from variety of people in agriculture regarding what is important for protecting Chatham agriculture. Tandy mentioned the recent county-wide survey that indicated that the number one priority for survey

participants was to preserve the rural character of Chatham County. Map created by independent conservation/preservation non-profits that rank farmlands in Chatham for preservation. There was a strong suggestion by several Ag Advisory Board members to include an ordinance revision focused on protecting water resources of existing farmers. Bobby noted that due to the fractured nature of ground water supply in the Piedmont, it is 'impossible' to accurately quantify long-term well capacities, nor strategically plan for and allocate ground water supply volumes between agricultural and other development demands. He suggested one option would be to require developments (over a minimum size and/or density) adjacent to VAD farm lands to supplement all or part of their water supply using surface water capture and treatment in-lieu of ground water sources (which is the primary source of water for Chatham agriculture). It was also noted that only 25% of bona-fide farms in Chatham County participate in the VAD, and that the number and location of all bona-fide farms is not publically available information. FSA information is confidential.

Discussion regarding the consultants Strategic Farmland Map followed Tandy's report. Questions raised included the following:

- o What is the name of the organization that drew the map?
- o What was their purpose in creating the map?
- o What was the criteria they used in rating farmland areas?
- o Were these individual farms that were rated or general areas?
- o What effected high or low ratings?
- o Were farming practices of any consideration?

Esta will try to get the answers to the above questions.

3. **Ag-Board By-laws:** Current status of by-laws was reported by Esta and Ronnie, although discussion was postponed to next board meeting.
  
4. **Mountaire Farms:** Chip provided a report from the Mountaire Farms public meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:46pm.