

***AGRICULTURAL/LAND CONSERVATION
COMMITTEE MINUTES
February 27, 2023***

The meeting of the Stafford County Agricultural/Land Conservation Committee for Monday, February 27, 2023, was called to order at 7:01pm, in the ABC Conference Room in the George L. Gordon Government Center by Kathy Baker, Assistant Planning and Zoning Director.

Members	Present	Absent
Jeff Adams	X	
Joanna Berger	X	
Carlos Bratton	X	
John Howe	X	
Benjamin Rudasill	X	
Alandra Simmons		X
Chad Young	X	

Staff Present: Kathy Baker and Vicki Sowers

Guests Present: Marshall Locklear, Robin Long, and Lester Long

1. Call to Order

Ms. Baker called the meeting to order at 7:01pm and confirmed there was a quorum present.

2. Welcome New Member – Joanna Berger (Garrisonville District)

Ms. Baker introduced and welcomed newly appointed member, Joanna Berger (Garrisonville District). All members introduced themselves. Ms. Berger proceeded with her own introduction and Bio. Ms. Baker offered assistance in her acclamation to the committee.

3. Organize Committee

- Election of Officers

Ms. Baker opened the floor to nominations for 2023 Chairman and confirmed that the position can run for two (2) terms. Mr. Bratton was asked if he was up for a re-election which was affirmed. Mr. Rudasill nominated Carlos Bratton for re-election as Chairman.

Vote: 6-0 in favor of Mr. Bratton's re-election as Chairman of the committee.

The floor was then turned over to Mr. Bratton to lead the remainder of the meeting.

Mr. Bratton requested nominations for Vice-Chair. Chad Young nominated John Howe for re-election as Vice-Chairman. Mr. Rudasill seconded.

Vote: 6-0 in favor of Mr. Howe's re-election as Vice-Chairman of the committee.

Mr. Bratton confirmed that there would not be a vote for Secretary.

- 2023 Meeting Calendar

Mr. Howe motioned to adopt the calendar as presented with the removal of the December 25th meeting. Mr. Young seconded.

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Vote: 6-0 in favor of adopting the 2023 Meeting Calendar as presented – December meeting removed/cancelled.

- **2023 Work Plan**

A copy of the 2022 Work Plan was distributed for reference. Ms. Baker complimented the committee for 2022 accomplishments and asked if there were any recommendations and changes to be implemented for 2023. Mr. Howe indicated that section 2 would need to be modified/changed from opening PDR applications to “work on completion” of 2022 applications. Ms. Baker said she would modify section 2 which will include removing parts a and b.

Jeff Adams asked Ms. Baker if it would be a good idea to recommend a presentation to the Board regarding what the PDR is and what it does. Kathy advised that information has been presented on a few occasions but if the committee would like to do that, it could be arranged to ask for a spot on the Board agenda. Ms. Baker said the existing applications will be going back to the Board on March 7th.

Mr. Howe referred to section 3c “Follow recommendations per the Planning Commission’s report dated 2/10/21” and asked if it was the same set of recommendations he has been involved with. Ms. Baker confirmed and stated that one of those recommendations was hiring a Land Conservation Specialist through the Land Conservation Trust. She advised that the position is close to being filled – possibly by April 1st. She said the position will work on the donated easement process as well as community outreach and education to promote the land conservation programs.

Mr. Young motioned to approve the 2023 Work Plan with the discussed changes. Mr. Bratton seconded. Vote: 6-0 in favor of the motion to approve the 2023 Work Plan with changes to be implemented by Ms. Baker.

- **By-laws**

Mr. Bratton noted that he did not see any needed changes to the existing By-laws. Mr. Adams asked for confirmation that these are the same the committee has had for years. Ms. Baker confirmed these By-laws were updated in 2016.

Mr. Adams made a motion to approve the existing By-laws. Mr. Young seconded. Vote: 6-0 in favor of accepting the existing By-laws for 2023.

4. Public Presentations

None – Guests were asked if they would like to speak. They declined. Ms. Baker explained that they are present for the Farmer’s Market Applications.

