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*Agricultural Advisory Board*

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**DRAFT Minutes**

**Agricultural Advisory Board**

**August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022 | 7:00 PM Zoom Remote Video**

1. Chair Tenita Solanto called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.
2. Roll Call - Present members identified themselves:
  - a. Present: Tenita Solanto (Chair), Cathy Jones (Vice Chair), Sharon Day, Jeff Vaughan, Amy Fulford, Chris Hart, Ginger Cunningham (Cooperative Extension), Susannah Goldston (Chatham SWCD)
  - b. Absent: Robert Logan (Chatham County Commissioner Liaison)
3. Appoint New Secretary
  - a. Ginger offered to record Zoom meetings to supplement Board minutes, but virtual meetings will cease with the State of Emergency declaration being lifted. Susannah noted that there are no additional meeting options/allowances at this time being offered by the county. Board requested that Ginger ask the Clerk if recording a live meeting could be an option. Susannah noted that bylaws outline that a secretary should be named. At the next meeting, a secretary will need to be determined at that time.
4. Approval of Minutes
  - a. No amendments were noted. Tenita made a motion to approve; Sharon seconded. Motion carried.
5. Discussion/Approval of Regular Meeting Calendar

- a. Susannah noted that the county would like to have the Board set a regular meeting schedule now for the year. The bylaws state that the Board will meet quarterly. It was proposed that regular meetings could be set for the following months: Aug., Nov., Feb., and May; those meeting would occur on the second Tuesday of each month at 7pm in the conference room of the Chatham County Ag & Conference Center in Pittsboro. Susannah noted that special meetings can be called if/when needed (following guidelines for public notification). Specific upcoming dates would include Nov. 8, 2022, Feb. 8, 2023, and May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Sharon motioned to approve regular meeting dates; Jeff seconded the motion. Motion carried.
6. Voluntary Agricultural District Update
    - a. Susannah presented 5 applications, including 8 parcels totaling 181.73 acres, for approval. All applications are eligible, with the exception of one which is located in the Pittsboro ETJ. Sharon motioned to approve all eligible applications with Tenita seconding the motion. Motion carried.
7. Board Membership
    - a. Susannah noted that the county has not yet posted new Board member applications online, but that will be done soon. There are currently three vacancies for term years 2022-2025.
    - b. Current Board members Cathy, Jeff, and Amy have terms expiring in 2023. Additionally, Tenita, Sharon, and Chris have terms expiring in 2024. The bylaws state that members can serve multiple terms if they wish.
    - c. Amy asked where board representation may be lacking. Susannah noted there was not much representation currently from the livestock producers, conventional cropping, and forestry. Also, there are no members from the SE quadrant of the county, which has typically been an area hard to recruit from due to lack of producers in that area. Susannah noted that this could be something the Clerk could mention as a recommendation on the application form, but it would not be included as a requirement that must be met.
8. New Business
    - a. Susannah noted that the FPP update process should be starting soon; we will know more by first of next month as a tentative planning session with the consultants will occur at the end of August.
    - b. We don't have any updates regarding the UDO at this time, so we will wait to get a report from the Planning Department and/or Planning Board soon.
    - c. Sharon inquired as to what the Board could/should do at this time to assist with pressures facing the ag community in general. Ginger noted that, at least from

the Cooperative Extension side, we are seeing developers pushing hard to buy property from local producers. While that has always been an issue, letters/calls/texts have become more prevalent. While we have had requests made to secure funds from rollback taxes, Article 46 funds, etc. to be proactive in addressing needs related to conservation and preservation efforts of ag within the county, we are now behind and must play catch up, which is a spot we did not want to be in. We need to take action now while we are constructing the FPP update so we don't fall further behind. Other counties have done this successfully to support producers and conserve farmland. We should track back to suggestions provided by the AAB/Local Foods Council to the BOC and request that they act on those needs. Advocacy with local elected officials and government personnel is greatly needed.

9. Next Meeting

- a. Tentatively scheduled for November 8<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm at the CCACC Conference Room.

10. Adjournment

- a. Sharon made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Tenita seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:48 pm.