

Montgomery County Agricultural Advisory Committee
Agenda
July 20, 2021

1. Call the Meeting to Order-Introductions:
2. Approval of the June 15, 2021 AAC meeting minutes.
3. COVID-19 Update:

The Agricultural Activities Center is **NOW** open for agricultural agency employees. We are targeting September 1, 2021 as the date to open the building to the public and volunteers.

68 % of the County's population have received one dose of the vaccine and 62% are fully vaccinated.

[Data - COVID-19 Information Portal - Montgomery County, Maryland \(montgomerycountymd.gov\)](https://montgomerycountymd.gov/Data-COVID-19-Information-Portal-Montgomery-County-Maryland)

4. The Department of Environmental Protection Legislative Proposals

Individual Water Supply and Sewage Disposal Systems-*County residents that live in areas without public water and sewer were mailed the DEP post card to expand awareness to extend the life of their septic systems by pumping out their septic tanks.* The proposed legislation has still not been introduced. In response to the OAG concerns surrounding the enforcement and penalties language on lines 158-170, the Director of DEP has stated they will delete the language below entirely and he said, "We think we can make significant progress without that provision."

Introduction of Bill 16-21-Environmental Sustainability-Building Energy Use Benchmarking and Performance Standards – Amendments to Chapter 18 Environmental Sustainability. The Office of Agriculture recommends that all existing and new agricultural buildings be added to Section 18A-38B Applicability and exempt from the bill. *Please see the attached letter from the AAC. **There is a public hearing scheduled on July 20, 2021** and the agricultural organizations should provide a letter outlining that all existing and new agricultural buildings should be exempt from this Bill 16-21.* [2707_1_14390_Bill_16-2021_Introduction_20210504.pdf](#)

Electric Lawn Care – The DEP has now proposed a more limited bill that will prohibit the use and sale of gasoline leaf blowers. The Electric Lawn Care bill will be delayed.

5. Update on the gravel portion of River Road. The DOT test results found asbestos in the gravel along the road. *The County Council forwarded the attached letter to the County Executive stating: **We are calling on you to direct MCDOT to implement a***

permanent solution that stops this potentially hazardous material from spreading onto adjacent properties. This section of River Road between Edwards Ferry Road and Whites Ferry Road is an Exceptional Rustic Road, making it important that we act to protect its historic and rural character. **However, that preservation cannot take higher priority than health and safety.** Ensuring the continued rustic nature of this portion of River Road must be done in a manner that protects residents. We believe the County can find a solution that replaces the gravel while maintaining the “look and feel” of the road.

6. MD Farm Bureau and MCFB Farmside Chats:

Food Resiliency - Tuesday, June 8th at 9:30 AM - Butler's Orchard-Productive conversation and good turnout.

Livestock Processing & Grain Farming - Thursday, July 1st at 9:30 AM - Seneca Ayr Farm-Productive conversation and good turnout.

Deer Damage - Thursday, August 5th at 7 PM - Jamison Farm

Forest Banking - Wednesday, September 8th at 9:30 AM - Willard Family Farm

Ag Reserve Solar - Wednesday, October 6th at 9 AM - Rockhill Orchard

7. Thrive 2050 Public Record closed on Friday July 9, 2021.

https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2021/20210615/20210615_16D.pdf

Please see the attached letter from the AAC regarding the Planning Board’s recommendation to remove the Agricultural Reserve Chapter from the Thrive 2050 Report and move it to an appendix.

As part of the Thrive 2050 plan, community health is a factor that is being addressed.

Please see the attached recruitment flyer from the Department of Health and Human Services.

The County conducts community health needs assessments to determine what different populations need for better health. The County is holding meetings in different areas featuring different demographics to build a list of those community’s health needs.

One of these meetings will be held to determine the Agricultural Reserves health needs. The attached flyer has information on how to sign up for this meeting.

It will be a virtual meeting held on July 20th at 6pm.

Please sign up and let your voice be heard.

8. The Subdivision Regulation Amendment 21-01 is scheduled on Tuesday July 20, 2021 as a full Council Work Session. The SRA 21-01 will remove commercial buildings from the subdivision process when the buildings are used for agritourism, on-site farm markets and farm alcohol production. The MNCPPC generally supports this SRA 21-01 although they have remitted recommendations that will still require commercial buildings to meet forest conservation, historic preservation, family burial sites, and road dedication.
9. Update on Leaf-Gro- The MDA “certifier” changed their determination on the allowance of Leaf-Gro. This happens occasionally as certifiers complete material reviews to determine if the product should be allowed or disallowed. In this case, MDA did a re-review of the (Leaf-Gro) material based on the fact that another certifier removed the (Leaf-Gro) material from its approved list. The MDA “certifier” reviewed the USDA organic regulations and a number of other resources and determined, based on that review, that the (Leaf-Gro) product should not be allowed. Based on the feedback from MDA about their process and decision, The USDA stands by the MDA decision.
10. US Senator Ben Cardin would like to schedule a Conversation with Farmers on Friday July 23, 2021 at 1:00 pm. The Senator is interested in hearing updates on how the agricultural community is moving past the COVID-19 Pandemic including an update on federal programs and initiatives impacting agriculture. *Please see the attached message with the proposed program-agenda of agricultural issues that will be discussed.*
11. The next meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Committee- August 17, 2021-Since this meeting falls during the County Agricultural Fair, Jeremy recommends that we could conduct a quick huddle up meeting following the Agricultural Leaders Luncheon on Monday August 16, 2021.

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

Montgomery Soil Conservation District-July 16, 2021 9:00 am
Community Health and Needs Assessment-July 20, 2021 6:00 pm
Montgomery County Agricultural Advisory Committee-July 20, 2021 7:00 pm
Montgomery County Farm Bureau Board of Directors- August 3, 2021 7:00 pm
MCPS Summer Agricultural Camps-August 3 and 5, 2021
Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board-August 10, 2021 7:00 pm
MCPS/CBF-Connecting Farmers with Teachers-August 12, 2021
Montgomery County Agricultural Fair- August 13, 2021 through August 21, 2021
Agricultural Leaders Luncheon-August 16, 2021