



AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AAC)

Regular Meeting Agenda October 15, 2024

1. Introductions
2. Approval of the September 17, 2024 AAC minutes
3. Presentation of [Montgomery Planning's Agritourism Study](#)
4. AAC report for the Montgomery County Committee Evaluation and Review Board (CERB)

The CERB makes recommendations to the County Executive and County Council concerning the function, structure, staff impact, and effectiveness of certain county advisory boards, committees, and commissions. The County Code requires that every advisory board, including the AAC, produce a report describing why that board should continue to exist, and the deadline to submit this report is October 30, 2024. CERB members will also ask to meet with each advisory board and its staff in the near future, and will be working towards producing an Interim Report that will go to the County Executive and Council by mid-July 2025.

5. Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) Report on the status of Transferable Development Rights (TDRs) and Building Lot Termination (BLT) programs – *No update since July 2024*

Throughout the course of three work sessions in June, the Planning Department presented to the Planning Board the same recommendations the department had presented to the OAG and agricultural community on how to increase the market for TDRs and BLTs through the Incentive Zoning Update. At the conclusion, the Planning Board voted in favor of presenting these recommendations to the County Council. The Planning Department stated that the recommended changes to the TDR program would require the County Council to introduce a Zoning Text Amendment.

6. Solar projects generating over 2 MW in the Agricultural Reserve

At the Planning Board's September 5 public hearing on Chaberton Solar's Sugarloaf project, the Planning Department staff presented their [report](#) recommending denial of the Mandatory Referral application. The reasons for this recommendation included non-compliance with the requirements of the Zoning Code (including an approved agricultural activity under the panels) and the State's Forest Conservation Law. Chaberton had not provided evidence of a commitment to agrivoltaics on the site and had not obtained an approved Forest Conservation Plan, Natural Resource Inventory, or Forest Stand Delineation. The Board voted to grant Chaberton a continuance, which together with an extension from the Public Services Commission (PSC), will give them more time to fulfill these requirements.

The County Council and Executive will be intervening as parties of record in the PSC process and have submitted joint comment to the PSC (which can be viewed [here](#)) arguing in favor of the



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County's approach to solar energy in the Agricultural Reserve and requesting that this zone's ordinance and master plan be give due consideration.

The PSC's second public hearing on this project has been postponed to February 4, 2025 at the Upper Montgomery County Fire Department.

7. Proposed solar project under 2 MW in the AR zone

The owner of 17700 Barnesville Road in Barnesville is working with a solar developer to apply for conditional use approval for a 1.8 MW solar array. The current proposed site occupies approximately 7 acres and has Class 3 or higher soils, except for a small area of Class 2 soils. A pre-submittal community meeting was held online on October 10.

8. Office of Agriculture (OAG) projects at the Agricultural History Farm Park

The OAG recently established two new on-site projects: 1) a three-bin composting demonstration site, which will be used to train farmers and gardeners how to compost food scraps, and 2) an outdoor refrigerated container where farmers will be able to store their products for subsequent delivery to food assistance providers, farmers markets, schools, retail outlets, restaurants, etc.

The OAG will host ribbon-cutting ceremonies for these two projects on October 25 and has invited the County Executive, County Council, farmers who produce table foods (produce, meats, dairy, and eggs), and many other interested organizations. If anyone would like to attend and has not received an invitation, please contact Natalia Salazar (natalia.salazar@montgomerycountymd.gov, 301-590-2816).

9. Rustic Roads Advisory Committee (RRAC) vacancy

The RRAC still has one commodity farmer vacancy. The position has been relisted with an application deadline of October 30, 2024. Anyone interested can apply [here](#).

10. The next meeting of the AAC will be held on November 19, 2024 at 7:00 pm on Microsoft Teams.

11. Upcoming meetings and events:

Montgomery County Farm Bureau Board of Directors meeting: November 5, 2024

Montgomery Soil Conservation District Board of Supervisors meeting: November 8, 2024

Montgomery County Farm Bureau Banquet: November 12, 2024

Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board meeting: November 12, 2024