

Orange County Agricultural Preservation Board

Approved Meeting Summary: March 16, 2016

Environmental & Agricultural Center—Conference Room
306 Revere Rd., Hillsborough, NC
7:30 p.m.

Members Present: , Kim Woods (Vice Chair), Renee Parker, Ashley Parker, Vaughn Compton, Ken Dawson, Howard McAdams, Noah Ranells, Jane Saiers, Kathy Shambley, Richal Vanhook

Members Absent/Excused: Renee McPherson (Chair); Amanda Scherle, Gordon Neville, Shelia Thomas-Ambat

Guests: Rich Shaw, Land Conservation Manager, DEAPR

Staff: Gail Hughes, Resource Conservation Coordinator-DEAPR-Orange Soil and Water Conservation District; David Stancil, Director, Department of Environment, Agriculture, Parks and Recreation, and Mike Ortosky, Agriculture Economic Developer.

- 1. Call to order:** Chair McPherson called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.
- 2. Chair Comments/Introductions:** Chair McPherson declared that a quorum was present.
- 3. Considerations of Additions to Agenda:** None
- 4. Meeting Summary/Minutes: --Nov. 18th, 2015 (Attachment 1):** McAdams moved to accept the minutes/summary; seconded by Ashley Parker; motion carried.
- 5. Presentation: Orange County Lands Legacy Program (Attachment 2):** Rich Shaw gave a presentation about the Lands Legacy Program. He reviewed the history of the program and the county's land acquisition and park projects, followed by a review of the permanent conservation easements, including the Victor Walters farm, Renee McPherson's farm, Vickie and David McKee's farm, the Latta dairy farm, the Sykes dairy farm and the Breeze farm. The Brooks Cattle Farm (Rocking B Saddle Shop) is a good case study with multiple creeks draining into the Hillsborough water source. The Brooks family came to the table to enlist help from local partners like the County and the Eno River Association. They wanted to protect their farm of 108 acres and also improve the water quality situation. Using multiple funding sources, including the County, the State of NC (CREP), the Forest Service, and even the City of Raleigh, they applied multiple strategies to fence out the cattle and re-vegetate the stream corridors. After 15 years the Lands Legacy program has acquired over 1000 acres, plus over 2,000 acres of

conservation easements. Another 1300 acres have been protected by the County's contributions to projects by other organizations. Woods thanked Shaw for his presentation.

6. Items for Decision:

a) New VAD/EVAD Applications (Attachment 2): Hughes presented an overview of the two current applications for enrollment in the VAD program. Both farms meet the minimum requirements/criteria for VAD/EVAD enrollment.

- **Sykes Family Limited Partnership: Jeff Sykes and family: EVAD and VAD: 284.96 acres in the Cane Creek/Buckhorn District.** Family farm consisting of four parcels in the vicinity of Bradshaw Quarry and Vernon roads. The farm produces dairy cattle, hay, pasture, corn grains and forestry/woodland. One parcel and portions of three other parcels are in permanent conservation easement, therefore will have EVAD on these acres; the acres outside the conservation easement will be VAD. VAD acres = 125.61 EVAD acres = 159.35
- **Randall Parker Farm: VAD: 26.89 acres in the Caldwell District.** Two parcels on Tilley Road. The farm produces tobacco, wheat, hay, and woodland/forestry. These parcels are newly purchased and will be added to their existing VAD farm.

Ranells moved to approve the Sykes Family Limited Partnership and the Randall Parker farm for VAD and EVAD as noted, seconded by Compton; motion carried. Discussion followed about VAD signs. Hughes now has 15 and will be ordering 25 more. Woods explained that in Person Co. they had a local artist do the design then have a local company make them, then they make treated frames. The farmers install them. They cost \$50-60 each; the farmers pay for them. We put our first one up in 1992, so some of our signs are old. Ranells noted that the county has re-branded itself so we might want to consider updating our as we near our 25th anniversary. Woods thanked Hughes for her work.

7. Items for Discussion:

- a) **Review Ag Support Enterprises draft brochure:** Sandbeck reviewed the history of the brochure done by Planning. Discussion followed. What does a brochure for this need to do? Can you make it more welcoming/inviting? Planning worked hard on this but it is challenging to understand for non-planners. Members felt it was worth having staff try to simplify it to make a "here is this great new program" sort of brochure, to give an overview in layman's language, and invite the reader to contact planning for more information etc. Staff will rough out a new draft and share with the group. Members debated the usefulness of brochures today. This sort of information can be better conveyed through a web site, maybe a special farm page within the planning web site, with links embedded for definitions etc. Maybe get grant funds to pay to have a special farm web site created. Discussion followed, with a consensus that a web portal is greatly needed. Saiers offered to help. Compton agreed that you needed something online.

Ortosky mentioned that the “orangecountyfarms” site might be a good place. It includes most of the farms in the county. There are also listserves on the county web site. The chart on the back is complicated with many abbreviations. If web based, it could link to the definitions/correct parts of UDO. Can the Ag Econ Dev. Person be the first point of contact for farm planning issues? Then that person could be a farm advocate, to help walk them through. Planning staff are very helpful once you sit down to present your project. Examples would help, like: “I want to start a new bed and breakfast—what do I do.” Members should share thoughts or ideas with staff. Ranells offered to help.

- b) **Review of “What is a Farm” brochure:** Staff referred members to the new brochure put out by planning. The mountains shown in the photo are not in Orange County. It was generated to help clarify the current issues surrounding bona fide farms. All agreed this was useful. Distribute at strategic places, and the Ag Summit.
- c) **Rescheduling breakfast meeting for prospective VAD/EVAD property owners:** Hughes discussed her idea of rescheduling this event to the fall. She will have funds for this in the new budget. She is seeking volunteers to help. Compton moved to direct staff to proceed to plan for this event for the fall, seconded by McAdams. Motion passed. Woods encouraged members to step up to help.
- d) **Volunteer to represent the APB on the new Food Council:** Ortosky started by asking reporting back on the Ag Summit and asking for feedback. The new video was a highlight for many. He then reviewed the history of the Food Council, which will have 15 members, some elected but most representing different sides of the food issue. The group wants to have a member from the Ag Board. Members agreed that the APB should be represented. Saiers offered to serve if nobody else could spare the time now.

8. Informational Items/Future Agenda Items: None

- a) Upcoming VAD workshops: Sandbeck reminded members that there will be a VAD workshop in Winston-Salem on Mar. 17. He will attend and report back next time.
- b) Ag Summit report: Ortosky provided a report during the Food Council discussion.
- c) Summary of Comments from BOCC Annual Report and Work Plan: Chair McPherson and Sandbeck reported on the meeting. The BOCC responded favorably to the VAD/EVAD program and appreciate the work of the members.
- d) Livestock Show: Compton noted that the 71st show is coming up April 13-14. There are 5 living members who showed at the first show: Bob Strayhorn, Ted Martin, Richard Roberts, Doug Crabtree, and Bill Dorset. Everyone should plan to attend.
- e) Screening of movie “Last Barn Dance”: Ortosky reported on this really well done 30 minute film. He may have a link to this that he could share. It showed on UNC TV a couple of months ago.

9. **Adjournment:** Compton moved to adjourn; seconded by Ranells. Meeting adjourned at 9:12.