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Agricultural Advisory Board

FINAL Minutes

Agricultural Advisory Board

June 8, 2021 7:00 PM CCACC (Chatham County Agriculture Conference Center) & Zoom
remote video

Called to order, 7:03 pm

Present: Tenita Solanto (Chair), Cathy Jones (Vice Chair), Ginger Cunningham (NCCES County Director), Sharon Day, Chris Hart, Doug Burleson, Ben Shields (Secretary), Jeanette Beranger, Jeff Vaughan, Brandy Oldham (CC Soil & Water Conservation District), Susannah Goldston (CC Soil & Water Conservation District), George Lucier (Planning Board Chair), Caroline Siverson (Planning Board Vice-Chair), Clyde Frazier (Planning Board), Jeannie Ambrose (Planning Board), Vickie Atkinson, Jason Sullivan (CC Planning Director), Hunter Glenn (CC Planning Dept.), Kimberly Tyson (CC Planning Dept.)

Absent: Jim Crawford (BOC liaison)

1. Introduction of Guests

Tenita introduced the guests from the Chatham County Planning Board and CC Planning Department staff, who presented on the Planning Board Subdivision Well Subcommittee's findings.

2. Approval of Minutes

Doug Burleson was added to the attendance at the May 11th meeting. Sharon motioned to approve the agenda; Doug seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Planning Board Subdivision Well Subcommittee presentation

Hunter started off by reviewing the purpose of the subcommittee; to evaluate the impact of residential wells on agricultural operations and to develop a list of recommendations to amend the Subdivision Regulations regarding the number of allowed wells for the Planning Board to consider. Hunter then briefly reviewed each presentation the sub-committee received, 18 in all, as follows;

October 14, 2020 – Introductions and Objectives

October 28, 2020 -Rick Bolich, Chief, Groundwater Resources Section, NCDEQ Div. of Water Resources, *Basic Hydrology of a Chatham County*

November 24, 2020 – Phil Bradley, Asst. Section Chief/Senior Piedmont Geologist, NC Geologic Survey, *Chatham County Groundwater Features*

November 25, 2020 – Phil Bradley and Rick Bolich answer questions

December 9, 2020 – Craig Caldwell, NCDEQ Well Construction and Permitting

January 6, 2021 – Anne Lowry, Environmental Health Director, *Wells in Chatham County*

February 3, 2021 – Larry Bridges, County Utilities Director, *Future Water Supply Planning*

February 17, 2021 – Susannah Goldston, Environmental Specialist and Director of Chatham County Soil and Water District and Ginger Cunningham, CC Cooperative Extension Director, *Chatham County Agricultural Operations and Water Use*

March 17, 2021 – Jason Sullivan, Land Use Regulations in Chatham County, *Planning Presentation*

March 31, 2021 – Billy Yow, President and CEO of D&Y Drilling

April 14, 2021 – Bob Hagemann, Chatham County Attorney

All subcommittee meetings were remote and the minutes and presentations are available for viewing online at <https://www.chathamcountync.gov/government/departments-programs/planning/planning-board/planning-board-subcommittees/planning-board-well-subcommittee>

Caroline shared the subcommittees recommendations with the board and said that due diligence was done, and a lot of information was discovered. Caroline continued by saying that as more information was learned, more questions arose. In her opinion, it is difficult to make regulatory recommendations at this point because so little data is available on local hydrology and that the legal framework is not good for this rule. Caroline said the Planning Board had one more meeting, on July 6th, before presenting the findings and recommendations to the Board of Commissioners on July 19th.

Sharon asked if testing was ever done on community wells and Caroline responded that yes, they are sometimes stress tested to see the impact on neighboring wells within 1000 feet and it is a good way to see a wells impact. Caroline went on to say a new community well rule may be onerous in non-agricultural areas, and it is important for Chatham County to get more specific with agricultural zoning and then we may be able to ask for more rules there. She then suggested Chatham County look at Guilford County's well test regulations.

Sharon then suggested there is not enough information for good, solid well regulations but we should push the line and not wait until it is too late. Caroline responded we should push for more hydrogeology studies as other counties have done but that funding will be an issue. Jeanette asked what motivates developers to use wells versus county water? Clyde responded that new houses within 100 feet of a county water line is required to connect to it. Jason reminded folks that the subcommittee presentations and meeting minutes are available online

for viewing. Cathy shared that wastewater is a big issue in Chatham County. Jeff responded that sub-surface wastewater systems are inspected weekly and surface wastewater systems are inspected every 5 years.

Tenita and the board members thanked the Planning Board members and Planning staff for attending the meeting and sharing their findings.

4. VAD Update

Susannah shared that an initial run of 250 letters were mailed to Present Use Value tax program participants with the last names starting with letters A to C. She also said this is being done to spread out and manage the workload. Susannah said there were no new parcels to approve, and we will likely have some at the next meeting.

5. Ag Center Update

Ginger shared that there was not much to share, just that they are waiting on contractors and there will hopefully be more progress by the next meeting.

6. Officer Elections

Tenita asked how this will be done? Susannah responded that the vote would happen at the next meeting.

7. New Business

Sharon asked if there was an update on land use by acreage in the county? Ginger responded that the new UDO contractor will help update that figure. The board agreed to invite Jim Crawford to the next Ag Board meeting.

Sharon then asked what does the Planning Board Subdivision Well Subcommittee need from the Ag Board? Folks suggested a few actionable items;

- 1- The Ag Board give our blessing to the findings and recommendation the Planning Board decides to submit.
- 2- Show up to the BoC meeting when the Planning Board presents the recommendations.
- 3- Invite the new Planning Board/Ag Board liaison to enter a discussion with Jim Crawford and carbon copy Caroline Siverson and Jason Sullivan regarding the liaison.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, July 13th or August 10th, depending on when the Planning Board meets next.

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:22 pm.