



Minutes

Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board

Peaks Conference Room at Falling Creek

1257 County Farm Rd. Bedford, VA 24523

Wednesday, May 1, 2024

7:30 p.m.

Present: Jeff Powers (District 1); Joy Powers (District 2); Don Gardner (District 3); Ethan Tanner (District 5); Melody Divers, (District 6); Pete Fellers (District 7); Dorothy McIntyre (At-Large); Ken Newman (At-Large)

Absent: Pam Armstrong, Chuck Grove (District 4); Sam Gardner (At-Large); Lindsay Tomlinson (At-Large) Matt Baumgardner (At-Large)

Staff Present: Justin Stauder, Trish Luger, Scott Baker

Guests: Mickey Johnson, Jordan Mitchell, Josh Powers, Johnny Divers

(1) CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Powers called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

(2) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Adopted Unanimously

(3) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

a. April 3, 2024

Chairman Powers called for a motion to approve the April 3, 2024, meeting minutes, as amended. Mr. Newman moved, seconded by Ms. McIntyre to approve the meeting minutes.

Adopted Unanimously

(4) ADMINISTRATION REPORT

Upcoming Board of Supervisor meetings:

May 13 Work Session: Waste Management discussion regarding the Landfill.

Regular Meeting - Farmers Market leases

May 28 Regular meeting: Budget - Public Hearing

The request for proposal (RFP) for the red barn did not receive any proposals.

Jordan Mitchell, Director of Community Development presented and discussed agritourism zoning.

Per the Code of Virginia "Agritourism Activity" is defined as:

"Agritourism activity" means any activity carried out on a farm or ranch that allows members of the general public, for recreational, entertainment, or educational purposes, to view or enjoy rural activities, including farming, wineries, ranching, horseback riding, historical, cultural, harvest-your-own activities, or natural activities and attractions. An activity is an agritourism activity whether the participant paid to participate in the activity.

Requirements that must be met for an event to qualify for agritourism are:

- 1) Property needs to be zoned as part of an agricultural district or engaged in an "agricultural operation". (<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title3.2/chapter3/section3.2-300/>)

- 2) Activity must occur on property meeting the definition of a “farm or ranch” (<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title3.2/chapter64/section3.2-6400/#:~:text=%22Agritourism%20activity%22%20means%20any%20activity,%2Dyour%2Down%20activities%2C%20or>).
- 3) Rural activities must be available for the public to experience.

(5) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

In the absence of Ms. Armstrong, Mr. Stauder reported about Bramble Hollow Farms and the AFID grant awarded in August 2022. Purchases of commercial kitchen equipment have been made totaling nearly \$18,000, and the county provided a 50% match.

(6) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION REPORT

Mr. Baker will discuss carbon credits at the meeting next month. Dr. Gardner raised three questions to be researched.

- Are farmers penalized if they are already in the process and may have a fair amount of carbon?
- How do you determine if you’ve met the criteria to be paid for these credits?
- If expectations are not met, will there be a penalty or forfeit of the expected payment?

Mr. Baker attended the Farm Bureau meeting with the sheriff’s office and state police regarding changes coming July 1 to farm use tags. It appears there is a disconnect between the DMV and the State police and the interpretation of code language. A permanent DMV farm vehicle placard may be mistaken for the original farm use tag. Those being pulled over will be educated about the misinformation and given a courtesy ticket.

Mr. Baker clarified that a trailer weighing 3,000 lbs. or less does not need a tag, while those weighing between 3,000-7,500 lbs. require a trailer tag, and those over 7,500 lbs. require a red tag.

The Central Virginia Livestock Show is on May 5 – 6.

(7) BEDFORD COUNTY FARM BUREAU YOUNG FARMERS REPORT

There is nothing to report currently.

(8) COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Education & Events

1. Upcoming events

2. School Ag Programs update

Five students from SRHS and Liberty High Schools collaborated at Welding Wars at CVCC-Lynchburg.

A reverse job fair was held at Liberty High School providing students with industry insights and potential job opportunities.

FFA week activities included "Food for America" and "Drive Your Tractor to School". Officer interviews are being held after school.

A banquet is scheduled for May 19 in the library at Staunton River High School.

3. County Fair Report

Sponsorships and vendors are being arranged for the fair. A community meeting is scheduled for May 14 to provide information for agencies, non-profits, and groups interested in the fair. A new addition to the fair is the Community Expo, which will showcase organizations and their involvement in the community.

b. Marketing & Production

The Cardinal News published an article about the Coyote Lottery, featuring Dr. Gardner.

1. Farmer’s Market updates

Moneta hosted its first market at the new location, receiving widespread praise. Fourteen vendors participated, and approximately 250 patrons attended. The signage will be redesigned for better visibility.

Forest hosted their first market last weekend with forty-nine vendors and approximately 1,300 patrons. An RFP is in progress for the trail access.

There is no update on the Montvale market, but Bedford had a successful market last week.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

Mr. Fellers is meeting with Forestry to discuss planting trees on his steep hillsides.

d. Public Relations

Ms. Divers mentioned that while visiting Ellis Island, Virginia farming was highlighted, specifically Lynchburg. Relationships with producers are growing and the social media platform is expected within a month. A test email was sent earlier in the day. Please remember to share the contact information for Bedford Grown: bedfordcountyag@gmail.com and utilize #**bedfordcountyVAag** when posting pictures. An informational postcard is currently being discussed.

(9) OTHER BUSINESS
a. Informational items

(10) ADJOURNMENT
8:38 pm