

AGRICULTURAL AND LAND CONSERVATION
COMMITTEE MINUTES
April 24, 2023

The meeting of the Stafford County Agricultural and Land Conservation Committee for Monday, April 24, 2023, was called to order at 7:05PM, in the ABC Conference Room in the George L. Gordon Government Center by Chairman Carlos Bratton.

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

1. Call to Order

Mr. Bratton called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM and confirmed there was a quorum present.

2. Public Presentations

None

3. Staff Update

• **PDR Applications Update**

The USDA approved the draft deed on the Moore property. The family is waiting on a soil scientist to confirm that they will have a perk site within the three-acre building envelopes before signing off. Staff is still waiting on the final approval of the appraisal.

References to some Civil War trenches need to be added to the baseline report for the Kevin Jones property. Once these two applications are complete, this will close out the 2017 round.

There are seven new applicants for the 2022 round. Ms. Baker has met with four applicants and has meetings set up to meet with the others to get them started working on their deeds of easement. The next step will be getting appraisals for each property.

Laura Hassell has begun work as the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust staff person dedicated to Stafford. She is currently in Harrisonburg for the Virginia United Land Trust Conference but will be in attendance at the next meeting. She is currently working on getting familiar with the county and working with staff on a game plan.

4. Unfinished Business

- **Purchase of Development Rights Ordinance Amendment – Appraisal Review Committee**

The Original language in the PDR ordinance from 2007 was being updated to use appraisal-only valuation instead of the methodology currently used. Since the agencies providing the matching funds do their own appraisal review the appraisal review committee is no longer needed. The Commissioner of Revenue and the independent appraiser also felt it would be a conflict of interest to participate.

Mr. Howe made a motion to strike section 22A-6 from the ordinance.

Mr. Adams seconded. Motion passed 5-0 (2 absent).

Ms. Baker will keep the committee updated of decisions made by the Board at the next CEDC meeting on May 2.

5. New Business

- **Land Clearing on Agricultural Lands**

A citizen emailed the committee to ask questions about timbering and clearing the forest lands that they own. Ms. Baker explained to them that this is not something that this committee generally addresses. The citizen has concerns with the runoff and erosion control. This would be handled through our environmental program with the stormwater erosion control, environmental division, or the Department of Forestry, who oversees timbering. Ms. Baker asked if any members would be interested in becoming more involved with educational programs that show people how to make the best use of their land. This could be incorporated on the website. Interested members can get with Ms. Laura Hassell, new Land Conservation Specialist, with ideas.

- **Chickens in Residential Neighborhoods**

The issue was raised by a citizen with concerns about a small property that is zoned A-1, Agricultural. Chickens are allowed on A-1 zoned properties. There is a complaint about a resident who has an extremely large coop and up to 30 roosters. Mr. Rudasill advised that he had been to the property and witnessed the extreme noise. He said they're not Rhode Island Reds. They are Fighting Cocks. Possible solutions were discussed to include limiting the number of chickens/roosters/poultry permitted on a lot less than three acres, setbacks for coops, and possible noise reduction barriers.

A motion was made by Mr. Adams to leave all as is at this time. Mr. Howe seconded.

Motion passed 4 – 1 (Mr. Rudasill opposed) with 2 absent.

6. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Howe motioned to approve the March 27, 2023 minutes as printed. Mr. Adams seconded. The Motion passed 5-0 (2 absent).

7. Member Comments

Mr. Adams made the Board of Supervisors aware of a situation with the extension service. Stafford's extension agent retired and the slot has not been filled. Three weeks ago, the Caroline extension agent died. King George has a vacancy. Spotsylvania is the only surrounding county with an extension agent. This is out of the committee's purview but he wants to make everyone aware of the problem.

On May 5-6, 2023 the 4-H is having their show and sale at the State Fairgrounds.

Mr. Adams has been invited to give a presentation on May 10 at Riverbend High School to the agricultural students.

8. Next Meeting

May 22, 2023

9. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss Carlos Bratton adjourned the meeting at 8:06 PM.