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Agricultural Advisory Board

FINAL Minutes

Agricultural Advisory Board

June 12, 2018 7:00 PM CCACC (Chatham County Agriculture Conference Center)

Called to order, 7:00 pm

Present: Tandy Jones (Chair), Cathy Jones (Vice-Chair), Bobby Tucker (Secretary), Henry Outz (Chatham Soil and Water), Sharon Day, Esta Cohen, Dr. J. Dykers, Terrill Ellington, Ginger Cunningham (NCCES Director), Emily Moose (Planning Board), Ron Dameron (Ag Extension Advisory, Climate Change Adv. Board), Sonny Kiesler (Climate Change Adv. Board), Martha Girolami (Climate Change Adv. Board), John Graybeal (Climate Change Advisory Board), Diana Hales (Chatham County Commissioner)

Absent: Walter Petty (BOC liaison), Joe Wachs, Wesley Hancock

1. Agenda Discussion

Tandy introduced the meeting and solicited input on the proposed agenda. No edits were suggested.

2. Introduction of Guests

The guests listed above introduced themselves and their respective affiliations.

3. Discussion/Approval of Minutes

May minutes were amended to indicate that the April minutes were not approved due to lack of a quorum. Esta also wanted her motion to add discussion of Robert's Rules of Order to future agenda added to the May minutes. Cathy moved to accept the April minutes, seconded by Sharon, and approved by the Board.

After inclusion of the aforementioned addendums, the May minutes were also motioned for acceptance and approved unanimously.

4. Presentation by John Graybeal, Climate Change Advisory Committee

John Graybeal reviewed and discussed the document title Agricultural Aspects of Carbon Sequestration previously provided to the board. The memo noted the decline in tree cover in Chatham County from 72% to 59% between 1974 and 2016. John solicited input regarding the following questions:

- What factors have contributed to the loss of tree coverage in the County?
- Are there any regulatory or other factors that either encourage or discourage tree growth in the County?
- How does the present use real estate tax program now affect tree growth?
- What if the present use tax program were structured so that it applied regardless of whether there was periodic harvesting?
- Would that increase tree coverage?
- Is the level of tree coverage likely to continue to decline, to stabilize or to increase?

Some discussion pursued about these questions, which will be followed up on later.

5. Presentation by Emily Moose, Planning Board Liason

Emily presented her background in agriculture and stressed the importance of the viability of agriculture in the County. Current Planning Board efforts are focused on the Unified Development Ordinance, and wants to include the Ag Boards concerns in the meeting. Esta mentioned the resolution written by the Ag Board regarding water supply impacts from development on agriculture. Diana expressed her desire to see water protections included in the UDO, and that planning regarding public water can strongly control where development happens. Despite the many benefits of smart infrastructure planning, Bobby expressed the challenge in protecting the viability of agriculture through top-down regulatory approaches. More importantly, a comprehensive discussion regarding the weak links to Chatham agriculture need to be identified and addressed. Diana mentioned that a land trust initiative was started with \$200k with the BOC to establish a principle to this model.

6. Continued Review and Discussion of Draft VAD

Tandy proposed that a sub-committee be formed to finish the Ordinance revisions. Lisa Gentry is leaving the County, which will potentially slow-down the Ordinance. Tandy mentioned that Scott Schoulers with NCDA who can provide legal/technical assistance to Chatham County to revise the Ordinance.

7. Next Meeting

Tandy will not be available in July for the meeting and requested input regarding postponing the next meeting to August. It was suggested that July will be a subcommittee meeting for the Ordinance revisions and the next general meeting will be moved to August 14.

8. New Business

Ron Dameron expressed his concern regarding the increasing amount of regulations against farming activities, followed by group discussion.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.