

**MINUTES OF
FAUQUIER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL & FORESTAL
DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

SPECIAL MEETING

September 6, 2017

The Fauquier County Agricultural and Forestal District Advisory Committee held a meeting on September 6, 2017, at 6:00 p.m. in the Warren Green Building, Second Floor Conference Room, 10 Hotel Street, Warrenton, Virginia. Members present were Mr. John Schied, Chairperson; Ms. Patty Leonard, Vice-Chairperson; Mr. David Gibson; Ms. Jolly de Give; Mr. William W. Gulick, Jr.; Mr. Ken Smith; Ms. Katherine Strother; and Mr. Tom Weber. Also present were Mr. Andrew Hopewell, Assistant Chief of Planning; Mr. Ben Holt, Planner II, and Mrs. Fran Williams, Administrative Manager. Members absent were Mr. Chris Butler, Lee District Supervisor and Mr. Ross D'Urso.

MINUTES:

On motion made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Strother, it was moved to approve the February 23, 2017 minutes.

The motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEMS:

CONSIDER PROPOSED CHANGES TO APPLICATION PROCEDURES FOR AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTAL DISTRICT PROPERTY ADDITIONS

Mr. Holt led the discussion on proposed changes to the process for evaluating Agricultural and Forestal District addition applications. Proposed changes would allow applicants to include information related to easements associated with the property (i.e., historic, environmental, conservation, etc.); Conservation Plans related to soil and water quality; and Conservation Plans meeting John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District (JMSWCD) requirements. Mr. Holt explained that this information would then be incorporated into a weighted evaluation process.

Committee members expressed concern that Staff may not have fully understood its request to review the issue of Conservation Plans as a recommended, rather than required, part of the process to select sites for addition to an Agricultural and Forestal District. Specific concerns included:

- The proposed changes do not encourage landowners to include their property in an Agricultural and Forestal District;
- Staff has not reached out to the John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to verify they

have the necessary resources and staff to provide Conservation Plans for property owners.

After further discussion, on motion made by Mr. Weber and seconded by Ms. de Give, it was moved to adopt the following proposed language to include as part of the informational materials on this program: *"All applicants to the program will be encouraged to request a conservation plan on the land proposed to be included in the program from... [insert a generic Planning Agency]. However, a conservation plan is not a condition or requirement for acceptance into the program."*

The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION REGARDING FUTURE AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTAL DISTRICTS AND RENEWALS

Mr. Hopewell reviewed *Code of Virginia* Section 15.2-4305, which states: *"...Each district shall have a core of no less than 200 acres in one parcel or in contiguous parcels. A parcel not part of the core may be included in a district (i) if the nearest boundary of the parcel is within one mile of the boundary of the core..."*

Mr. Hopewell noted that Fauquier County previously considered the "core" to consist of parcels that originally made up the Agricultural and Forestal District. However, this does not meet State Code and as currently comprised, the Southern Fauquier Agricultural and Forestal District, does not comply. Accordingly, when this district is up for renewal, it may need to be split into multiple districts to be in compliance.

In addition, Mr. Hopewell stated that the *Code of Virginia* allows renewal periods to extend from four to 10 years and proposed moving district renewals to one single cycle instead of having them staggered. A primary benefit would be to have one consistent Ordinance that applies to all districts.

Mr. Hopewell stated that, while renewing all districts concurrently would be a major undertaking, tracking of these is now simpler with improved technology.

After discussion, it was determined that the Committee would like to further analyze this proposal and revisit it at a later date.

Mr. Hopewell will provide a further analysis, outlining the potential benefits and consequences of moving forward with this option.

OTHER BUSINESS:

- Ms. Leonard and Mr. Smith urged the Committee to schedule future meetings at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:35 p.m.

A tape recording of the meeting, as well as the associated staff reports and attachments for each agenda item, are retained on file in the Department of Community Development, Planning Office, 10 Hotel Street, Suite 305, Warrenton, Virginia, for a period of one (1) year after approval of the minutes.