



THE OFFICE OF AGRICULTURE

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

MEMORANDUM

March 11, 2016

TO: Agricultural Advisory Committee Members (AAC)

FROM: Jeremy V. Criss, Agricultural Services Manager
Department of Economic Development

SUBJECT: Joint Meeting-March 15, 2016 of the Agricultural Advisory Committee and
Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board

There will a joint meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Committee and the Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board on **Tuesday, March 15, 2016 at the Up County Regional Services Center 12900 Middlebrook Road Germantown in Room A at 7:00 pm.**

The agenda is on the next page.

The other attachments for our meeting will be posted on the Agricultural Services web site. Due to the County's paper reduction mandate, please print these attachments out and bring them with you to the meeting.

I hope to see you on Tuesday evening.

*Sign language interpreter services will be provided only upon request with notice as far in advance as possible but no less than 72 hours prior to the event. If you need other services or Aids to participate in this activity, please call 301-590-2810

e:aacMarch(aac16)

**Joint Meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Committee and
Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board Agenda
March 15, 2016**

1. Approval of the AAC Minutes from January 19, 2016 meeting. *Please note the AAC did not meet on February 16, 2016.*
2. **The MAEF-Mobile Science Lab-Food Fiber and You** is funded by OAG to visit elementary schools in the County each week. Since the fall semester began the lab has visited 14 elementary schools and we have received positive evaluations from teachers and students.
3. **Good News-MDA Weed Control Program and Staff**

The Governor's proposed budget eliminated the State Weed Control Program and four veteran staff. The Montgomery Weed Control, Inc. President-Eric Spates and the AAC Chairman-David Weitzer and MSCD Chairman-Robert Butz wrote letters of opposition to the members of the County Delegation and the Secretary of MDA. *The MDA Secretary reinstated 2 pins for 2 staff positions.*

4. Follow up from the Ag Tire Collection event

February 16 & 17 the County Government partnered with the MFB and MES to conduct an Ag Tire Collection Event. Over the two days about 15 farmers dropped off tires filling one and a half containers. Considering the short 2.5 week turnaround time for farmers receiving the letters and the weather on Tuesday the event was successful. We hope to schedule the event again next year and the process should be easier for everyone.

5. Update on the Office of Agriculture-OAG

On February 22, the PHED Committee held a work session to discuss the status of the Office of Agriculture-OAG and funding for the Ag Land Preservation CIP project.

OAG will not function independently until DED is closed sometime this coming spring. The Agricultural Services will continue to operate under the DED until it closes. *Please note the DED will not be closing down until June 30, 2016.*

The Ag Pres CIP program proposed appropriation for FY17 is \$1.1 million for easement acquisitions. The Ag Pres Advisory Board has requested new funding from the WQPC and the County DEP and CE will remit recommendations in April.

The CE proposed operating budget does not include the Program Manager II position that was supposed to replace the capacity of Peter Bang. The CE proposed budget restores the 2% savings in the amount of \$20,830.

6. New Improvements and Communication Systems at the AHFP

New communication systems are in the works for the agricultural agencies in Derwood. The existing Verizon phones will be replaced with Comcast Business Service. All phone numbers for agricultural agency staff will be the same. The existing Verizon T-1 lines will be replaced for the County OAG, University of MD-Extension and the MSCD. The FSA, NRCS and MDA will maintain their existing Verizon T-1 lines. The Access Agreement to begin the project is pending and all of the utilities have been surveyed and marked.

7. New Farmer on Small Acreage workshops-Scheduled on Thursdays evenings at 6:00 pm through March 31, 2016 and 15 folks are attending these trainings.
8. We are still looking for one more new farmer member to serve on the AAC.
9. Follow up from the County Council Proclamation for National Agriculture Day. Presented by Council members Berliner, Rice and Navarro.
10. The Council is looking for new Planning Board member to replace Amy Presley (Republican) and deadline to apply is April 20, 2016.
11. There was a good turnout of 125 farmers to Winter Agronomy Update- February 24, 2016.

12. Rustic Roads Advisory Committee-RRAC Proposed Language for Farmer members

- (1) 3 members who are owner-operators of **[[commercial]] agriculturally-assessed** farmland earning **[[50 percent]] \$10,000 annually (in 2015 dollars)** or more of their **gross** income from farming, one of whom is a representative of the Agricultural Advisory Committee;

AAC staff recommendation:

Over the history of the RRAC, recruiting eligible farmers has been difficult. Requiring farmers to earn 50 percent or more of their income from farming is difficult.

Support the proposed changes noted above with the additional requirement that each of the farmer members on the Rustic Roads Advisory Committee must be identified as representative to one of the following groups:

One farmer as representative to the Agricultural Advisory Committee,
One farmer as representative to the Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board,
One farmer as representative to the Montgomery County Farm Bureau.

13. ZTA 16-02 Agricultural Zone-Transferable Development Rights Requirements.

Attached you will find two versions of ZTA 16-02.

The first ZTA on circles 1 and 2 was drafted by Jim Clifford to further amend the original ZTA.

The second ZTA 16-02 on circles 3-6 was discussed at the public hearing February 23, 2016.

Attached you will also find the comments from the APAB and County Executive and the Draft letter from the AAC that was not submitted as part of the public record.

There is a PHED Work Session scheduled for March 21, 2016 on the ZTA.

14. **Ag Education Outreach Team**-Gene Kingsbury, Greg Glen, Caroline Taylor, Doug Tregoning and Jeremy Criss are presenting to high school students. Poolesville High School was scheduled in January and Damascus High School-March 9, 2016 and Sherwood High Schools scheduled March 23, 2016. Field trips to farms will be scheduled in late April for Butler's Orchard, Rock Hill Orchard, and Rupert's Nursery.

15. Recommendations from the AAC Sub-committee:

- A. Micro-Alcohol Production Facilities- Fruit and Grain based Alcoholic beverages.
- B. Limited Use Standards for Private Events on farms including food.
- C. Food trucks-trailers prohibited on farms due to Transitory Uses restricted under Section 3.1.5 TDR Prohibitions. *Please note the Council may draft a ZTA that would permit food trucks on farms that are encumbered by TDR easements.*

16. Next Meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Committee- April 19, 2016 @ 7:00 pm

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

National Agriculture Day Proclamation by the County Council March 15, 2016

Joint Meeting Ag Advisory Com and Ag Pres Advisory Bd-March 15, 2016 @7:00pm

PHED Committee Work Session-ZTA 16-02-March 21, 2016

Montgomery Weed Control, Inc. Annual Meeting-March 23, 2016 @9:30 am

Ag Education Outreach-Sherwood High School-March 23, 2016

Montgomery County Farm Bureau Board of Directors-April 5, 2016 @7:00pm

Montgomery Soil Conservation District-April 8, 2016 @ 9:00am

Annual Farmers Market Training- April 15, 2016 @ 9:00 am

Montgomery County Agricultural Advisory Committee-April 19, 2016 @7:00pm