



Minutes
Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board
Peaks Conference Room at Falling Creek
1257 County Farm Rd. Bedford, VA 24523
Wednesday, February 7, 2024
7:00 p.m.

Present: Jeff Powers (District 1); Joy Powers (District 2); Don Gardner (District 3); Chuck Grove (District 4); Ethan Tanner (District 5); Melody Divers, (District 6); Pete Fellers (District 7); Matt Baumgardner (At-Large); Sam Gardner (At-Large); Dorothy McIntyre (At-Large); Ken Newman (At-Large); Lindsay Tomlinson (At-Large)

Staff Present: Pam Bailey, Justin Stauder, Trish Luger, Scott Baker

Guests: Mickey Johnson, Josh Powers, Johnny Divers

(1) CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Powers called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

(2) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Powers called for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Gardner moved, seconded by Mr. Newman to approve the agenda.

Adopted Unanimously

(3) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

a. January 3, 2023

Chairman Powers called for a motion to approve January 3, 2023, meeting minutes. Mr. Baumgardner moved, seconded by Mr. Newman to approve the meeting minutes.

Adopted Unanimously

(4) ADMINISTRATION REPORT

Mr. Stauder & Mr. Hiss attended VACo//VML/VAPDC Local Government Day at the Capitol. Discussion topics with local representatives included solar, short-term rentals, and algae funding at SML.

Regarding AFD's, due to a use value established county-wide, there is no second tier. The Board could review a land use/land planning /comprehensive plan, as an intermediary between current use and perpetual conservation easement for four- or ten-year terms. There is no additional tax incentive.

Dr. Gardner mentioned proposed bills for the solar mandate and concerns about the bills being passed. Mr. Stauder understands that the company would have a say and the Board would have an opportunity to draft an ordinance. This essentially creates a back-door appeals process. Mr. Stauder does not have the status of these bills but will follow up.

Dr. Gardner made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gardner that the Ag Board oppose the solar mandates that remove it from the hands of the local Board of Supervisors.

Adopted Unanimously

(5) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

The Board of Supervisors approved the By-Law adjustments as requested. Therefore, the four committees have been added as items on the agenda and all terms expire in January versus December.

(6) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION REPORT

The Central Virginia Cattleman's Conference will be held at Wright Bros Beef in Moneta, on April 5th between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. This conference was previously held at Knoll Crest Farms.

Chairman Powers spoke about the passing of James Bennett of Knoll Crest Farms.

The next Value-Added Weaned Vaccinated Feeder Calf sale is on March 15, 2024, at Springlake Stockyard. The cattle take-up will occur on March 14.

Local beef cattle farmer, Keith Tuck, was selected as the Region 1 winner of the National Cattleman's Beef Association Environmental Stewardship Award. The National winner will be revealed at the NCBA Legislative Conference in April.

Dr. Taylor Young was an outstanding speaker at The Bedford Beef Producers' meeting.

Mr. Baker attended the Virginia Forage & Grasslands Council meeting. Jared Luhman of the Herd Quitter was an exceptional speaker.

Dr. Gardner shared the article Habitat Help which speaks about the problem with plants growing up on the land that is being fenced out. The article explains Remedy, which is used for controlling invasive plants by either cutting and spraying or hacking and squirting. A blue dye can be added to the mixture so that sprayed areas are visible.

(7) BEDFORD COUNTY FARM BUREAU YOUNG FARMERS REPORT

Farm Bureau will begin legislative meetings within the next month or two.

Ms. Powers recognized Farm Bureau for their comprehensive and easy to understand emails regarding legislative priorities.

(8) COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Education & Events

1. Upcoming events

2. School Ag Programs update

Approximately 400 FFA students recently attended the state capitol.

The Bedford Ag Club traveled to Front Royal for the Skyline Stockman's Contest and came in 4th place overall. Clay Jackson from Staunton River came in 3rd place overall.

FFA students attended a public speaking contest in Rustburg and Bedford County won all the top scores.

Staunton River will be hosting a Tractor Operators Contest on February 21 at 4 p.m.

January Ag Club meeting brought many new faces.

Public Speaking students will attend the area rally at The Old Dominion Ag Complex in March.

The 3rd week of February is FFA week. Students will be visible at Tractor Supply, and Bedford Co-Op, with activities planned at both chapters. They appreciate any support given.

The middle school chapter at Liberty is selling strawberries by the flat or half a quart. Strawberries will be available on March 11.

Mr. Powers mentioned a raffle ticket fundraiser for the State Convention. Each ticket is \$20.

A new flower cooler has been installed and the greenhouse will soon have electricity.

3. County Fair Report

Ms. Powers stated that the Board will attend the Board of Supervisors meeting on Monday, February 12 to announce the fair date of August 23-25, 2024, and request permission to utilize the fields across from the Extension office and the County gym. The midway company will return, and a combination of new faces and ideas will bring excitement and inclusivity.

b. Marketing & Production

1. Farmer's Market updates

Ms. McIntyre has a vendor market this weekend. Vendor meetings are scheduled for March 7 at the Forest Library and April 4 at the Moneta Library. Meeting times are 6:00 p.m.

Ms. McIntyre was contacted today regarding a change of venue in Moneta, which may alleviate issues.

Farm Credit has been in touch with Ms. McIntyre regarding a sponsorship.

The Montvale Market is in a holding pattern until they receive approval from the Board of Supervisors.

Bedford has a market on Saturday, February 17.

2. Coyote Lottery

To date, 127 coyotes have been checked in.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

Mr. Fellers stated that Cardinal News & Virginia Mercury publications contain information about the General Assembly.

d. Public Relations

Ms. Divers stated positive feedback on the progress of connecting with Bedford Grown contacts. Contact information is updated, along with new farms added.

Ms. Powers has worked on a press release to relay information about the Ag Board and PR committee.

The regional sales manager for Farm Credit is interested in partnering with the committee. Discussions will continue to determine how they can be a presence in Bedford.

Chapel Creek Farms is featuring burgers & bluegrass at their Live Music Festival, on April 27 from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

(9) OTHER BUSINESS

a. Informational items

The VDACS website lists Resources for New & Beginning Farmers to assist farmers in establishing their operations. Dr. Gardner spoke about GOME-Global Ozone Monitoring Equipment that deciphers satellite imagery. It concluded that Agriculture in the eastern half of the United States produces 40% more oxygen than the Amazon Rainforest.

Mr. Grove mentioned the overabundant deer population and regulations on the number of deer that can be hunted/killed. He requested a member of Fish & Game to attend a meeting or contact him through email to explain the limits. Black-headed vultures – 5 can be killed but a permit is required.

Mr. Baumgardner mentioned an SEC proposal to publicly sell air rights on public land. If passed, it could possibly control what is being done on farms.

(10) ADJOURNMENT

8:12 pm