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Agricultural Advisory Board

Minutes

Agricultural Advisory Board

November 14th, 2023 | 7:00 PM Chatham Co. Agricultural Center Board Room, 1192 U.S. Hwy 64 Business,
Pittsboro, NC 27312

1. **Call to Order, 7:05 p.m.**
2. **Roll Call**
 - a. Present: Sharon Day (via Zoom), Dr. John Dykers, Dave Eskelund, Amy Fulford, Jeff Vaughan (via Zoom), Amy Fulford
 - b. Absent: Diana May
 - c. Others Present: Ginger Cunningham (Cooperative Extension), Andrew Waters (SWCD), Susannah Goldston (SWCD), Katie Kenlan (County Commissioner liaison), Tandy Jones (guest), Ted Feitshans (Farmland Preservation Plan consultant).
3. **Approval of Minutes**
 - a. Minutes from the March 2023, May 2023, and October 2023 meetings were distributed prior to the meeting. Dave Eskelund made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Motion seconded by Amy Fulford and passed unanimously.
4. **Approval of Agenda**
 - a. Andrew reviewed the prepared agenda and asked for additions or revisions. No additions were proposed. John Dykers moved to approve the agenda as submitted. Motion seconded by Sharon and passed unanimously.
5. **Present Use Funding Resolution**
 - a. Sharon Day noted that the FY 2025 Budget process will soon be underway and recommended that the AAB draft a resolution recommending that PUV rollback taxes be dedicated to farmland preservation funding. This recommendation is featured prominently in the Farmland Preservation Plan draft. Such a resolution would support an identical recommendation made in the 2009 Farmland Preservation Plan. John Dykers made a motion to adopt a resolution from the AAB recommending to the Chatham County Board of Commissioners that annually collected rollback taxes from the Present Use Value (PUV) program be designated toward farmland preservation. As part of the resolution, he asked for the Farmland Preservation coordinator to prepare a presentation for the Board of Commissioners on how PUV rollback taxes are used for farmland preservation in other North Carolina counties. Dave Eskelund seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

6. Farmland Preservation Plan Presentation

- a. Ted Feitshans representing a consulting group from University of Mount Olive presented the draft version of the Chatham County Farmland Preservation Plan. His group has been working on the plan since May. The goal is to finalize the plan and adopt by the AAB at the January meeting, then present to the Chatham County Board of Commissioners as soon as possible following AAB adoption. Ted explained that the Cost of Community Services portion of the plan is not included in the draft reviewed by the AAB.
- b. Ted reviewed a revised version of the plan (different from the initial draft that the AAB received prior to the meeting). He noted that changes could be identified through the Microsoft Word “track changes” feature. For the presentation, he reviewed the 17 current “Recommendations” from the plan. Although the draft plan contained other elements, he explained that the recommendations were the most important items for the Board to consider, given the time constraints of the meeting. The recommendations are as follows:
 - i. Develop sustained and committed funding for farm and forest land preservation.
 - ii. Coordinate farmland protection outreach, education, and policy development.
 - iii. Strengthen the Chatham County Voluntary Agricultural District program.
 - iv. Build support for a farmland protection program and agribusiness development.
 - v. Review subdivision regulations and zoning to ensure that the needs of agriculture and forestry are met where possible.
 - vi. Explore means to ensure that agriculture has long-term access to water supplies.
 - vii. Advocate for farm and forestry friendly state agricultural policies.
 - viii. Seek innovative means to integrate farm and forest land protection into the Jordan Lake rulemaking process.
 - ix. Enhance business development programs.
 - x. Develop an integrated agricultural marketing system for county agricultural producers.
 - xi. Create an alternative energy development program.
 - xii. Create an outreach and education program about farmland preservation issues in the county.
 - xiii. Expand education and training opportunities.
 - xiv. Develop a farmer recruitment program.
 - xv. Support regional agricultural leadership development.
 - xvi. Support the resiliency initiatives of “Plan Chatham.”
 - xvii. Support equity and inclusion for the farming population.
- c. Each recommendation included a background section and recommended “Action Steps.” Ted noted AAB feedback and comments throughout the presentation. Ted stated that Chatham is better positioned for significant farmland preservation than most counties in the state due to its socioeconomic profile, existing agricultural community, and agency and partner support.
- d. Andrew will distribute the revised version to the AAB. Ted asked that additional comments be submitted to Andrew, who will collect all comments and submit them to Ted in a single correspondence. Members of the AAB thanked Ted for his presentation.

7. Next Meeting

- a. The next meeting is scheduled for the second Tuesday of January 2024. The location will be Dave Eskelund’s barn.

8. Adjournment

- a. John Dykers submitted a motion to adjourn. Amy Fulford seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.