

Agricultural Resources Advisory Committee (ARAC)

August 14, 2025 – HYBRID meeting

2 pm – 3 pm

DRAFT MINUTES

Attendees: Pharyn Smith, Bill Ritchie, Jennifer Cross, Dan Donohue, Cheryl Abrams Davis, Tracey Duval, Kathy Canning, Marian Honecny and Steve Darcey.

Public attendees: Esther Mitchell, and Katina Shoulars

Meeting started at 2:05 pm. Have quorum

Old business:

Draft May 2025 minutes – adopted.

Discussion on **membership and vacant positions**. All were informed that the person interested from the USDA retired. Requested was a list of the vacancies to assist members in recruiting. Steve will contact Agriculture Preservation Advisory Board, Pharyn will contact the Equine community, and it was mentioned that Esther Mitchell of Extension, who has attended the last few meetings, was interested in becoming a member. Also requested were the timeline (due dates) for appointments and the name of Ms Brewer's replacement.

Discussion on the **upcoming Farmers Market Tour** and three farmers markets the committee could visit (open on Saturdays: Capital Market, Bowie Farmers Market, and Greenbelt Farmers Market). Steve mentioned another: Croom Community Farmers Market open Saturdays. Pharyn will send a poll on availability for a Saturday visit in September. Idea is to visit multiple markets in two hours, see the operation, take photos and discuss ARAC's role with vendors. Photos to be shared with Farm Bureau /posted on ARAC's website.

New business:

The **County Fair** is being held this year which surprised members. The members discussion included the overlap of the Fair with Farm and Family Day, and the lack of a county owned fairground as compared to other counties. Esther Mitchell and Jennifer Cross led the discussion. Ended with multiple takeaways:

- 1) ARAC should be involved in Fair planning process as well as Extension, Farm Bureau and SCD.
- 2) ARAC to send a letter to the County Council expressing the county's need for designated fairground property to take advantage of year-round events similar to those held at other counties' fairgrounds. Council Member Blegay is collecting ideas for the Commander's property and Six Flags property.
 - Suggestion made to establish a subcommittee on this topic. Esther and Jennifer volunteered.
 - Pharyn will draft a letter to the Council for the group to review prior to sending.

Updates:

Farm Bureau: mentioned various events including Farm and Family Day and other events mentioned in her email which was re-sent. She's looking for names of food trucks for various events.

SCD update – Congratulations to Tracey Duval as a new supervisor with SCD!!!!

Bill's update - discussed his recent trip to Cameroon and farmer markets in DC. Requested a hand-out or flyer on what ARAC can provide the county farmers so members can bring it to meetings and leave behind.

- Pharyn will research our funding source for outreach material (booth materials)
- Dan suggested that the material should include cards or handouts of the services agencies (FSA, SCD, Extension, Farm Bureau) can provide farmers.

Events

- Farm & Family Day - Sept 7 FREE at Baden Firehouse in Brandywine.
- County Fair - Sept 4 – 7 at Equestrian Center, Upper Marlboro.
- Check out Jennifer's email with multiple event flyers attached.

NEXT MEETING: Oct 8 Time 2 – 3 pm, format TBD. Speaker TBD

Meeting ended at 3:10 pm