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Agricultural Advisory Board

FINAL Minutes

Agricultural Advisory Board

August 13, 2019 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), Doug Burluson, Sharon Day, Dr. Tenita Solanto, Ben Shields, Sarah Justice, Ginger Cunningham (NCCES County Director), Susannah Goldston (CSWCD Director), Emily Moose (Planning Board Liaison) **GUESTS:** none present

Absent: Andy Wilkie (BOC liaison)

1. Introduction of Guests

No guests were present but the new board members and current members introduced themselves and were welcomed to the board. Tandy also complimented Susannah for her new role as the staff liaison with Chatham Soil and Water Conservation.

2. Agenda Review and Approval

The agenda was reviewed and approved unanimously. Discussion of the roll-back tax policy will be added to the September meeting.

3. Discussion/Approval of Minutes

A motion was approved to vote on approval. The minutes were approved unanimously.

4. Voluntary Ag District (VAD) Ordinance and BOC Presentation

Susannah presented on the revised VAD Ordinance and the presentation that will be given to the Board of Commissioners. The presentation summarized the statistics for agriculture in Chatham County, included a

total annual cash receipts of \$129 million for the County. Susannah overviewed the purpose of the VAD ordinance and its benefits to farmers (including environmental, economic, quality of life benefits to the County). An American Farmland Trust study reported that for every dollar in tax revenue from working land, only \$0.58 in public services are required from county government, compared to \$1.15 in services required for residential development. [Tandy mentioned that commercial development contributes the most revenue per services required based on a Chatham County study]. She also mentioned the Chatham County Comprehensive Plan and its goals/strategies to promote and protect the livelihood of Chatham agriculture and forestry. Finally, Susannah reviewed the main changes to the proposed 2019 VAD Ordinance. Susannah will deliver this presentation to the BOC next Monday (8-19-19) at 3 pm at the historic courthouse.

5. Draft VAD Application and Letter to Applicants

Susannah continued by presenting both the revised application for enrollment in the VAD program and the adjoining letter to existing VAD participants. Discussion pursued but no concerns or suggested edits were noted. Additional questions were raised on how best to recruit new applicants not previously enrolled, either hosting a public meeting or presenting at various agriculture-related meetings or events in the County. The Ag Board will vote on approval of the letter at the next board meeting conditional upon approval of the VAD Ordinance by the BOC.

6. Discussion of Officers and By-Laws

Tandy mentioned the need to replace him as chair soon and create by-laws for the Ag Board. Ginger mentioned that Andrew Brannan provided a draft template for Ag Board by-laws, and thus a committee needs to be formed to consolidate this draft for Chatham's Ag Board. Sarah offered to review the template, make edits, and provide to Ben and Sharon for review.

7. New Business

Emily provided an update on the Planning Board activities. The Planning Board recently recommended denial to the BOC of a proposed cricket field following opposition from the neighboring community, including two farmers.

The next meeting is proposed for September 10th in anticipation of BOC approval of the Ordinance.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.