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Agriculture Advisory Board

FINAL Minutes

Agriculture Advisory Board

August 8, 2017 7:00 PM Ag Building

Called to order, 7:02 pm

Present: Esta Cohen (Chair), Sam Groce (NCCES), Tandy Jones, Sharon Day, Bobby Tucker, Dr. J. Dykers, Terrill Ellington, Joe Wachs, Cathy Jones, Ronnie Vaughn, Charlie Bolton (guest), Clarence Durham (guest)

Absent:

Approval of March 2017 Minutes

Approved unanimously

Old Business

The Board needs to answer the questions solicited to the group regarding the Agricultural Area (zoning district/overlay) specified in the Comprehensive Plan. Tandy suggested that all members speak directly to the Planning Department staff regarding any questions. Esta emphasized the need for Ag Board members to read the plan, decide what they like and don't like, and compile responses as a group. Additional land use ordinances will need to be required to allow non-residential uses, alternative development models, etc., within the R1 zoning district.

Dr. Dykers inquired about what other social conflicts would be encountered with the growing county population (e.g., odor complaints against chicken houses). The group response centered around water with great concern regarding long-term groundwater supply. Tandy mentioned that the Ag Advisory Board is the best-positioned group to guide the County Commissioners and Planners regarding agriculture interests – the next two years being the most important as aspects of the Comprehensive Plan are implemented.

The following questions still need discussion and resolution among the Ag Advisory Board.

- a. Is this area where we want to prioritize agriculture?
- b. More flexibility for non-residential uses and lower residential densities) Is that ok?
- c. Weigh in on utility extensions.

- i. The board agrees that protection of groundwater resources is highly important to the agriculture community – how to protect these resources is uncertain
 - ii. Sewer service is more a limiting factor to development than county water supply.
 - iii. Extension of county water would benefit some farm activities (e.g., chicken houses), but not others (e.g., nursery growers).
- d. Should the Ag Adv. Board work to clarify utility policies as they relate to the ag area?

Agricultural Conservation Ordinance

The Conservation Agreement needs to be notarized before it can be finalized. Applications can be accepted but not voted on until then. Previously accepted applications need to be audited; if they want to stay in they need to sign and notarize the conservation agreement.

New Business

Sam is retiring at end of August and his placement, and liason to the Ag Board, is currently undecided.

A group of EDC directors are trying to recruit agri-businesses into several local counties (Harnett, Johnston, Lee, Chatham). Statistics reported in a presentation sent to Sam seemed inaccurate to the group.

A final farewell and thanks to Sam Groce was given for 34 years of service with the state (both Education Dept. and NCCES).

Meeting adjourned at 9:04 pm.