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Agricultural Advisory Board

FINAL Minutes

Agricultural Advisory Board

May 8, 2018 7:00 PM CCACC (Chatham County Agriculture Conference Center)

Called to order, 7:00 pm

Present: Cathy Jones (Vice-Chair), Bobby Tucker (Secretary), Henry Outz (Chatham Soil and Water), Sharon Day, Esta Cohen, Terrill Ellington, Ginger Cunningham (NCCES Director), Doug Ellis (guest)

Absent: Tandy Jones (Chair), Walter Petty (BOC liaison), Joe Wachs, Dr. J. Dykers, Wesley Hancock

1. Agenda Discussion

Tandy was absent, so Cathy welcomed everyone and solicited input regarding the agenda. No changes suggested.

2. Introduction of Guests

Doug Ellis introduced himself and spoke regarding his concerns about neighbors trying to stop him from applying sludge by complaining about heavy truck traffic. Ginger will have the County Attorney contact Doug to provide guidance (Doug Ellis, 915 Barker Rd., Bear Creek).

3. Discussion/Approval of Minutes

The April minutes were not approved due to lack of a quorum.

4. Update on VAD Program by Henry

Henry attended a program on VAD run by David Hardy. Recommendations presented at the program include:

- County Ordinance should mirror the State Ordinance.
- The ½ mile notification can't be extended to 1 mile.

- At least one member on Ag Advisory Board should be a registered forester.
- The Ordinance should follow the Present Use Value (PUV) Guidance Document posted by the Department of Revenue.
- County Ag Boards can decide VAD acreage thresholds.
- Ag Boards should review the long-range transportation plan developed by the County (if available).
- Every County in the state would benefit from having a VAD to help deter rapid development pressures.
- The GIS map that shows the VAD districts can serve as a legal notification to the presence of active farms.
- The NCDA should receive an annual report by each County with VADs and EVADs with number of farms enrolled, and their respective acreage.
- The Ag Boards should lobby County commissioners for funding of Extension and Soil and Water programs.
- The qualifications for qualifying land in the VAD are included at NCGS 106-581.1.
- All VAD applicants must have a soil conservation plan that meets NRCS specifications [Noted: all farms that received any financial assistance from NRCS will already have a conservation plan on file].
- There are VAD grants available through the NCDA ADFP website that could match County funds to support additional staff. New VAD website to be available soon: (www.ncvad.org).
- Coffer funds returned to County tax office from properties leaving the PUV program can be earmarked at the County level for purchase of development rights and farmland conservation easements.

5. Membership Term Expiration

Three existing Ag Board members have terms that are about to expire: Dr. Dykers, Sharon Day, and Terrill Ellington. Dr. Dykers was not present at the meeting, but both Sharon and Terrill agreed to serve another term on the Board.

6. Continued Review Draft VAD Ordinance

Review of the the VAD Ordinance continued.

Article VII, A – Creation: Definition of eligible farms changed to ‘bona-fide’ farm definition as defined by State statute NCGS 153A-340.

Article VII, B – Regions: leave as is.

Article VII, C – Education: leave as is

Article VII, D – Addition and Withdrawal: remove section as minimum acreage thresholds no longer apply

Article VIII, A – Application Procedure: leave as is

Article VIII, B.2 Remove “county designee”; replace with “Soil and Water Conservation District staff,”

Article VIII, B.4 – Remove “Upon approval by the Agricultural Advisory Board”. Insert

New section C – Appeal process. Text from Article VIII.

It was agreed that further edits to the Ordinance will be recorded and reviewed outside of the general meeting minutes.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.