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## *Agricultural Advisory Board*

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### **FINAL Minutes**

#### Agricultural Advisory Board

November 12, 2019 7:00 PM CCACC (Chatham County Agriculture Conference Center)

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

**Present:** Tandy Jones (Chair), Bobby Tucker (Secretary), Cathy Jones (Vice-Chair), Sharon Day, Ben Shields, Tenita Solanto, Susannah Goldston (CSWCD Director), Ginger Cunningham (NCCES County Director) GUESTS: Douglas Stensvad (President of the Chatham Agribusiness Council), Jason Sullivan (Chatham County Planning Department), Cara Russell (Chatham County Planning Department), Margaret Chad Meadows (CodeWrite Planners), Margaret Sands (Triangle Land Conservancy)

**Absent:** Sarah Justice, Doug Burleson, Andy Wilkie (BOC liaison),

#### 1. Introduction of Guests

All attendees present introduced themselves to the group.

#### 2. Agenda Review and Approval

No changes to the agenda were motioned and the agenda was approved unanimously.

#### 3. Presentation by the Planning Department on the County Unified Development Ordinance

Cary introduced herself as the County project manager for the UDO, and Chad Meadows from CodeWrite Planners from Durham as the lead consultant. Chad provided a presentation overview of the UDO process. The purpose of the UDO is to help landowners understand what is allowable on their land, how to gain authorization, and how the activity must be conducted once approved. Specific goals of the UDO is to streamline the permitting process and simplify the existing regulations. The consultant team consists of seven

different firms including CodeWright, including engineers and environmental scientists, planners, legal review, mapping, graphic design, etc.

The top seven policy elements guiding the UDO (based on Plan Chatham) include preserving rural character, protect and enable agriculture, conserve natural resources, foster compact development in designated areas, encourage employment-generating uses, provide open space and recreational amenities, and promote healthy lifestyles.

The project goals include:

1. Implement adopted policy guidance
2. Promote preferred forms of development
3. Raise the bar for development quality
4. Facilitate greater housing choice
5. Increase clarity, predictability, and efficiency
6. Ensure consistency with legal requirements

Updates on the UDO process will be continually updated at [www.advancechatham.com](http://www.advancechatham.com).

Chad's purpose for the visit is part of Task 3 – Annotated Outline, which includes a set of recommendation for how to improve the County's current development regulations, and a detailed outline of the proposed UDO structure and contents (i.e., blueprint of the initial draft). Task 3 will work with focus groups to prepare the outline, one group for each of the eight focus topics: (agricultural preservation, resource protection, conservation design, wastewater, stormwater, housing, non-residential/mixed-use design, incentives and flexibility). The plan is to have one representative from all the County Advisory Boards part of each of the focus groups. Between 5 and 10 focus group meetings are planned for the same day each month, each lasting 1.5 hours. County Boards have until the second week in December to provide up to eight (8) volunteers.

The Board discussed volunteers for the focus groups. Bobby volunteered to represent the Agricultural Preservation group, pending no-one else was interested. Tandy agreed to serve as the substitute for this topic. Tenita volunteered reaching out to the Food Policy Council for additional representatives.

#### 4. Discussion/Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to vote on approval of the October minutes. Tandy suggested removing Emily Moose from the "present" category as she was not in attendance at the last meeting. The edited minutes were approved unanimously.

#### 5. VAD Applications

Susannah provided a summary sheet with the new VAD applicants, consisting of 39 applications comprising 131 parcels (103 are eligible – 4,490 acres). She mentioned that approval of the parcels currently in the Siler City ETJ will be postponed until Siler City updates their resolution regarding their own VAD program. Ben motioned to approve all eligible parcels, which was approved unanimously.

## 6. Report on By-Laws Drafting

Ben provided an update on the drafting of the Ag Board by-laws. He removed all language referencing the required “clerk” position. Ben did clarify language regarding the definition of a “quorum”. The Board agreed to set the definition of a quorum as a majority of total Ag Board membership, which would currently be a 5-member minimum present to conduct voting procedures.

## 7. Report on Ag Hall of Fame

Cathy and Ginger met with Sam Groce to get background information on the Ag Hall of Fame process that he previously orchestrated. In 2009, the Ag Hall of Fame process was initiated and continued through 2011. Sam concurred that a small acknowledgement ceremony was appropriate (e.g., mention at a BOC meeting), Cathy requested that the Ag Board discuss at the January meeting how the Board wants to proceed. Ginger mentioned that Ms. Ellington mentioned it was important to Terrill (recently deceased) that the Ag Hall of Fame was continued.

## 8. Report on By-Laws Drafting

Ben provided a copy of the revised by-laws. The Board agreed to make the language in the by-laws consistent with the VAD Ordinance in sections II.c, II.f, and V.g. Ben agreed to make the edits and return to the Board for final approval.

## 9. Report from Food Policy Joint Committee

Tandy reported on he and Debbie’s presentation to the BOC’s working session in October regarding the request for allocated funding for an agriculture preservation program in the County. The Joint Committee did not ask for funding but asked how they can support the BOC in achieving the previous goals already approved by the BOC. Tandy mentioned the spending categories for the Article 46 funds was reduced from eight to four, one of which included agriculture. The BOC deferred to County staff to propose ideas to the Joint Committee on how to help with the ag preservation program. Recent statistics indicate that North Carolina has the second highest rate of farmland conversion to development, but also the second highest number of acres being converted.

## 10. Board Member Applications

The members reviewed the recent applicants and motioned to approve Christopher Hart for recommendation to the BOC.

## 11. Board Member Farm Presentations

Tandy suggested postponing the board member presentations to the January meeting due to shortage of time.

## 12. New Business

Tandy suggested expediting the turn-over of the Chair position due to an increase in work/life responsibilities. The Board encouraged Ben to take over Chair for the next 6 months, to which he acquiesced. Tandy subsequently provided him an overview of the Chair responsibilities. The motion for Ben to replace Tandy as Chair for the remainder of his term was approved unanimously.

The next meeting is planned for January 14<sup>th</sup> and will include a presentation by the Triangle Land Conservancy.

Meeting adjourned at 9:07 pm.