



Meeting Minutes
Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board
May 4, 2016 – 7:30 p.m.

Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board:

:Present:

Jeffrey Powers, Ken Palmer, Don Gardner, Keith Tuck, Ken Newman, W.P. Johnson, Pam Willoughby, Lindsay Tomlinson

:Absent: Ronnie Gross, Chuck Grove, Pete Fellers, Matt Baumgardner

Staff Present: Scott Baker, Jessica Hupp, Jerry Craig

Staff Absent: Carl Boggess, Traci Blido

:Guests: Joy Powers

(1) Approval of Agenda

Jeff Powers called the meeting to order and asked for a review of the May 4, 2016 agenda.

A motion and a second were made to approve the May 4, 2016 agenda, as presented.

Adopted Unanimously.

(2) Approval of Meeting Minutes – April 6, 2016

Mr. Powers asked for a review of the April 6, 2016 meeting minutes.

A motion and a second were made to approve the April 6, 2016 meeting minutes, as presented.

Adopted unanimously.

(3) County Administrator's Report

Mr. Boggess was not in attendance.

(4) Economic Development Director's Report

Ms. Hupp reported that the Board of Supervisors adopted the Fiscal Year 2016-2017 budget. Once again this year, Traci and I included the \$1,500 for any sort of agriculture related conferences the Ag Board would like to attend this year.

Ms. Hupp stated that staff has been very busy with a lot of prospect activity. Staff has one prospect coming from the UK next week, and hopefully another visiting from Germany the following week. We have also been moving forward with work on the brewery project, filing a lot of documents and doing our due diligence.

Ms. Hupp reported that May is Business Appreciation month and that staff has organized a Business Appreciation event for May 26 at the Elks Lodge in Bedford from 5:30 to 7. Staff will be co-hosting this event with the Chamber, D-Day Memorial and the Elks Lodge.

(5) Cooperative Extension Report

Mr. Baker reported last month how the fruit crops fared after the first freeze and now that the second freeze has taken place we have a better idea of how the crops survived. Mr. Baker stated that peaches will be hit the worst, apples are somewhere in between, and he's seen a 30-50% loss for grapes. The difference with grapes is they can make additional buds after a frost.

Mr. Baker stated the Central Virginia Livestock Show is coming up this Saturday. Mr. Baker passed around a couple of the books for anyone who would like to look at it or take one home. This will be the 37th year of the event and it will have great representation from Bedford again, with 18-19 kids participating. Mr. Baker encouraged everyone to come, and if they need specific times the schedule is in the book. Mr. Baker stated that for the market animal sale you can either buy the animal to take home to eat and pay full price, or you can offer to pay to support that child without taking the animal home.

Mr. Baker reported there are some processing limitations this year due to renovations taking place at Peaks Slaughter House. All others they are trying to plan to get processed in Green Valley. Mr. Baker said he asked Seven Hills, but since they are just getting off the ground they are only doing cattle right now, and they do just USDA slaughter, no custom slaughtering.

Mr. Baker stated they will have another summer intern in their office this year named Gabrielle Miller. Gabrielle will be a December graduate for Animal Science from Virginia Tech. Gabrielle has already been shadowing extension in Campbell County since she's considering it as a career. She will start May 16 and be with them for 10 weeks.

(6) Tourism Report

Mr. Craig stated that he attended the Agritourism Conference held in South Boston recently. It was a great conference overall, but had some repetition from last year so he will likely attend every other year from now on.

Mr. Craig stated that the Fibre Fair was really successful this year. He estimated 30 vendor booths present, with about 80% being from out of town. After talking to some of them, he found most were from North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland and West Virginia. Mr. Craig also estimated 300 people to attend, but saw around 250 on the ground at one time and assumes there were more than 250.

(7) GUEST SPEAKER: Josiah Tillet, District 6 Planning Commissioner

Josiah thanked the Ag Board for letting him come speak with them tonight. Mr. Tillet stated he was approached by a county resident whose home is residentially zoned, and he wants to have a pig on his three and a half acres. Mr. Tillet checked the ordinance that states you can only have a private stable. He then talked to staff to see if you could have a pig or goat, and they said it was for equine only.