5. Staff Update

- **New Land Conservation Specialist Position**

Ms. Baker reiterated that the position should be on board by April 1st. She said there were many good candidates and that although the position is in partnership with the NVCT (Northern Virginia Conservation Trust), they will be located here in the Planning and Zoning Department. In the beginning, they will likely be in Arlington with NVCT and then move to our offices. Ms. Baker said they will be

coming to these committee meetings so there will be an introduction. A work plan and goals will also be created with them which will be shared with the committee. A few known items will include social media (website), educational outreach, and potential workshops. The MOU states the position is approved through 2025 so it is a 2 ½ year position and will be re-evaluated for renewal or extension as that time.

- **Purchase of Development Rights Program Funding and Applications**

Ms. Baker advised that the money/funding is still the same – about 1.3M. She did advise that the VDACS fund will likely be lost as it expires on May 31st (\$54,000 from 2021). She also explained that the new funding is still applicable (approximately \$280,000 in VDACS funds). As other grant money becomes available, the committee can apply for those throughout the year – as long as the Board takes action on the resolution to move forward with the existing applications.

Ms. Baker said in the last CEDC meeting, the Board requested to defer their decision to obtain additional information and resolve questions regarding funding, budget, applications, and notifications (740 mailed out to existing qualified land owners). Ms. Baker has provided all of the requested information for the upcoming March 7th CEDC meeting. She said if they do take action at this meeting, it will move to the Board's 3pm Agenda (same day as CEDC) for a vote.

Mr. Young asked about the status of the previous PDR application recipients – Jones and Moore.

Ms. Baker advised:

Jones: Virginia Land Conservation Foundation has reviewed the deed but they now need a letter stating that the appraisal is still valid since typically, it is only valid within 6 months of closing. Ms. Baker said they are in discussions as to how to handle.

Moore: Currently waiting for a response from the USDA appraisal.

Mr. Adams stated and Ms. Baker confirmed that the delays were outside of our office and outside of our control. She said she continues to work on resolutions with all of the involved parties – she is hoping for both to be finalized soon.

6. New Business

- **Farmers Market Application – Long Family Market**

Ms. Baker advised that the Longs were present to answer any questions. She explained that their application is basically the same as they have submitted and approved in the past.

Mr. Howe motioned to approve the Long Family Market. Mr. Young seconded.

Vote: 5-1 (Adams) to approve the Long Family Farmers Market application for 2023.

- **Farmers Market Application – Marshall Locklear**

Mr. Locklear was present to answer any questions.

Mr. Howe motioned to approve the Marshall Locklear application. Mr. Young seconded.

Vote: 5-1 (Adams) to approve Marshall Locklear's Farmers Market application for 2023.

7. Approval of Minutes

- November 28, 2022

Mr. Adams motioned to approve the November 28, 2022 minutes as printed. Mr. Howe seconded.

Vote: 6-0 in favor to approve the November 28, 2022 minutes.

8. Member Comments

- Mr. Adams announced that VSU will offer an Urban Agricultural Certification class starting on Saturday, March 4th.
- Mr. Adams advised that BOS Monica Gary will be visiting his farm on Thursday.
- Mr. Adams said he spoke with the Extension Office and they will be posting for Guy Mussey's (retired) replacement soon. Small discussion regarding this ensued.

Ms. Baker asked Ms. Berger if she had any questions.

- Ms. Berger asked Mr. Adams for a synopsis that he would present to the Board.
- Mr. Adams complied and discussed current application status.
- Ms. Baker offered to answer any questions – said to feel free to contact her directly. She will also pull together additional information and records to forward to Ms. Berger for reference.
- Ms. Baker reiterated that the CEDC will be meeting – with the PDR applications on the agenda – on Tuesday, March 7th at 12:00pm in this room (ABC). She said the meeting is open to the public but there is no interaction. This is the committee meeting – if they approve to move forward to the Board, the Board will vote same day – March 7th at 3pm in the Board Chambers.
- Mr. Howe announced that the Tri-County Conservation District will have a Pasture Walk (Seminar) on March 23rd at 4pm on Janet Harris' Farm off of 218.

9. Next Meeting

- March 27, 2023

10. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss Mr. Bratton adjourned the meeting at 7:40pm.