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Agricultural Advisory Board

Minutes

April 9, 2023 | 7:00 PM | Fidelis Fields Farm, 424 Jim Moody Rd., Siler City, NC 27344

1. **Call to Order, 7:10 p.m.**
2. **Roll Call**
 - a. Present: Dr. John Dykers, Dave Eskelund, Diana May, Sharon Day
 - b. Absent: Jeff Vaughan
 - c. Others Present: Susannah Goldston (SWCD), Andrew Waters (SWCD)
3. **Approval of Agenda**
 - a. Sharon Day moved to approve the agenda as distributed. Motion seconded by Diana May and passed unanimously.
4. **Approval of Minutes**
 - a. Minutes from the 2.13.23 meeting were distributed prior to the meeting. Sharon Day made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Motion seconded by Dave Eskelund and passed unanimously.
5. **Review of New Member Application**
 - a. Applications for five potential candidates were submitted prior to the meeting. Andrew reported we have five current members out of nine possible members. Current bylaws emphasize representation from four geographic districts: northwest, southwest, northeast, southeast. We do not currently have a representative from the southeast quadrant. Susannah noted that Sharon Day's term is scheduled to end at the end of the fiscal year, and she is the only current member from the northwest quadrant. Dave asked if candidates with current SWCD contracts have a conflict of interest. Susannah said they wouldn't because AAB has no authority or influence over SWCD contracts. However, the group decided not to consider applicants who are currently under consideration for farmland preservation funding because that might create a conflict of interest, or the appearance of one.
 - b. Individual applications were discussed informally by the board. Andrew noted that the County Commission appoints the AAB members, so we will need to recommend AAB appointments to the County Commissioners. Following discussion, Dave Eskelund made a motion to recommend the appointment of John Headen (Southwest quadrant). As chair, Dave's motion included the request to the Board of Commissioners that Headen's application be approved in lieu of an appointment from the Southeast quadrant, since no suitable applications from the Southeast quadrant have been received within the last six months. The motion was seconded by John Dykers and passed unanimously. John Headen's recommendation will be made

to the County Commissioners at an upcoming Board of Commissioners meeting. Andrew will notify other candidates their applications were not recommended at this time.

- c. Dave asked current members to try to solicit two eligible candidates by the next meeting as we still have vacant positions that need to be filled.

6. Voluntary Agricultural District applications

- a. Andrew presented the slate of applications for the Voluntary Agricultural District. We had 3 applications for the VAD program encompassing 9 tax parcels and 203.3 acres. Andrew said all the applications had been reviewed and qualified for the program.
- b. John Dykers motioned to approve the VAD applications. Sharon Day seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

7. Old Business

- a. Andrew gave an update on the status of the Farmland Preservation Plan. The plan will be presented to the County Commissioners for their approval/adoption this summer. As part of that process, Andrew is creating an executive summary document to present to the Commissioners.

8. New Business

- a. Outreach events: Andrew asked members to help spread the word about an upcoming Farmland Estate and Transition Planning workshop on June 20. He also informed the group he is planning a Farmland Preservation Resource Day for Chatham County residents on Thursday, December 5.
- b. Ordinance update: Susannah and Andrew reported that they are working on an update to the farmland preservation ordinance. The AAB will be asked to review the revised ordinance in the upcoming months.
- c. Newsletter update: Andrew reported that the staff is working on a new Soil & Water Conservation District newsletter that will be available through the county e-notification system. Farmland preservation information will be included in the new newsletter.

9. Next Meeting

- a. The next meeting is scheduled for the second Tuesday of June 11, 2024. Diana May is hosting.

10. Adjournment

- a. Dave submitted a motion to adjourn. Jeff seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:19 p.m.