

Agricultural Advisory Committee
February 18, 2014

Attendees:

Jane Evans, Drew Stabler, Tim McGrath, David Weitzer, Eddie Kuhlman, Gary Marx

Members that responded they could not attend:

Woody Woodroof, Debbie Benson, Linda Lewis, Patrick Brown, Charlotte McGehee, Paula Linthicum

Guests: None

Staff: Jeremy Criss, Jonathan Casey

The meeting was called to order at 7:09PM

1. **Introductions** – Not necessary

2. **Approval of the December 17, 2013 AAC minutes:** Drew Stabler motioned to approve the December 17, 2013 minutes as corrected and Jane Evans seconded the motion. The January 21, 2014 AAC meeting was cancelled due bad weather. Jeremy Criss reviewed the follow up items for the March meeting.

3. **Update from the Zoning Rewrite ZTA 13-04:**

The Full County Council approved a straw vote for the Zoning Rewrite Text on January 15, 2014. The final vote for the Zoning Rewrite Text is scheduled for March 4, 2014. The Zoning Maps will come later in the year. The Council addressed all of the remaining Agricultural issues recommended by the AAC. Jeremy Criss reviewed each of the agricultural items and explained how the Council addressed them. Tim McGrath recommends we thank Jane Seigler for her involvement and representation of the agricultural community on the Zoning Advisory Panel. There was a suggestion that Jane should be recommended for the annual award for Outstanding Contribution during the Agricultural Leaders Luncheon and the Soil Conservation District Dinner.

4. **Farming at Metro's Edge Conference-FAME Final Report. Council President Craig Rice will be scheduling a Full Council Work Session on March 4, 2014 to discuss the recommendations in the FAME report.**

Mr. Criss said he would let everyone know the time the Council will conduct the FAME work session. The farmers need to be well represented and show a good turn out of farmers. Jeremy said that DED plans to move forward on the Agronomy Educator Position that will be a part-time contract position and funded 100% by the County. Jeremy reviewed the Carry Forward funding for the position and he estimates it will cost \$30,000 annually and the position will only

work in Montgomery County. Gary Marx asked if the Carry Forward funding was the same source of funds the Dean discussed during the April 10, 2013 MD Ag Commission Public meeting. Gary was not sure if the Deans comments regarding large funding cuts to Extension were consistent with what was outlined in the Chancellor's response letter dated September 24, 2013 to the AAC that Extension has sufficient funds for all staffing, programs and services. Jeremy said the County is using the Position Announcement from September 2013 for an Agriculture Educator position on the Lower Shore.

5. High Tunnel Public Work Shop on April 29, 2014:

Jeremy said there is a Public Work Shop on April 29, 2014 as a follow up to the High Tunnel Listening Session from December 3, 2013. There were about 30 folks that attended the Listening Session and the Public Work Shop will address the questions and comments raised in December.

6. The County will conduct a Building Lot Termination BLT Program Easement Purchase Period from February through April 1, 2014:

The County will accept BLT Easement applications from February through April 1, 2014. The BLT Base price is \$222,000 and the BLT Maximum price is \$254,000. Anyone that is interested please contact John Z for more information. Drew asked how much money was available and Jeremy said we have enough money to purchase 14 BLTs or approximately \$3.0 million. Eddie Kuhlman asked how many BLTs has the County purchased so far and Jeremy estimated the total was 9 BLTs. *Please note the County has purchased a total of 17 BLTs through two BLT purchased periods at an average BLT price of \$245,000 and a total of 10 BLTs have been privately purchased during the same period.*

7. New Appointments to the AAC

The Committee learned the Doug Lechluder and Michele Cropp have expressed interest in applying to the AAC as new farmer members. Drew Stabler said that Randy Stabler was not interested in the applying to the Rustic Roads Advisory Committee-RRAC. Jeremy said that he is still working with Keith Patton and Mason Hopkins to apply to the RRAC.

8. Proposal from a Committee of Farmers to hire a part-time person to represent the farmers in the County Government:

Jeremy Criss said that a committee of farmers has proposed a new part-time position be created to help represent the agricultural community in Rockville. The committee of farmers is as follows: Billy Willard, David Weitzer, Bob Cissel, Doug Lechluder, Randy Stabler, Eric Spates, Doug Tregoning. The person in this position will not be subject to the influence of the County Government. There is still a question whether the person will represent agriculture in Annapolis, as this is a function of the Farm Bureau. County Farm Bureau has been informed of the

proposal and individual farmers have received letters requesting funds be donated to help fund the position.

9. Next Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting is scheduled for March 18, 2014 and we will follow up on the items discussed in December with the RRAC.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 pm#