

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ARAC) MINUTES

Virtual Meeting

February 12, 2025, 2:30-3:30 p.m. Draft

ATTENDEES:

ARAC Members:

Pharyn Smith, Chair and Citizen Member
Dan Donohue, Co-Chair and Forestry Industry Representative
Bill Ritchie, Citizen Member
Jennifer Cross, Farm Bureau Representative (by phone)
Cheryl Abrams Davis, PGCAR Representative
Tracey Duval, Citizen Member
Steven Darcey, SCD

Staff Attendees:

Marian Honeczi, M-NCPPC
Kathy Canning, County Council Legislative Officer
Kenneth Battle, Director TIEE Committee, County Council

Public:

Kim Lynch Rush, SCD
Lakisha Hull, Planning Director, M-NCPPC Planning Department

AGENDA:

2:30 pm Meeting called to order

Old Business: Approval of ARAC minutes of Dec 11, 2024

The group agreed that minutes were correct and voted to adopt.

MD General Assembly Legislative Update (Steve Darcey)

Steve went through the General Assembly bills that were of interest to the agriculture community. These included bills about agriculture such as HB 81 Protect Maryland Farmlands as well as solar bills and urban agriculture bills such as HB 1231. HB1231 amends the existing program to remove the size of the acreage in production.

Recap of the Recertification of the County's Application to the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program by Soil Conservation

Steve explained the three programs: HARPP/ MALPF and Rural Legacy. Recertification paperwork is ready to be submitted just need the cover letter of support signed by the Council Chair.

Touring Farmer's Markets

Interesting idea to do instead of a farm tour. The difficulty may be that these occur on different days of the week. Kim will distribute the FEC's Farmers Market listing. Maybe visit one a month.

Discussion of 2024 Annual Report: Requests and Recommendations

Pharyn led discussion by suggesting that the committee should tackle the top 3 recommendations from the 2022 report. 1) ARAC Chair farm photo – will need to wait until spring. 2) Invite Dpie to meetings. 3) Send out invitation to get on TIEE calendar, 4) meet with Council.

Need to gather success stories of county farmers (Urban Farm Incubator) Pharyn will provide text.

Follow up discussion on: TIEE Mtg: (Kenneth Battle) TIEE meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursday at 10 am. Committee decided to schedule March 13th for briefing. ARAC can choose topic. HARPP briefing by SCD and M-NCPPC is future topic.

Upcoming Events

- Prince George's County Farm Bureau Banquet – Sat, March 3
- MD Farmers Market Conference – March 11th 8:30 – 3:30 at MDA Headquarters \$35
- National Urban Farm Festival – May 4th 10 am – 5pm Brandywine
- Farm & Family – Sun, Sept 7

Floor was opened

- Dan discussed the Montgomery County Ag Development Conference.
- Lakisha Hull mentioned new position. Adding a Food System Planner position in FY2026 budget. This position will join the Committee.
- Jennifer Cross – Fusion Conference March 7-10
- Steve brought up the vacant Agriculture Marketing Specialist at UM Extension. Funded through M-NCPPC. Needs help developing the paperwork for this position.
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Next Meeting/Agenda

To be discussed later.

7. Adjournment

3:22 pm The Committee adjourned.