AGRICULTURAL/LAND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MINUTES October 24, 2022

The meeting of the Stafford County Agricultural/Land Conservation Committee for Monday, October 24, 2022, was called to order at 7:06pm, in the Activities Room in the George L. Gordon Government Center by Carlos Bratton, Chairman.

Members Present: John Howe, Chad Young, Carlos Bratton, Jeff Adams

Members Absent: Alandra Simmons, Elizabeth Cameron, Benjamin Rudasill

Staff Present: Kathy Baker and Vicki Sowers

1. **Call to Order**

Carlos Bratton called the meeting to order at 7:06pm and confirmed there was a quorum.

2. **Public Presentations**

None

3. **Staff Update**

- **PDR Property Updates**

Kathy Baker advised that the Jones Property is in the final stages in the PDR process. She said due to a change of attorneys, the Jones' have not submitted their final version of the deed yet. The new attorneys are looking over everything before we submit it to VDACS for their review.

She also advised that the Moore property received a notice from USDA because their appraisal was higher and they want to give them more funds. The appraisal came back at $425,000, the County committed to $200,000 and USDA matches at $200,000 which is 400,000. USDA is authorizing another $12,500 which will be ½ of the appraised value. We are still waiting on the final review of approval on their appraisal from the USDA technical reviewer.

4. **New Business**

  - **New PDR Applications – Property Overviews**

Ms. Baker handed out a map showing all of the application properties with their Election Districts. The majority of the properties are located in the George Washington District. There is one in Aquia District and two in the Hartwood District. Kathy went over the basics of the applications: Eight total received totaling 355 acres and all are zoned A-1. Most of the applications refer to timber and agricultural land uses.

Overview of all applications from the handout:

1. Bell Property – Parcel 60-56 (Hollywood Farm Rd). 20 Acres. Pasture/Livestock. Has a pond and a few horses. There is frontage on Hollywood Farm Rd. No subdividing. Entire 20 acres would be put under Easement.
   Ms. Baker advised that within the next few weeks (November) she plans to do site visits to all of the properties and will confirm all information and obtain pictures.

2. Davis Property – Parcel 34-5A-5 (Wiley Ln/Eley Rd). 26.79 Acres. Timber usage. Bumps up to a subdivision. This property was part of that original acreage but is the part that did not get subdivided. It has limited access but Wiley Lane is public access that butts up to the property.
   Potential to divide into 4 subdivision lots.

3. Ellington Property – Parcels 55-77+ (Bertha Ln) 57.3 Acres. Timber usage. Property is off of Ferry Rd/Bertha Ln- private road. Application is using all acreage as one property easement.
   Potential for 9 subdivided lots.

4. Harris (Janet) Property – Parcel 56-112A (White Oak Rd) 73.35 Acres. Pasture/Hay/Livestock usage. Property is just before crossing into King George County. Family owns about 200 acres in that area.

5. Harris (John/Cathy) Harris – Parcel 25-38 (Spotted Tavern Rd- Spotted Tavern Farm) 55.53 Acres. Timber/Hay usage. John and Cathy Harris have had previous applications for easements. They currently have about 100+ acres under easement. This part of the property was the actual site of the old Spotted Tavern.

6. Long Property – Parcels 56-126A (Hickory Hill Ln) 67.27 Acres. Timber/Residence usage. Off of Bethel Church Rd.

7. Pagnotta Property – Parcel 40-24 (Brooke Rd) 35 Acres (portion of property) Timber/Residence usage. This parcel was left out of the surrounding subdivisions because it is a lot of streams and marsh. This is near the Crows Nest Area. Applicant wants to subdivide the front of the lot and then use the back 35 acres for the easement.

8. Schenemann Property – Parcel 47-21C (Brooke Rd) 20 Acres. Timber usage. Directly off of Brooke Rd.

Jeff Adams asked for a reasonable time frame for the application process and initial rankings. Ms. Baker advised that she plans to have site visits and all applications reviewed prior to the next meeting in November (staff to help). She said she will go through the ranking criteria and develop questions. Initial rankings shouldn't take too long.

Ms. Baker also explained that one reason to expedite is because VDACS next application round deadline is November 17th. They are the only ones that do not require an actual project to be in process to apply for the funds. The two years of funds that we currently have will expire in March – but can give a six-month extension if we have a project in process. Therefore, if by March, we have identified a project, then we the funds can be extended and used.

Ms. Baker said her goal is to get the applications to the BOS by the first meeting in February for them to authorize approval to move forward.

More discussion ensued regarding finances and funding with regards to what is currently available and potential needs with this round of applications.

