

Montgomery County Agricultural Advisory Committee - Agenda September 26, 2023  
Office of Agriculture- Jeremy Criss

**Call the meeting to Order and Introductions-**

**Approval of the July 18, 2023, AAC minutes-** *Please note there was no meeting in August.*

**1. Bill 40-21, Individual Water Supply and Sewage Disposal Systems – Amendments**

The OAG will continue to monitor this bill, which will be scheduled for a second T&E Committee Work Session.

[https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2023/20230307/20230307\\_3A.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2023/20230307/20230307_3A.pdf)

**2. Bill 18-22, Noise Control – Leaf Removal Equipment – Amendments**

The County Council tabled this bill, but the OAG will continue to monitor it.

[https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2023/20230321/20230321\\_4G.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2023/20230321/20230321_4G.pdf)

**3. PFAS Update- DuPont, Corteva, Chemours agree to pay \$1.2B in ‘forever chemicals’ settlement | Manufacturing Dive**

<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.manufacturingdive.com%2Fnews%2Fdupont-chemours-corteva-agree-to-1-2b-pfas-settlement-fund%2F652076%2F&data=05%7C01%7Cjeremy.criss%40montgomerycountymd.gov%7C6489c00848894305f2a608db9a9596e7%7C6e01b1f9b1e54073ac97778069a0ad64%7C0%7C0%7C638273739493232319%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljojMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6IklhaWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=F0x6oB4sltMhh0OkZKHPKWDxI9NQRwXTHio9DnYThbY%3D&reserved=0>

**4. Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) Report on the Status of Transferable Development Rights (TDRs) and Building Lot Termination (BLT) Easements**

The OAG contacted Andrew Friedson, Chair of the Planning Housing and Parks Committee and learned that a work session on the OLO Report for TDRs and BLTs is delayed due to the MNCPPC staff still working on the new opportunities for using TDRs and BLTs. **The OAG is proposing the attached Letter of Intent/Interest** for any farmer that leases farmland that still has retained TDRs as these farmers will need the ability to use these retained TDRs as equity to help purchase the farm. The OAG hopes this approach will enable the MNCPPC to better understand how many TDRs they will need to be planned for in TDR Overlay zones.

**5. The Office of Agriculture recommends that the County Government revisit the Farm Alcohol Production Zoning Text Amendment 18-03 and 18-14 with the following amendments.**

The minimum lot size for all types of FAP should be amended to require 25-acres. Farm breweries and farm distilleries currently require a 25-acre minimum lot size.

The minimum on-site production requirements for farm breweries and farm distilleries should be amended to require five (5) acres which is consistent with farm wineries and farm cideries. Farm breweries and farm distilleries currently require only one acre of on-site production. The OAG will require that FAP owners provide evidence of contract growing of specialty crops. **Please see the attached AAC letter to the County Council and CE regarding these recommendations.**

**6. Update on the October 1, 2023, Retirement of Jeremy Criss, Director of the Office of Agriculture**

The position for the new Director of the Office of Agriculture was advertised during the summer and a total of five candidates were interviewed. The interviews were also attended by twelve stakeholders of agricultural groups etc. and Eleanor Leak represented the AAC and the MCFB. The new Director of the Office of Agriculture is Mike Scheffel to be effective October 1, 2023, which is the same date that Jeremy Criss retires.

**7. New DPS Policy for High Tunnels used in Urban Areas for producing local food**

The Office of Agriculture worked with the Administration and DPS to eliminate the building permit and fee for high tunnels used in urban areas to produce local food. Natalia Salazar conducted research that showed Montgomery County was the only MD jurisdiction that was requiring a building permit and excessive fee for these temporary structures. **Please see the attached Agricultural Producer Certificate** that was developed to assist with the placement of these high tunnels in urban areas-Down County.

**8. Amendments to Chapter 49 Streets and Roads-Rustic Roads Advisory Committee-**

On July 25, 2023, the County Council approved Bill 30-23 to amend Chapter 49, Article 8 on the Rustic Roads Advisory Committee. The Council approved that three of the RRAC members shall be commodity farmers earning at least 50% of their income from farming and a fourth member will be recommended by the AAC as the AAC representative.

[https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2023/20230725/20230725\\_13G.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2023/20230725/20230725_13G.pdf)

The OAG reached out to several commodity farmers that we believe meet the farm income requirements. The following commodity farmers responded that they are interested on serving on the RRAC:

Tom Linthicum, Mason Hopkins, John Jamison, Billy Willard. Sr.-AAC representative recommended by the AAC.

