

Montgomery County Agricultural Advisory Committee
Agenda
April 20, 2021

1. Call the Meeting to Order-Introductions:
2. Approval of the March 16, 2021 AAC meeting minutes.
3. The County Executive has remitted a draft Bill to the County Council for Introduction, Environmental Sustainability – Building Energy Use Benchmarking and Performance Standards – Amendments to Chapter 18 Environmental Sustainability. The OAG staff met with DEP staff on April 8, 2021 to determine whether this bill will negatively impact agricultural buildings. The Office of Agriculture will recommend that existing and new agricultural buildings be added to Section 18A-38B Applicability and exempt from the bill.
<https://montgomerycountymd.gov/green/Resources/Files/energy/building-energy-performance-standards.pdf>
4. The University of MD-Extension and Maryland Department of Agriculture conducted a two-day March 23-24, 2021 Good Agricultural Practices-GAP training and Certification for Montgomery County food producers and it was well attended with 23 farmers including some employees.
5. Please see the MCFB Announcement for Scholarships that are now available for students interested in agricultural curriculums. The Friends of Montgomery County Farm Bureau have \$279,700 budgeted for future student scholarships.
6. 2021 MD General Assembly update:
HB 007 Deer Donation Tax Credit passed
HB 991 Forest Conservation Banking Credits-Existing Stands of forests passed
SB 414 Climate Solutions Now Act failed to pass
HB 1356 Blue Ribbon Solar Commission failed to pass-*Please see the attached letter from Lonnie Luther, MCFB to the Montgomery County Delegation.*
7. The Office of Agriculture FY22 Operating Budget documents were attached to my cover memo and report for this AAC meeting. The PHED Committee Work Session is scheduled for April 22, 2021. *Please see the attached letters from the AAC and MCFB on the need to restore the Maryland Matching Money-MMM program that expands the purchasing power of customers at our farmers markets.*
8. Discussion on Leaf-gro that is provided by Maryland Environmental Service that many farmers use annually as a soil amendment. The Maryland Department of Agriculture has removed Leaf-gro from their approved list of organic soil amendments for organic certification because of the ink in the bags that are provided to residents for gathering leaves and grass clippings. Leaf gro is essential for the farmers that participate in the Farm to Food Bank Program-F2FB (2020-11 farmers and 2021-22

farmers) that provide food to the Manna Food Center for people in need at competitive prices.

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

City of Gaithersburg Ag Breakfast-Council Laurie Anne Sayles-April 16, 2021

Site visit to PG County Organics Facility and Eco-City Farm-April 19, 2021

Montgomery County Agricultural Advisory Committee-April 20, 2021

PHED Committee OAG FY22 Operating Budget-April 22, 2021

Montgomery County Farm Bureau Board of Directors- May 4, 2021 7:00 pm

Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board-May 11, 2021 7:00 pm

Montgomery Soil Conservation District-May 14, 2021 9:00 am