Ms. Baker offered an invitation to anyone who would like to visit the properties but to keep in mind, no more than 2 at one time – otherwise it is considered a meeting. She said that once she has all of the information gathered – and because it will be too much to email – she will set up a site to hold the documents so everyone will have access. She said once the preliminary scoresheets have been completed, and the committee looks at them, offers comments and changes, the preliminary draft will be sent to each applicant for their review. They will have a chance to make comments, changes, and relative updates. Final scores will be approved by all of the applicants and then final rankings will be submitted to the BOS. Ms. Baker welcomed questions and said to send her an email if any additional come up.

5. **Unfinished Business**

- **PDR Funding**

Ms. Baker went over the letter that she drafted and sent out upon last meeting request to send a letter to the BOS requesting additional and on-going budget funds for the Land Preservation/PDR program. A thorough discussion ensued regarding the information in the letter and the amount that should be requested in the formal letter. As per previous meeting, the draft letter requests an "allocation of $3,000,000 to the PDR fund in FY2024, and consider a specific allocation for each subsequent fiscal year."

Mr. Adams said based on the estimate of approximately $4.3 million to fund all eight new applications, and noting that there are matching funds available, that maybe that amount should be dropped to between $1.2 and $1.5 million. He said, although he was the one who brought to the table and voted on the $3 million requested previously, now that there are guestimate numbers and submitted applications, he has no problem trimming that amount down.

Chad Young confirmed that this request is just for FY2024. A request would need to be made every year but the verbiage in the letter "consider a specific allocation for each subsequent fiscal year' puts it in writing that a request would be expected. More discussion ensued regarding roll-over funds, matching funds, and previous years/applications/processes.

Mr. Adams made a motion to revise the letter to request $1.3 million instead of $3 million. More discussion took place regarding future spending, budgets, and Board changes. Ms. Baker explained that the request needs justification and also, if the request for $1.3 million is approved, there is no guarantee that the same will be approved for fiscal year FY25. The statement added in the letter for subsequent years would be a part of their financial policy.

Mr. John Howe agreed and said the request needs to be realistic and supportable. He seconded Mr. Adams motion to change the request in the letter to $1.3 million. Mr. Bratton called for vote. Motion passed 4-0 to change the formal letter request to $1.3 million.

Ms. Baker advised that she would revise the letter and have Mr. Bratton sign.

- **Appraisal Review Committee Establishment**

Ms. Baker advised that someone from our Commission of Revenue typically serves on the Appraisal Review Committee – this will likely be Scott Mayausky. She advised that there will also need to be an outside appraiser and someone from this (AG/LCC). She said for all to think about anyone they would like to nominate or would like volunteer to serve.

Mr. Adams had a question regarding conflict of interest which was discussed.

Mr. Adams volunteered himself to serve on the committee saying that he has gone through and is familiar with the process. Initially, Ms. Baker was going to send a note to all committee members advising there were two members interested – Mr. Adams and Mr. Howe, but Mr. Howe endorsed Mr. Adams and Mr. Bratton made a motion to vote on Jeff Adams as the committee member representative to the Review Committee. Mr. Howe seconded. Mr. Adams was appointed as the representative with a 3-0 vote (Mr. Adams obtained).

Ms. Baker said she is going to ask the Commissioner of the Revenue to make a recommendation on who could be asked to be the third outside person. It isn't someone that would potentially be doing the appraisals. The committee would vote on that outside person as well. She said she hopes to get a recommendation for vote by next meeting.

Ms. Baker also mentioned that she forgot to add the Farmer's Market to this agenda and will add it for the next meeting. It is just to approve the regulations – which the committee reviews and approves every year.

6. Approval of Minutes

- Mr. Howe motioned to approve the August 22, 2022 minutes as printed. Mr. Young seconded. Vote of 4-0 in favor to approve August minutes.

7. Member Comments

None

8. Next Meeting

- November 28, 2022
- December 26, 2022 (Holiday) – Discuss change of date

Mr. Young made a motion to combine the November and December meetings into one meeting.
Mr. Adams seconded with more discussion about picking the date and then Mr. Young suggested possibly cancelling the December meeting. After much discussion about application timelines and deadlines to get processes in place – BOS approvals by March, Mr. Young withdrew his motion to combine and Chairman Bratton made the official decision to keep the November meeting as scheduled and to cancel the December 26, 2022 meeting.

Prior to adjournment, Mr. Bratton had a discussion with the committee regarding member absences. Mr. Bratton will be reaching out to committee members directly to get more insight regarding participation.

9. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss Mr. Bratton adjourned the meeting at 8:23pm.