Mr. Tillet is trying to come up with an ordinance that will pass and allow residentially zoned areas to have pigs or goats given a certain minimum lot size, based on agricultural best practices, and would like input from the Ag Board on what makes the most sense.

Mr. Tillet said he started out with a two-acre minimum lot size, based on some information from Jeff. Mr. Tillet wants to get the ordinance passed by right, instead of amending the existing ordinance.

Mr. Powers stated he has a neighbor two doors down that has a pig running around their back yard and house and believes kids are much better off with an animal. Mr. Powers stated he can understand the push back, but it doesn't make sense to be able to have horses over a small animal. Joy stated pasture requirements are much larger goats, but pigs are just more work.

Mr. Johnson stated he believes its best to take the animal out of it, and estimate by animal unit per acre, with a scientific calculation that says how much pasture is needed per each animal unit. Differentiating between different types of animals and language can get complicated.

Mr. Tillet said he checked to see what type of similar ordinances the City of Lynchburg had and found residents can have up to 40 chickens in a residential zone. In Bedford, residents can only have 12 chickens and none can be roosters.

Dr. Gardner made a motion to move this project to a committee to study animal units in Residential 1 and Residential 2 zones. Voted unanimously.

(8) FARM BUREAU YOUNG FARMERS REPORT

Mr. Johnson reported nothing new to report.

(9) COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Education & Events

(1) Upcoming Events

a. Bedford County Fair update

Mr. Palmer stated that Ronnie mentioned to him a property that's available alongside Lowe's. The back part was almost like a plateau, with no timber and no road. Mr. Palmer felt it may be a possible future site for a fairground. The lot is over 10 acres. Mr. Powers stated that after working at Curry Martin's that may be a little small. Mr. Powers stated he thinks a church bought a portion of that land.

Ms. Powers stated the fair now has its own bank account. They are working on getting all details finalized and transitioned. They have been getting fair vendor and sponsor forms and are pleased with the way things are going. The committee will be meeting next week to hash out final scheduling and event details.

b. Marketing & Production

(1) Farmers Markets

Mr. Baker stated that Forest Farmers Market started this last Saturday, and that the Bedford Farmers Market started yesterday. He said there was some good activity at the Tuesday market, but that the grand opening will be the first Saturday Community Market event this Saturday. They seem to have a lot of things planned, with themes each month. This month will be Mothers Day, and they will have volunteers helping kids cook omelets for their moms. The Virginia Ag Council gave 30 dozen eggs for the event.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

1. Farm Transition Workshop update

Mr. Fellers was not in attendance. Mr. Baker stated he met with Carolyn and a couple reps from the women's group about what they can provide and would like to include for the Farm Transition workshop. The event will include a speaker on long-term care. Carolyn suggested having an elder law attorney out of Roanoke, and they heard back today that she will be the speaker for that.

November 14 is the tentative date. The farm business management agent will be coordinating it along with him. As soon as it's finalized they'll really want to push out the information.

(9) Other Business

(10) Informational Items

Mr. Powers stated Lindsey has been working hard to set up a middle school ag program at Bedford Middle. In the last few weeks, she had a faculty meeting and was informed the program wasn't going to happen now. Mr. Powers stated he's never seen the Board of Supervisors get

behind something like they have with this middle school ag program. He has received calls from two supervisors so far, and email from a third. Another supervisor went to see Dr. Dills to find out why and see if there is anything they can work through.

Mr. Powers sent a letter and copied ag board members that was sent to the school system explaining how excited the ag community and Board of Supervisors were for having true ag in the middle schools. When he asked if it was a financial issue, Lindsey explained it can't be because she volunteered to do it for free. About 50 students have signed up for middle school ag, and if nothing happens all those kids will be moved into other electives.

Lindsey stated that there were plenty signed up for the ag class, and dropping the program was based on the total number of students enrolled at Liberty High School next year. There is a large amount of homeschool children in Bedford County with ag backgrounds, which may change if there was more ag in schools. When the low enrollment numbers came into the high school, they knew they had to cut some teachers. Administration stated they couldn't see how they could send one of their teachers to the middle school to teach another class while they're cutting other teachers due to enrollment numbers. Lindsey reported the amount of students allowed to enroll in middle school ag was capped at 50, so there could have been more.

(11) Adjournment
-8:34 p.m.