

***AGRICULTURAL AND PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT
RIGHTS COMMITTEE MINUTES
March 28, 2022***

The meeting of the Stafford County Agricultural and Purchase of Development Rights Committee for Monday, March 28, 2022, was called to order at 7:05p.m. in the County ABC Conference Room in the George L. Gordon Government Center by Carlos Bratton, Chairman.

Members Present: John Howe, Elizabeth Cameron, Chad Young, Carlos Bratton, Jeff Adams

Members Absent: Benjamin Rudasill, Alandra Simmons

Staff Present: Kathy Baker and Vicki Sowers

1. Call to Order

Mr. Carlos Bratton called the meeting to order at 7:05pm and confirmed there was a quorum.

2. Welcome New Member – Elizabeth Cameron (Garrisonville District)

Ms. Elizabeth Cameron introduced herself as a lifelong resident of Stafford County – 2017 graduate from North Stafford High School. She is 22 years old and will be graduating from Northern Virginia Community College this spring. She is hoping to go to George Mason University for a degree in Conflict Resolution and Analysis.

3. Public Presentations

None

4. Staff Update

Land Conservation Program Improvements

Ms. Kathy Baker advised that the Board’s Healthy Growth Initiative was pushed to the April 5th CEDC meeting to talk about the potential partnership with Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (NVCT). Two of their representatives will be there to talk about their program. There will be an overall discussion about all of the recommendations that the committee is looking to move forward with.

In addition, in the FY2023 budget, there is a request to hire a potential staff person provided by the NVCT. The county would commit to paying ½ of the salary. As of now, it is still in the budget but will wait to see what happens after it goes to public hearing.

Mr. Jeff Adams asked if the committee meeting is open to the public. Ms. Baker explained that the meeting is open but there are no public comments or presentations.

PDR Property Updates

Ms. Baker said she received and vetted the appraisal quotes and is ready to hire the appraiser to take care of the Moore and Jones appraisals. She hopes to have the appraisals back by the first part of May and get the draft deeds from both property owners. At that point, we will submit to the respective matching fund

agencies and be ready to close by the end of the year on these properties. Ms. Baker confirmed that both properties will be appraised by the same appraiser.

5. Unfinished Business

2022 Work Plan (Handout):

Ms. Baker said she did not get any additional changes or recommendations and advised that the handout is red-lined as to what was taken out as well as four potential added items for this year.

1. Under item **2** – Purchase of Development Rights Program –

Added **b. Revise application based on new ordinance changes, if adopted by Board**

She explained that, as previously discussed, the application would include an attached version of the newly revised ranking criteria with comments to better explain to the applicant what the committee will be looking for which will then make it easier to rank the applications.

2. Added **c. Open new PDR application round in 2022**

Ms. Baker said the goal is to open a new PDR application round this year – possibly in July. The committee should look to make an announcement once the board approves the budget (April/May) which will confirm the additional funds afforded going into the next year. She advised the committee should be ready to move forward, particularly with the Ordinance amendments. Once they are sent to the full Board, all would be ready to move ahead with the new application round. In addition, Ms. Baker reminded everyone as previously discussed, that notices would be sent to property owners with at least 20 acres in the agricultural zone and then follow up with a public information meeting. Ms. Baker asked for any questions or additional changes. Mr. Chad Young responded that it is all what had been previously discussed.

3. Under Education/Outreach –

Added **b. Improve website to be more informative for citizens.**

Ms. Baker said some information is outdated and she would like to see the website become more informative and more user friendly. She also explained that if the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust partnership is approved, it will provide a big part with regards to the educational component. They would be responsible for going out and having public meetings once or twice a year, getting mailing lists and contact information, and reaching out directly to property owners so that they are aware of what their options are for the conservation. She said we would have more of a collaborative effort with them as far as making improvements to our website as well.

