



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.
County Executive

STEVEN LAFFERTY, Director
Department of Planning

Baltimore County Agriculture Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes

MEETING: September 11, 2024 Board Meeting – 6:30 PM @ Center for Maryland Agriculture and Farm Park, 1114 Shawan Road, Cockeysville, MD 21030

Attendees:

Board Members Present: Rick Bernstein, Scott Welsh, Joanna Winkler, Holly Gilmore

Ex Officio Members Present: Jim Ensor

Staff: Megan Benjamin, Abigail Rogers, Joe Wiley

Others: Glenn Ferenschak, Nathan House

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES/ADDITION OR DELETION OF AGENDA ITEMS

A. Approval of Minutes of: June 12, 2024

Motion: To approve the Minutes of June 12, 2024

Motioned by: Scott Welsh Seconded by: Joanna Winkler

Decision: Unanimous Approval

II. Special Guests-Baltimore County Forestry Board representatives, Nathan House-DNR Forester and/or Glenn Ferenschak-Forestry Board Chair

Discussion:

Representatives from the Baltimore County Forestry Board were invited to meet the State statutory requirement for the Ag Land Preservation Advisory Board and the local Forestry Board to meet annually to discuss ways to work cooperatively to encourage the promotion and retention of farmland and woodland in Baltimore County.

Glenn Ferenschak introduced himself as the Forestry Board Chair and explained the role of the Forestry Board as the volunteer arm of DNR Forest Service. He said fifteen years ago their ranger station in Parkville had eight foresters, now there is one full-time and one part-time forester. Mr. Ferenschak says his organization works with citizen groups looking for information or help with grants, as well as working with schools. The Forestry Board also has an educational camp for children to learn about the field. Since the camp costs about \$600 per child per week, their main goal state wide is to help fund that effort. They mostly raise money by doing workshops.

Rick Bernstein asks if Forestry Board assists people who own land in conservation. Nathan House, DNR Forester, explains yes, he helps landowners with forest conservation plans and informs them of

responsible management choices. Ms. Benjamin asks the timeframe for getting a plan. Mr. House says there is a backlog of cases, but they are now fully staffed. He said they charge \$200 for 5-10 acres, with the price going up a bit over that, before maxing out at \$300. Mr. House said the cost share is a few hundred dollars.

Joe Wiley says when he does site visits, the most common things landowners are missing are soil conservation or forest conservation plans. Mr. House says the best contact to give landowners is the Forestry Board office in Baltimore County. Mr. Ferenschak says their office has a new website.

Mr. Bernstein asked if landowners can contact the Forestry Board for a general property assessment. Mr. House said their cut off is five acres, any less and they cannot work with a property. Ms. Benjamin said Planning is always looking for outreach opportunities, and said it would be helpful if the Forestry Board let landowners know that forested land is eligible for Agricultural Preservation Programs. The Ag Board will plan to attend a Forestry Board meeting in 2025.

III. BALTIMORE COUNTY PERMITS & DEVELOPMENT APPLICANTS

None

IV. BALTIMORE COUNTY EASMENT/LANDOWNER REQUESTS/ISSUES

A. Frank, Raymond & Sandra- 2800 Monkton Road, Monkton – 92 +/- ac- (BC- 02-30)

Request: Review and approval of five special events, scheduled: September 27-29, October 11-13, October 25-27, November 1-3 and November 22-24.

Background: The Franks have provided details of five upcoming events, scheduled for September 27-29, October 11-13, October 25-27, November 1-3 and November 22-24. These are the final 5 events scheduled for 2024.

For the events, the parking area will be the same as was approved by the Board in July 2022 for their temporary events (~4 acres as shown in attached exhibit). Under the Guidelines, this qualifies as a Tier 2 Ag-related event and thus requires Ag Board approval since the requested parking is greater than 2 acres (see Section B.14. page 8 of Guidelines, attached). In addition, any event must be farm or forest related (see Section B, page 8).

The number, frequency and scale of events are as limited to 8 by the Special Exception Order 2017-0327-X and are to be consistent with the scale of the brewery operation and the area's rural character. If impacted, any farm or forested area must be maintained or restored to its original condition.

The Board is asked to review the events to confirm they are farm or forest related and to review the requested parking area for the events listed below:

September 27-29-Celebrate 6th anniversary of farm brewing-All things locally grown

October 11-13-Fall fest Pig Roast

October 25-27-Touch a Tractor/Truck. Pit Beef

November 1-3-Salute to Veterans Farm Fair Weekend

November 22-24- Give thanks for our Farmers. Farm education. Oyster Fest.

Discussion:

Previously and related to review(s) of matters before the Board involving 2800 Monkton Road, certain Board Members have recused themselves from the vote. Per the Baltimore County Code ("BCC") § 7-1-301(c)(1): *A public official who otherwise would be disqualified from participation under subsection (a)*

of this section shall disclose the nature and circumstances of the conflict, and may participate or act, if:
(1) The disqualification would leave a body with less than a quorum capable of acting. In accordance with BCC, Rick Bernstein disclosed that the Franks have donated to Mr. Bernstein's charity, First Fruits Farm in 2023. The sum donated was not considered a major gift, according to Mr. Bernstein. Mr. Bernstein stated he felt he was able to make an unbiased recommendation related to this item.

Scott Welsh indicated though the Franks have been customers in the past, he does not feel that he has a conflict of interest and stated he felt able to make an unbiased recommendation related to this item.

Given a quorum was reached, Holly Gilmore recused herself and left the room for the discussion and vote.

Megan Benjamin reviewed the background information with the Board.

Mr. Bernstein asks if the events were previously approved. Joe Wiley says that these are similar to events approved in 2023 and the parking area is the same as was previously approved.

Motion: To approve of the listed events as farm related and approve the proposed parking area

Motioned by: Joanna Winkler Seconded by: Scott Welsh

Decision: Unanimous Approval

V. MALPF EASEMENT LANDOWNER REQUESTS/ISSUES

None

VI. MISCELLANEOUS/INFORMATION/ CORRESPONDENCE/ NEWS ARTICLES

Ms. Benjamin said that she attended the Forever Maryland land preservation conference in Maryland along with Ms. Rogers and Mr. Wiley. Solar and the power line project were main topics of discussion.

The Office of Agriculture's Board is now active, and Megan created a report for them, which she shared with the meeting attendants. Ms. Benjamin says two easements have closed, Alexander and Rogge, and the county is up to 71,446 acres preserved. She said the number includes agricultural easements as well as Rural Legacy, MET and local land trust easements. Mr. Wiley said the number does not include forest conservation easements. Ms. Benjamin says 13 easements are in the process of approval. The ranking resolutions are being worked through in County Council.

The County Ag program is open, with a deadline of October 11. Ranking will likely happen in November.

Mr. Wiley said the MALPF and federal inspections are done with no significant issues found. County easement inspections will occur in October.

VIII. FUTURE MEETING DATES: October 9, 2024

IX. ADJOURNMENT: 7:05 pm