

MINUTES

Farmland Protection Program Durham Soil and Water Conservation District Virtual Zoom Meeting

Meeting Number: 5 (Farmland Protection Advisory Board) Date: September 16, 2021

Advisory Board Present:

Nicole Connelly – Chair – Little River VAD
Mark Waller – Vice Chair – Farm Bureau Representative
Kenny Browning – 2nd Vice Chair – Eno River VAD
Heidi Carter – BOCC Representative
David Heeks – At Large
Matthew Eagle – At Large
Derrick Beasley – Open Space & Trails Representative
Lindsay White – At Large
Jillian Riley – Soil & Water Board

Others Present:

Sherry Scully – Soil & Water
David Harris – SWCD Supervisor
Celeste Burns – Open Space
Janel Ohletz – Cooperative Extension

The regular monthly meeting of the Farmland Protection Advisory Board was held on Thursday, September 16, 2021 and called to order at 6:36 pm by the Chair. The meeting was held as a virtual Zoom meeting.

1. **Approval of Board Minutes from August 2021** – Motion made by Mark Waller to approve the minutes, seconded by Kenny Browning. All in favor; motion passes.
2. **Agriculture Economic Development update** -Sherry Scully reported 32 applications were received for the Ag Economic Development Grant: 20 Farmers, 8 Nonprofits and 4 Schools. Application requests totaled \$109,289, The Ag Economic Development Grant Committee ranked these applications and met to approve applicants for \$75,000. 14 Farmers, 5 Nonprofits and 4 Schools were approved.

Sherry was asked to send out FY 2021 Grant Report to Board when complete. Nicole also asked for links of videos completed of grant projects to be shared for viewing.

3. **Easements/Open Space** – Report was provided by Celeste Burns.
 - Scottie MacFarland’s Easement (11 ac) – Phase II – in process and near closing by end of year.
 - Len Needham’s Easement due diligence is in process.
 - Mike Garrett’s Easement – moving forward with unexpected administrative delays on the federal end with regard to finalizing the program agreement that secures federal USDA NRCS funds.
 - Douglas Daye’s Easement (additional 11 ac) – moving forward
 - Alston Glenn (additional 12 ac) – in preliminary discussion. More details to come to FPAB on this in coming months.

Celeste is involved with the Durham County Environmental Policy Working Group and provided information about the Comprehensive Plan. Interest to invite a Durham County Planner to speak at the next meeting was shared.

4. **Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD)** – Sherry Scully has received one application for the VAD Program.

- Maggie Healy – 9.81 ac on Winkler Rd in Durham – Eno VAD

Mark Waller made the motion to approve this application with a second by Kenny Browning. Motion passed unanimously.

5. **Cooperative Extension Report** – Janel Ohletz reported that she has been accepted to attend a national training program through the American Farmland Trust to become a certified land transfer instructor. The Soil Health Series is still in progress as well as the Farm School. In addition, Janel has applied for a grant of \$160,000 to produce a feasibility study on the proposed Farm Campus concept.

6. **Committee Updates**

A. **Video Committee** – This committee has not met since last meeting. Janel Ohletz will send out a Doodle Poll to find out best time for everyone to meet. Meeting will be held before next FPAB.

7. **New Business** – Annual Plan of Work. Lisa Marochak provided information on how money has been spent the past five years. Nicole Connelly shared this in the form of a graph. \$3,375 is available in budget. Discussion followed. Virtual Farm Tour is the main focus for this year.

Next Meeting –October 21, 2021 at 6:30 pm. The meeting will be held virtually via Zoom.

Adjourn – With no further discussion or business, Chair, Nicole Connelly adjourned the meeting at 7:29 pm.

Nicole Connelly
Chairman

Sherry Scully
Soil and Water

October 21, 2021
Date approved