4. Added **c. Follow recommendations per the Planning Commission's report dated 2/10/21 (noted to move this item under number 4)**

Ms. Baker said this document was emailed to all committee members and included the whole overview and background information. She said the bullet points talk more about conservation in general – not just the PDR program. She said the committee can take a look at these different recommendations and as the year moves along, see which ones should be addressed – those that the committee is not already working on. In addition, the committee can look at more ideas for funding, how funding can be maximized, and how the program can be expanded. Ms. Baker said that if the NVCT is approved, they will be a good resource for program expansion ideas.

5. Under Board of Supervisors Healthy Growth Initiative

Added **b. Assist with development of Donated Lands process**

Added **c. Assist with creation of land trust partnership**

Ms. Baker discussed setting up a formal process for donations of easements and how to make the public more aware of how it works – including the ability to offset some of the costs that an applicant would typically have to spend up front. Partnerships to help subsidize applicant costs. She asked for everyone to look through the document again to work on making additional improvements to the process and spreadsheet.

6. Added 5. Consider development of proposed legislation to enhance land conservation

Ms. Baker said she revised number 5 a bit from last year. She explained that the Board of Supervisors has a legislative committee that look to get information, recommendations from the planning commission, wetlands board, and all the other boards and commissions that are in the county to see if there are any state code changes that can be made to enhance land conservation. Usually in September the board starts their updates and puts together their legislative agenda that they want to submit to the General Assembly. Ms. Baker said to keep this in mind and be research ways that we can reach out to the state to make any future improvements.

Mr. John Howe commented about how this working document would be perceived from the outside – would it be understood? He said Land Conservation is broader than just purchasing development rights. It's facilitating the implementation of conservation practices and best management practices. Ms. Baker said she welcomes any language changes, updates, or additions to make the Working Document clearer. Mr. Howe then agreed that this is an internal working document and therefore may not need any additional clarifications.

Ms. Baker asked for additional feedback and comments. Mr. Adams said that Mr. Darrell English had approached him and asked for the committee to possibly come up with a way of recognizing a Farmer of the Year. A discussion ensued about what a Farmer is, criteria, qualifications, applications or nominations, categories.

Mr. Howe made a motion to study and possibly implement a plan to recognize at least one Farmer of the Year. Mr. Young seconded. Unanimously approved to add this item to the 2022 Work Plan list. (5-0)

Mr. Adams made a motion to approve the 2022 Work Plan list as amended. Mr. Young seconded. The amended 2022 Work Plan was unanimously approved. (5-0)

Ms. Baker asked committee members to do some background research and come back with recommendations and strategies.

Mr. Bratton said he would do some research with the small farm bureau to see what criteria they currently use when giving out their Farmer of the Year recognitions.

6. Approval of Minutes

February 28, 2022

Mr. Bratton said that staff had pointed out a corrected error – the staff meeting was held in the ABC Conference Room (not the County Administration Conference Room). He advised that this error has already been corrected.

*Agricultural and Purchase of Development
Rights Committee Minutes
March 28, 2022*

Mr. Adams made a motion to approve the February 28 meeting minutes. Mr. Young seconded. The February 28, 2022 meeting minutes were unanimously approved and adopted (5-0).

7. Member Comments

Mr. Bratton said Board Member, Ms. Tinesha Allen, approached him and asked about ideas she could take to her Board retreat that the AG/PDR Committee could work on and achieve. He said he advised and discussed the Agricultural Research Center for Stafford County Schools as previously discussed.

Mr. Adams announced that he has been engaging in agricultural education with school children. He has been busy going to classrooms with pigs, goats, lambs, plants, and has advertised a sheep shearing event, to spread the word about local agriculture and farming.

More discussion ensued regarding education and opportunities including virtual learning centers, webinars, interactive web links, and email newsletters. A discussion also came up about creating a packet of information for the Board Members to take with them on their April retreat.

8. Next Meeting

April 25, 2022

9. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss Mr. Bratton adjourned the meeting at 7:45pm.