



P. O. Box 1809, Pittsboro, NC 27312-1809 • Phone: (919) 542-8200 •

## *Agricultural Advisory Board*

---

### **FINAL Minutes**

#### Agricultural Advisory Board

September 10, 2019 7:00 PM CCACC (Chatham County Agriculture Conference Center)

**Called to order**, 7:00 pm

**Present:** Tandy Jones (Chair), Bobby Tucker (Secretary), Doug Burleson, Sharon Day, Ben Shields, Sarah Justice, Dr. Tenita Solanto, Ginger Cunningham (NCCES County Director), Susannah Goldston (CSWCD Director), Emily Moose (Planning Board Liaison), Andy Wilkie (BOC liaison) **GUESTS:** Debbie Roos (NC Cooperative Extension Service)

**Absent:** Cathy Jones (Vice-Chair)

#### 1. Introduction of Guests

Tandy introduced the guest – Debbie Roos – and the new members to Commissioner Wilkie who was not present at the last meeting.

#### 2. Agenda Review and Approval

Tandy suggested adding Emily's discussion to the agenda. The revised agenda was approved unanimously.

#### 3. Discussion/Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to vote on approval of the August minutes. The minutes were approved unanimously.

#### 4. Discussion of PUV Rollback Tax from Food Council perspective

Tandy overviewed the purpose and function of the PUV and rollback tax program for the County. Currently, all the rollback taxes go into the general fund, and the Ag Board has previously proposed to the BOC that these PUV rollback taxes be allocated for a farmland preservation program(s).

Debbie Roos explained that the Chatham Food Council began discussing ideas for the PUV rollback taxes several years, although the discussion was put on hold until after the PUV audit is completed. Debbie was proposing to work with the Ag Board to amend the program. Tandy asked Commissioner Wilkie for his suggestion for amending the rollback tax allocation, to which he responded by recommending that we focus on how the funds should be spent. He also mentioned the current impact fees are ending, which will make it tough to reallocate money from the general fund. Doug asked if the rollback tax reallocation had to be all or nothing, or a percentage could be allocated for farmland preservation programs. A 0.25% sales tax (Article 46) is being discussed as a way to make up the lost funds from impact fees (possibly to be voted on in Spring 2020). Commissioner Wilkie mentioned the decision to remove impact fees from the two NC counties who have implemented the fees was based on lobbying from building contractors and developers to the NC General Assembly.

The group discussed multiple ideas for a farmland preservation program, including purchase of development rights, farmer economic/marketing support, farmland preservation plans (and associated action implementation), and water/stormwater mitigation fees. Tandy mentioned the creation of a farmland preservation program, regardless of the amount of hard funding, goes a long way towards garnering matching funds from other sources. Ginger mentioned that most of the recommended action items from the 2010 Farmland Preservation Plan (FPP) had not been implemented, and it would be a good idea to update the FPP toward the recent Comprehensive Plan and push forward some of the actions. Grant agencies require or prefer updated FPPs for farmland preservation funding.

## 5. Planning Board Update

Emily provided an update from the last Planning Board meeting. She solicited input from the Ag Board regarding water use in the County. She presented a current application from a developer for a conservation development that has 36 lots on over 82 acres, although 53 lots would be allowed, and asked the Ag Board's opinion on groundwater concerns. The Ag Board commended the developer's conservation-based approach, although they still stand by the resolution submitted in 2018 recommending that all major developments be served by public water.

## 6. Report on By-Laws Drafting

Ben and Sarah met to review and amend the by-law template from Lee County. Ben mentioned that the template included a "clerk/secretary" that works for the County and not officially on the Ag Board (i.e., no voting rights). However, the Chatham Ag Board's secretary has always been an officer/member, and a County staff liaison helps with document printing, coordination with other County staff, compliance with regulations, etc. It was agreed to write the by-laws to maintain the current responsibilities (i.e., agenda and minutes created by the Ag Board members) but allow the County staff to take over responsibilities if needed.

## 7. Draft VAD Application and Letter to Participants

Susannah finished the VAD application that will be provided to new VAD enrollees. All the addresses are already set up for previous enrollees to receive the new application and draft letter. Susannah mentioned that Commissioner Howard suggested adding a hard deadline to the application for previous enrollees. It was mentioned that one of the requirements for eligibility for VAD participation is they can't be located within a

municipal jurisdiction, although Ginger is going to follow-up to see if ETJs apply. The Board voted unanimously to approve the VAD application and letter.

#### 8. Future Speakers

Sharon solicited input from board members regarding ideas for presenters; including erodible land (Susannah), silvopasture, input from commodity groups in the County (e.g., beef, poultry, timber), cost-share reforestation programs, cooperative/localized wholesale marketing programs, sustainable/low-impact forestry, permanent land conservation, and presentations from each Ag Board member on their current operations.

#### 9. UDO Presentation

Cara in the Planning Department is going to present to all the County boards regarding the UDO process and solicit input. She will present at the Ag Board meeting on November 13th.

#### 10. Discussion of Ninth Member

No recent applications have been submitted, but Tandy encouraged everyone to solicit new member applicants, particularly those from the traditional/commercial/commodity agriculture.

The next meeting is proposed for October 8<sup>th</sup>.

Meeting adjourned at 8:47 pm.