September 6, 2023, Listening Session for the replacement of Shaeffer Road Bridge.  
[https://www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcportalapps/Press\\_Detail.aspx?Item\\_ID=43826&Dept=50&fbclid=IwAR382gOzfNYNbaFq9cF5fQ6ZSmrjQsB8Huk088qULrGxZZhBG419VTCHag](https://www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcportalapps/Press_Detail.aspx?Item_ID=43826&Dept=50&fbclid=IwAR382gOzfNYNbaFq9cF5fQ6ZSmrjQsB8Huk088qULrGxZZhBG419VTCHag)

**9. Agricultural Advisory Committee Appointments and Selection of New Chair**

Interviews for new AAC candidates were conducted on May 31, 2023. The interview committee was Doug Lechluder, Mike Scheffel, Natalia Salazar, and Jeremy. Lori Larson is designated as our Conservationist and Patrick Jamison is designated as our Farm Economist. Here is a summary of the AAC appointments and we will need to recruit additional farmers members and one more non-farmer member.

County Council Confirmation of AAC appointments is scheduled on September 12, 2023

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Russ Allnutt    | Farmer Member  |
| Ben Butler      | Farmer Member  |
| Amanda Cather   | Farmer Member  |
| Jane Evans      | Farmer Member  |
| Tim Hussman     | New Farmer Member  |
| Lori Larson     | Farmer Member and Conservationist                              |
| Matt Lechluder  | New Farm Member  |
| Michael Protas  | New Farm Member  |
| John Brewer     | Non-Farmer Member  |
| Debra Tropp     | Non-Farmer Member  |
| Aliza Silver    | Can Continue as Non-Farmer Member until replaced               |
| Eleanor Leak    | Can Continue as a Farmer Member until replaced                 |
| Patrick Jamison | Can Continue as a Farmer Member- Farm Economist until replaced |
| Pete Driscroll  | Can Continue as a Farmer Member until replaced                 |
| Jordan Cissel   | We need to find another farmer member                          |

This will be the last AAC meeting for Doug Lechluder serving as the Chair. We need to select a new Chair, Vice Chair.

**10. Update on the Crossvines Facility**

The Office of Agriculture, the Office of Food Systems Resiliency and the MC Food Council coordinated a meeting on September 14, 2023, for local farmers to meet with the Chef Luis from the Crossvines Facility and discuss new opportunities for locally produced food to be sold to Crossvines for preparing meals for their guests and events. The Crossvines may be another marketing avenue for farmers to sell their locally produced food like the Farm to Food Bank-F2FB program where 35 farmers are currently participating. The OAG is working with Chef Luis to develop a list of food products that he will need daily so the farmers can begin planning for the 2024 growing season.

**11. Maryland Department of Agriculture announces a Crop Damage Survey resulting from White Tailed Deer.**

The MDA announced that they need MD Farmers to respond to a survey that will document the total amount of crop damage from deer. Montgomery County conducted a survey in 2014 that showed County farmers lost a total of \$4.4 million due to crop damage from deer. Here is the link to complete this survey. [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScm-hzWm7QAmA9ysZkLA91mi\\_TEvhZdI3yCHhcToxCGlvbbXw/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScm-hzWm7QAmA9ysZkLA91mi_TEvhZdI3yCHhcToxCGlvbbXw/viewform)

**12. National Farmers Day October 10, 2023 Luncheon and Proclamation**

Councilmember Laurie Ann Sayles would like to extend invitations to local farmers for a luncheon and proclamation that the Council office are organizing to recognize National Farmer's Day. They have it scheduled for Tuesday, October 10 from 12-1:30 p.m. at the Council Office Building.

**13. Next Meeting of the AAC is October 17, 2023, at 7:00 pm –**

**14. Upcoming Meetings and Events:**

Montgomery Soil Conservation District Board of Supervisors – September 15, 2023  
Montgomery Weed Control Board of Directors-Fall meeting-September 18, 2023  
Up County Citizens Advisory Board-Ag. Reserve discussion-September 18, 2023  
County Council Proclamation for Jeremy Criss-September 19, 2023  
MSCD Cooperators Dinner-September 19, 2023, The Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting will be reschedule due to the MSCD Cooperators Dinner.  
Poolesville Day-September 23, 2023  
Agricultural Advisory Committee-Rescheduled to September 26, 2023  
MCFB Membership Committee-Ag on TAP @ Waredaca Farm Brewery-September 28, 2023  
Last Day of Employment with Montgomery County for Jeremy V. Criss-September 29, 2023  
Montgomery County Farm Bureau- October 3, 2023  
National Farmers Day Luncheon and Proclamation-October 10, 2023, 12:00 pm  
Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board – October 10, 2023