

Meeting Minutes
Buncombe County Agricultural Advisory Board
Buncombe Soil & Water Conservation District
49 Mount Carmel Road, Asheville, NC 28806 with optional Zoom
March 15, 2022, at 11 am

Ag Advisory Board Members Present: Chair David Lee (virtual), Vice-Chair Bruce Snelson, Ed Bulluck, Terri Wells (virtual), Steve Duckett, Chase Hubbard, Anne Grier, and Alan Lang.

Others Present: Ariel Zijp, Gillian Phillips (virtual), and Avni Naik.

Meeting was called to order at 11:03 am by Vice-Chair Bruce Snelson.

Approval of the March 15, 2022, Meeting Agenda

- **Alan Lang made a motion to approve the February 15, 2022, Meeting Agenda, seconded by Steve Duckett, and the motion passed on the vote.**

Approval of the February 15, 2022, Meeting Minutes

- **Steve Duckett made a motion to approve the December 21, 2021, Meeting Minutes, seconded by Alan Lang, and the motion passed on the vote.**

Martin's Creek Preservation Vote: Ariel Zijp informed Board Members that the Martin's Creek Preservation Project site visit went well. Board Members Terri, Alan, and Steve were out at the property with staff, they were joined by landowners Steven Clarke and Andrew Berner. Mr. Ed Bulluck commented on the project's smaller size compared to other easements in the past. Ms. Zijp mentioned that this project is in proximity to two other easements held by the program, allowing for the possibility of contiguous conserved lands. Additionally, the project is a donation easement and there are few of those left on the waiting list.

Ms. Wells voiced support for the project despite the size because its proximity to other protected lands and the Pisgah National Forest, as well as the landowners' and surrounding community's commitment to conservation. Mr. Lang voiced agreement. Mr. Bulluck asked Ms. Zijp if she has noticed any changes in appraisal costs; Ms. Zijp answered that appraisal costs have stayed relatively the same, but survey costs have been rising over the years. Mr. Duckett noted that there seems to be momentum and potential for other easements in the area – which is encouraging. He also noted that there is stream frontage on the property that would help with water quality protection.

- **Alan Lang made a motion to approve the Martin's Creek Preservation Project, seconded by Steve Duckett, and the motion passed on the vote.**

Board Member Reports: Ms. Wells thanked Ms. Zijp for attending the Leicester Community Center for a meeting and presenting information about the Farmland Preservation Program. Mr. Snelson agreed and mentioned that community members seemed receptive to the information that was presented.

Board Members discussed the new Forest Service Plan that was recently released and the public's response to the logging suggestions in the plan.

VAD and EVAD Applications: Attachment A. One new EVAD application that was listed as VAD but will be moving to the EVAD program now that an easement has been placed on the property.

- **Steve Duckett made a motion to approve the EVAD application, seconded by Chase Hubbard, and the motion passed on the vote.**

VAD/EVAD Update March 2022								
Appl. No.	Tax Lot PIN	Applicant	Township	Address of Property	Acres	Determination	Appl. Date	Phone Number
635-EVAD (Replaces VAD Application 597)	969615777	Ed and Suzy Rankin	Fairview	297 Church Street	45.5 acres	Eligible-Awaiting Agg Board Approval	3/11/2022	828-628-1878

	VAD		EVAD		TOTAL COMBINED
Vad/EVAD as of March 2022	Number of Farms	293	Number of Farms	17	310
	Total Acreage	20924.15	Total Acreage	2099.34	23023.49
Vad/EVAD as of March 2022 (with approval of 635)	Number of Farms	292	Number of Farms	18	310
	Total Acreage	20878.65	Total Acreage	2144.84	23023.49

Ms. Phillips mentioned that the Planning Department is now hosting their Comp Plan meetings in-person and encouraged Board Members to ask partners in ag to attend and provide input.

Snelson Conservation Easement DOT Update: Ms. Zijp informed Board members that there are no new significant updates about the Snelson Conservation Easement/ DOT issue, but they are hoping to have a decision by May/June.

Farmland Preservation Report: Ariel Zijp presented the farmland preservation report:

❖ **Easement Project Updates**

- Board Approval Process – Berner and Clark easements
- Survey & Deed work
 - McCurry Easement – Survey in progress
 - Rosseter Easement – Survey in progress
 - Sneddon Easement – Survey in progress
 - Harvey/O’Doherty Easement – Starting Survey April
 - SAHC Teague Property Easement - Starting survey April
 - SAHC Jenkin’s Creek Easement – postponed until stream easement
 - Splendor Valley LLC Easement – fully funded – contracting with surveyors
- Closing Preparations –
 - Hart Easement – final deed and exhibits, budgets, reviews
 - Currie Easement – final deed and exhibits, budgets, reviews
- Waiting on Grant Funding
 - Sluder Easement – NCDAs approved, waiting on USDA
 - Ramsey Easement – NCDAs approved, waiting on USDA
 - Anthony Cole Farm – awaiting NCDAs funding
 - Gary Cole Farm – awaiting NCDAs funding
 - Jasperwood Phase 1 – awaiting NCDAs funding
 - Jasperwood Phase 2 – awaiting NCDAs funding
- **Commissioners Environmental Subcommittee – Jan, Feb, March presentations**
- **Updating landscape records, projects, budgets, tasks**
- **Monitoring Visits Planned – March/April 2022**
- **Speaking at Organic Growers School Spring Conference on Agritourism March 19th**

Ag Advisory Board Overview: Ms. Zijp presented information about the Farmland Preservation Program’s history, goals, and offerings to help new Board Members have a better idea of the program and their roles.

Announcements and Discussion: With no other announcements, the meeting was adjourned at 11:50 am.