



Meeting Minutes
Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board

September 3, 2014 – 7:30 p.m.

Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board:

:Present:

Jeffrey Powers, Ken Palmer, Sam Gardner, Chuck Grove, Pam Willoughby, Pete Fellers, Daniel Layman, Ken Newman, Matt Baumgardner, W.P. Johnson

:Absent:

Ronnie Gross, Spencer Tinsley

Staff Present: Mark Reeter, Scott Baker, Traci Blido, Jessica Hupp

Staff Absent: None

Guests: Daniel Hale, Dorothy McIntyre, John Graham, Brent Wills

(1) Approval of Agenda

Mr. Powers called the meeting to order and asked for a review of the September 3, 2014 agenda.

A motion and a second were made to approve the September 3, 2014 agenda, as presented.

Adopted Unanimously.

(2) Approval of Meeting Minutes – August 6, 2014

Mr. Powers asked for a review of the August 6, 2014 meeting minutes. Mr. Baker suggested two minor edits. Appropriate edits have been made.

A motion and a second were made to approve the meeting minutes of August 6, 2014, as presented.

Adopted unanimously.

(3) County Administrator's Report

Mr. Reeter reported that the Deputy County Administrator, Frank Rogers, is leaving Bedford to take on the position of County Administrator at Campbell County. Mr. Reeter will continue to attend the Ag Board meetings on an every-other-month basis. The Board of Supervisors is set to get a first look at the Region 2000 Agriculture and Forestry Strategic plan on Monday, Sept. 8, and he expects they will give approval upon the request of the Ag Board.

(4) Economic Development Director's Report

Mrs. Blido reported that economic development has eight active prospects this month, with more and more in the manufacturing industry. Mrs. Blido will be attending a trade show in Chicago the first part of next week in order to market our business parks and county, and will be attending a VDACS tour in Maryland for Agriculture and farm industries the second half of the week.

Mrs. Blido stated she would like to pass around the Bedford Grown Agriculture Directory proof received from Blair Marketing for the board to review for any typos or misinformation.

(5) Cooperative Extension Report

Mr. Baker reported the Bedford County Family Farm tour took place on August 16, 2014. They enjoyed perfect weather and an excellent turn out. The tour provided a nice overview of conventional agriculture, as well as showcased the Russell's new venture into agritourism with the creation of a corn maze.

Mr. Baker reported that last month the board discussed Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), so he has gathered more information on GAP certification that can be dispersed to members of the board if they are interested.

Mr. Graham stated that Virginia Tech also has a Good Aquaculture Practice classes program and information as well.

(6) Bedford County Farm Bureau Young Farmers Report

Mr. Johnson reported that the annual Farm Bureau dinner will be held October 7, at 6:00 p.m. Our county's Young Farmers are working with the state's Young Farmers on an EMS farm safety training workshop based in Chatham on February 6-8, 2015.

(7) Guest Speaker – Daniel Hale, Agricultural Safety

Mr. Hale reported his goal this past summer was to become more involved in agricultural farm safety. Mr. Hale was hoping that the board would approve the Ag Expo theme this year to be farm safety.

Mr. Powers stated there needed to be very little format change to last year's expo, and that the topic is the only thing they are expecting to vary. Mr. Powers stated the topic of the expo will be left to the subcommittee to address. Mr. Johnson made a motion to use safety as the overarching topic for the ag expo, seconded by Mr. Palmer.

Adopted Unanimously.

(8) Committee Reports
a. Education & Events
(1) Ag Complex

Mr. Palmer reported that he had been considering how Body Camp Elementary School could be utilized by the ag community to create an ag complex.

Mr. Palmer stated the BEA Equine Education Day had a great turnout with excellent presentations. The Sedalia Fair is coming up this Saturday with a parade of breeds. Mr. Palmer also stated Franklin County was having their county fair this month, on September 10-13.

