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## *Agricultural Advisory Board*

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### **FINAL Minutes**

#### Agricultural Advisory Board

October 13, 2020 7:00 PM CCACC (Chatham County Agriculture Conference Center) & Zoom  
remote video

**Called to order**, 7:09 pm

**Present:** Bobby Tucker (Chair), Cathy Jones (Vice Chair), Ginger Cunningham (NCCES County Director), Sharon Day, Chris Hart, Ben Shields (Secretary), Emily Moose (Planning Board liaison), Tenita Solanto, Susannah Goldston (CC Soil & Water Conservation District), Jeanette Beranger, Jeff Vaughan, Brandy Oldham (CC Soil & Water Conservation District), Dr. Deanna Osmond (guest speaker, NCSU Crop & Soil Science Dept. Extension Leader)

**Absent:** Doug Burlison, Andy Wilkie (BOC liaison)

## 1. Introduction of Guests

Bobby introduced the guest speaker, Dr. Deanna Osmond from NC State University's Department of Soil & Crop Science, who was invited to speak on Nutrient Management and Water Quality in Chatham County.

## 2. Planning Board Update

Emily Moose gave a quick update on how the Subdivision Water Supply in Agricultural Areas Subcommittee will include Caroline Siverson (Subcommittee Chair), Emily Moose and Clyde Frazier from the Planning Board as well as Ben Shields, Bobby Tucker and Sharon Day from the Agricultural Advisory Board. The subcommittee will also include developer Mark Ashness and will start meeting every other Wednesday.

## 3. Presentation by Dr. Deanna Osmond

The board welcomed Dr. Osmond from NCSU, who gave a talk titled "Effectiveness of Conservation Practices on Improving Water Quality from Agricultural Water".

On typical NC farms, phosphorus (P) and nitrogen (N) are the largest share of nutrients lost from soil by erosion and leaching. Phosphorus usually is built up to high levels in soils from over application and nitrogen is usually lost from fertilizer and manure. Insoluble P easily attaches to sediment and soluble P easily dissolves in water, so it is lost by both erosion and leaching but mostly erosion. In general, the greater the amount of legacy (mineralized in the soil) P, the greater the amount of P runoff. Average farm soil tests in NC show very high indices (100 g/kg or greater) of P with an average decline of about 50 g/kg over a 15 year span.

Erosion control is a good way to keep nutrient from running off farm land, including cover cropping, riparian buffers, grassed waterways and conservation tillage. These practices also mitigate N runoff. Conservation tillage reduces runoff but increases nutrient leaching

because of increased bioavailability and therefore solubility. Vegetative buffer are quite effective, capturing most runoff in the first 30 feet of buffer. Runoff control is difficult to manage but can be done with controlled drainage infrastructure and cover cropping. In Chatham County, the higher clay content of the soils binds P and therefore leads to greater P retention.

The algae blooms in Jordan Lake are a big problem and that we should expect the new Jordan Lake Nutrient Management Plan to include lower nutrient load levels.

Dr. Osmond shared the results from a 6 year on-farm experiment with buffers and nutrient management conducted in Chatham County. They set up 2 farms near each other with both crop field and pasture test and control plots. They found an average loss of 6.8 lbs P annually per acre. They also found that a 10 foot wide fence excluding livestock from waterways resulted in a 60% reduction in nutrient loss. They also found that reduced P application on land with high P levels also resulted in less P lost. One of the main obstacles to implementing conservation practices on farms is the cultural practices of those farmers.

#### 4. Review of minutes from September 8, 2020

The board reviewed the minutes from the meeting on September 8<sup>th</sup>. Jeff Vaughan's last name was spelled incorrectly, no other changes were made. Sharon motioned to approve, Bobby seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Cathy asked for feedback from the new board members Jeanette and Jeff on the interview process. Jeanette thought it went well, was fairly simple, easy and comfortable. Jeff agreed that it was seamless and went well. Cathy thanked the other board members for filling in for her while she was not in attendance on September 8<sup>th</sup>.

## 5. Voluntary Agricultural District Update

Susannah shared that one new VAD application had been submitted since the last meeting. They are eligible to participate in the program. Ben motioned to approve the application; Cathy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## 5. New Business

Bobby said he will keep coordinating future guest speakers and that he will try to be in touch with the Forest Water Quality expert suggested by Doug.

Regarding the Subdivision Water Supply in Agricultural Areas Subcommittee, Bobby will share documents with the Ag Board. He also questioned the desire to invite guest speakers focused on water issue and that perhaps we ought to expand that focus. He then asked the board members for further input.

Jeanette is stunned by the lack of small scale meat processors in the region as well as the unwillingness of local cattlemen to market directly to local folks. She would like the Ag Advisory Board to learn more about this and to explore ways the board can support expanding locally grown and marketed meat. Cathy and Sharon both suggested that logistical bottlenecks, such as the lack of available processors, and the increased time demands of direct marketing are significant hurdles for conventional cattlemen to overcome. Bobby then suggested that actionable items developed in the upcoming Farmland Preservation Plan may offer a way to address this issue. Cathy asked Tenita if the Chatham Food Council had discussed this and Tenita responded she is no longer on the Food Council and they had not developed any related action items when she was still a member.

Jeanette suggested that the unwillingness of local cattlemen to enter local markets was a failure of marketing and education and that maybe we can help alleviate this. She then suggested we invite the owners of Key Packing to be guest speakers. Bobby agreed to contact the Chatham County Livestock Producers Association if we had guest speakers in this area. Jeff explained how Agri-Waste Technologies (the company he heads) had worked with a Cabarrus

County Slaughterhouse to upgrade their waste water system and that they had received a Rural Development grant to do so. He suggested the owners of this slaughterhouse may also be good guest speakers. Ginger shared that Cooperative Extension has also seen a need for expanded meat processing and commercial kitchen facilities in Chatham County. She shared that Cooperative Extension will be rolling out a new mobile app in late 2020 or early 2021 to connect the public with farms. Chris suggested the board invite a farmer who sells fractions of processed animals to share their experiences as guest speakers. Chris also shared how he knows of some local restaurants who partnered with farmers and Chaudry's Meats to streamline meat availability.

#### 8. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 10, 2020 at 7 pm.

Bobby motioned to adjourn; Cathy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:53 pm.