

Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes

May 14, 2024

7:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

1. Introductions

Board Members: Randy Stabler, Sarah Daken, Nick Magliato, Wade Butler,

Staff: Mike Weyand, Mike Scheffel

Guests: Dale Tibbitts, Jake Adler, Don Burrows, Tom Hoffmann, Vladimir Trench, Kenny Shumaker, Carol Shumaker, Mike Jamison, Marilyn Balcombe, Dawn Luedtke, Tiffany Telford, Chris Allen, Craig Wilson, Lorraine Toni, Allana McDaniel, Jeremy Cronin, Gerard U. James, Cher Sorzano, Innocent Wamey, Santana Salazar, and Myesha Beamon.

2. Approval of February Minutes

Randy Stabler motioned to accept the minutes; Wade Butler seconded, and the motion carried.

3. AEP/BLT/TDR Easement Programs

a. Caribbean festival- 16700 Barnesville Rd

Caribbean Festival, called the “Fest of Spring,” is scheduled for Saturday, May 18, on a farm located at 16700 Barnesville Rd. The event organizer (Vladimir Trench) and the property owners (Kenny and Carol Shumaker) gave a brief overview of the festival.

Montgomery County Department of Permitting (Chris Allen) informed the event organizer and the property owners that the special events permit for the festival was not approved. Mr. Trench asked why the permit was not issued. Mr. Allen explained that 16700 Barnesville Road is in the Agricultural Reserve zone. According to Section 59.3.1.6 of the Zoning Ordinance, the proposed festival is prohibited.

Montgomery County Office of Agriculture (Mike Scheffel) explained that the farm at 16700 Barnesville Rd was encumbered by a County Agricultural Preservation Easement. Ag Preservation Easements lock in agriculture as the primary use and restrict residential, commercial, and industrial uses. Special events are considered commercial activities and are not permitted on land encumbered by a preservation easement unless that event is directly related to the agricultural operations on the farm.

b. TDR & BLT Incentive Update

The APAB provided a letter of support to the MNCPPC on April 17. Several conversations have occurred about recent efforts to incentivize the TDR & BLT programs. The Office of Agriculture set up a meeting on May 28 at the Ag History Farm Park between the Ag Groups and MNCPPC to discuss the topic further.

4. Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation

- a. [FY23 Applicants](#)
- b. [FY24 Applicants](#)
- c. [FY25/FY26 Combined Application Cycle](#)

MALPF issued a memo about the FY25 and FY26 combined funding cycle on April 30. The memo reported a 58 million dollar decrease in preservation funds. In response, MALPF is combining funds from the next two fiscal years. New preservation applications are due by June 30, 2024. The end of FY26 is the next time MALPF will be taking applications.

5. RLP Easement Program

- a. [FY23 Grants](#)

6. Ag Easement Monitoring & Inspections

The Office of Agriculture conducted six farm inspections last month. All farms complied and followed the terms of the easement. The County has met its annual inspection requirements for the Rural Legacy and MAPFL Preservation Programs.

7. Legislative activities

- a. [ZTA 23-09 – Incidental outdoor stays](#)

On April 22, 2024, the OAG sent a letter on behalf of the Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) to Councilmembers Friedson and Fani-Gonzalez requesting that ZTA 23-09 be withdrawn and include recommendations agreed upon by the AAC, APAB, Montgomery County Farm Bureau, Montgomery Agricultural Producers, Montgomery Countryside Alliance, and Sugarloaf Citizens Association.

On May 3, 2024, Councilmember Fani-Gonzalez sent an amended ZTA to the rest of the County Council and letters of support from farmers and residents. This amended ZTA removes all the changes to the definition of Farming proposed by the original ZTA and creates a new conditional use in the Lodging section of the Code called “Overnight Farm Stays.” The amended ZTA allows these overnight stays in the Agricultural Reserve and the rural residential and residential-detached zones.

On May 29, 2024, at 6 pm, Councilmember Balcombe will hold a “town hall” meeting at the Agricultural History Farm Park Multi-Purpose Room to discuss the ZTA she and Councilmember Luedtke to discuss a competing ZTA using the recommendations provided by the agricultural groups.

8. Other Business

- a. Solar – Agriculture Reserve
- b. APAB Advertisement Non-farmer Member

Five applications were received for the APAB non-farmer member vacancy. Interviews will be scheduled in the coming weeks. Staff is anticipating a July appointment.

- c. CREP/DNR/RLP Easement Option
- d. Upcoming Meetings and Events
 - May 21 - Agricultural Advisory Committee.
 - May 27 - Memorial Day (office closed)
 - May 28 – TDR & BLT Meeting w/Parks & Planning
 - May 29 – ZTA 23-09 Townhall Meeting
 - June 9 – Montgomery County Farm Bureau Annual Picnic
 - June 11 – Next APAB Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 8:41 pm.