(2) Upcoming Events

a) The Sedalia County Fair and Youth Livestock Fun Show – Sept. 6, 2014

Mr. Powers stated that Lindsay Tomlinson, who is in charge of the Youth Livestock Fun Show, said there would be 2-3 different types of most pig, goat, and cow breeds at the show and they are expecting many people to attend.

b) Bedford's Finest Fare – Sept. 14, 2014

Mr. Graham stated Bedford's Finest Fare is being put on by the Wharton Foundation. They plan to sell up to 200 tickets to the event. Those involved in planning reached out to local producers and local chefs from Benjamin's, Town Kitchen, and the Social Club who will make food from local produce and products. Upon arriving you are able to show your ticket and help yourself to various selections of food. The event has attempted to be as local as possible. Tickets are \$35, and proceeds support the Bower Center.

b. Marketing & Production
(1) Farmers' Market

Dorothy McIntyre reported the Bedford Y's Farmers Market is holding their own, and should have a good crowd coming up due to soccer season. She also reported the Forest Farmers Market has 35-38 vendors, making it hard to accommodate customers with parking. Mrs. McIntyre stated her meat vendors at the Forest Market are doing exceptionally well.

(2) Approval of Region 2000 Agriculture and Forestry Strategic Plan

Mr. Powers stated that he was concerned that there was not very much conventional agriculture added to the Region 2000 Agriculture and Forestry Strategic plan. Mr. Baker stated that the plan is simply providing a vision, not necessarily strict guidelines that each county must follow. Mr. Baker reiterated that the plan provides specificity that does seem to focus on local foods, however our region is unique in that our region includes four rural counties with an urban center

(Lynchburg), which benefits from our agricultural production. Mr. Baker stated Centra is very interested in this regional plan concept as it applies to supplying its hospitals. Mr. Baker stated it is important that the region goes on record to say collectively that agriculture is economic development, and that we plan to actively plan for emerging markets, and by developing a climate for the importance of agriculture, you are indirectly addressing those original concerns.

Mr. Layman stated the impression of the plan he got was that the future of agriculture is consumer sales, to which he disagrees. Mr. Palmer stated that Lynchburg is considered the hub, and rural counties such as Bedford feed their products into Lynchburg, and the money made benefits Bedford. It only seems to benefit the farmer's contributing, however he understands wanting conventional agriculture mentioned.

Mrs. McIntyre stated that although she hadn't read the report, she wanted to point out as being involved in the direct sales atmosphere; you need both selling as a commodity and direct sales in case one strategy fails. She cited that Barry Turpin sold to the Lynchburg City School system and he was very successful.

Mr. Powers said no one on the board has an issue with what has been said in the plan, they would just like a greater representation for production agriculture.

Mr. Baker stated the board should not forget that not only will elected officials understand agriculture after reading this plan, but so will citizens. He stated he believed the lack of specificity about conventional agriculture was due to the fact that it's what most people understand and know of agriculture in our area. He explained the key element to this plan is going to be staying engaged in the process to consistently review the plan and modify as needed over time. As someone who has been involved since the beginning, he doesn't agree with the assessment that conventional agriculture is underrepresented.

Mrs. Blido told the board to keep in mind that the plan is regional, therefore it can't be focused exclusively on our county, but on the common strengths of all the localities included. As such, our county can apply for its own grants, apart from the region if we want to pursue a specific area of opportunity.

Mr. Reeter stated the plan has already been sent to the Board, and they will receive a formal presentation of the plan on September 8. There is a resolution for them to consider adopting the plan; however that doesn't mean they have to act on what they hear. They can adopt an endorsing resolution at another regular meeting, which would need to be amended and added to their agenda.

Mr. Graham asked if this plan was binding if approved. Mrs. Blido responded that there are no legal obligations, however Mrs. Blido and Mr. Baker would be a part of the continued action of the plan, and would stay engaged to work on it together.

Mr. Grove made a motion, seconded by Mr. Palmer, with a unanimous vote, to endorse the strategic plan with the amendment of conventional farming's inclusion, as follows:

“The Bedford County Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board (AG Board) supports the Strategic Plan for the Agriculture and Forestry Economy in Virginia's Region 2000 and recommends the Bedford Board of Supervisors endorse said plan. Consistent with the mission/purpose of the Ag Board, we also confirm our support for, and recognition of the importance of, commodity type production systems not specifically focused upon in the plan including but not limited to dairy, beef cattle, row crops, forages, equine and forestry.”

c. Protection & Conservation

(9) Other Business

Mr. Gardner stated that the Bedford County Farm Bureau said they would match \$1,000 for the Coyote Lottery prize. Don Gardner wanted to make sure the coyote lottery was still planning to take place again this year. Mr. Gardner made a motion, seconded by Mr. Palmer, and the board voted unanimously to run the Coyote Lottery again this year with details to come soon.

(10) Informational Items

(11) Adjournment

9:08 p.m.