

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Buncombe County Agricultural Advisory Board**  
**Buncombe Soil & Water Conservation District**  
**49 Mount Carmel Road, Asheville, NC 28806 with optional Zoom**  
**April 19, 2022, at 11 am**

**Ag Advisory Board Members Present:** Chair David Lee, Vice-Chair Bruce Snelson, Terri Wells, Steve Duckett, Chase Hubbard, Anne Grier, and Annie Louise Perkinson.

**Others Present:** Ariel Zijp and Avni Naik.

Meeting was called to order at 11:05 am by Chair David Lee.

**Approval of the April 19, 2022, Meeting Agenda**

- **Steve Duckett made a motion to approve the April 19, 2022, meeting agenda, seconded by Chase Hubbard, and the motion passed on the vote.**

**Approval of the March 15, 2022, Meeting Minutes**

- **Steve Duckett made a motion to approve the March 15, 2022, meeting minutes, seconded by Chase Hubbard, and the motion passed on the vote.**

**Board Member Reports:** Ms. Wells provided an update about the new bond proposal that is being discussed by the Board of Commissioners (BOC) and the Trust for Public Land (TPL). The bond is planned to fund affordable housing and conservation/open space. A meeting with an update about the bond is to be presented at the BOC meeting, and two weeks later will go for vote. Ms. Wells voiced excitement for the potential of the bond as it would help to ramp up the easement work that has been ongoing as well as the potential for the Ag Advisory Board’s role in helping with more conservation/agricultural work. She will be providing the AAB with more updates and information surrounding the bond so that they are able to potentially answer questions and educate the public about how this may impact the community. Ms. Wells informed the board that county staff is unable to advocate for the bond, they are only able to educate.

Ms. Wells stated that Pegeen Hanrahan with the TPL will be presenting information about the bond to the BOC that afternoon and the to stakeholders the following day at a separate meeting -- which Chair Lee and Vice-Chair Snelson have both been invited to. Mr. Lee asked if Ms. Wells was familiar with any of the repayment terms, she stated she believed the county would have 8 years to utilize the funds and there would be a certain amount that landowners would pay on their property tax (~\$15/year was one of the options, but potentially less due to the population growth rate in the county).

**VAD and EVAD Applications:** Attachment A – presented by Ms. Zijp as Ms. Phillips was not available for the meeting.

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

VAD/EVAD Update April 2022								
Appl. No.	Tax Lot PIN	Applicant	Township	Address of Property	Acres	Determination	Appl. Date	Phone Number
636- Joy and Joseph Melone	9712209644, 9712310495, 9712312024	Joy and Joseph Melone	Leicester	145 Ridgeview Road	32.38	Eligible-Awaiting App	3/31/2022	828-683-2428
637- Janice Black and Paul Trivette	9733586112	Janice Black; Paul Trivette	Reems Creek	161 Greenridge Road	33.729	Eligible-Awaiting Approval	4/6/2022	336-416-1124
638- Janice Black and Paul Trivette	9667189900	Janice Black; Paul Trivette	Ivy	55 Brown Branch	95.059	Eligible-Awaiting Approval	4/6/2022	336-416-1124

	VAD		EVAD		TOTAL COMBINED
<b>Vad/EVAD as of March 2022</b>	Number of Farms	292	Number of Farms	18	<b>310</b>
	Total Acreage	20878.65	Total Acreage	2144.84	<b>23023.49</b>
<b>Vad/EVAD as of April 2022 (with approval of 636 and 637)</b>	Number of Farms	295	Number of Farms	18	<b>313</b>
	Total Acreage	21039.818	Total Acreage	2144.84	<b>23184.658</b>

Ms. Wells mentioned to Ms. Zijp that there was an item on the BOC agenda about an EVAD ordinance change and she was curious as to what that pertained to as it was not brought before the Ag Advisory Board. Ms. Zijp stated she was unsure about an EVAD ordinance change- they are working on a resolution with LCAB that will be brought to the BOC, but has not heard about anything EVAD-related from county legal. Ms. Zijp stated she would reach out to county legal and find out more information.

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

- **Easement Project Updates**
  - April 19- BOC consent agenda - Berner and Clark easements
  - Survey & Deed work
    - McCurry Easement – Survey in finishing up, starting deed work
    - Rosseter Easement – Survey in finishing up, starting deed work
    - Sneddon Easement – Survey in finishing up, starting deed work
    - 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 –initial survey visit May 3rd
  - Closing Preparations –
    - Hart Easement – Easement Closing on April 28<sup>th</sup> 2022!!
    - Currie Easement – Easement Closing on April 28<sup>th</sup> 2022!!
  - Waiting on Grant Funding
    - Sluder Easement – NCDCA approved, waiting on USDA funds
    - Ramsey Easement – NCDCA approved, waiting on USDA funds
    - Anthony Cole Farm – NCDCA Farm Visit was on 4/5/2022
    - Gary Cole Farm– NCDCA Farm Visit was on 4/5/2022
    - Jasperwood Phase 1– NCDCA Farm Visit was on 4/5/2022
    - Jasperwood Phase 2 – NCDCA Farm Visit was on 4/5/2022
- **Commissioners Environmental Subcommittee – 20% by 2030 project estimates**
- **Monitoring Visits – March/April 2022**
- **Baseline documentation visits for McCurry, Rosseter, Sneddon, Harvey – April 2022**

**Priority Mapping Presentation by Avni Naik:** Ms. Naik presented her capstone project to the Board. This included both a priority mapping presentation as well as a new project evaluation rubric proposal.

The board discussed the project and voiced the importance of having research and data to support the work that has been happening for years. Mr. Lee voiced some concern over having proximity to public water and sewer as a question in the project evaluation rubric as that may emphasize certain parcels closer to development. Ms. Zijp and Ms. Naik agreed stating that the current rubric is a straightforward sum of all the questions including proximity to water and sewer; probability of conversion to development; and proximity to planned development, which does tend to favor projects at the urban fringe or closer to development rather than in rural areas. While factoring in development/conversion potential of projects is important, the current evaluation rubric may favor projects at the urban fringe over rural ones – which is not necessarily the program’s priority. This is one of the reasons why a new evaluation rubric is being proposed.

Where the current evaluation rubric is a straightforward sum, the proposed rubric is a weighted sum. This will help to emphasize certain characteristics of a property over others (e.g., clustering potential over development potential). Ms. Zijp stated they did not want to completely eliminate conversion potential questions from the rubric as there are certain grants that ask those questions and they are factors that must be considered; however, conversion potential is not the most important criterion to look at while evaluating a project. Additionally, while the priority map provides a bird’s eye view of conservation priorities in the county, the evaluation rubric is important in evaluating conservation values at the property level. Ms. Zijp emphasized that projects will not be discarded just because they do not fall in a priority area. They will still be evaluated at the parcel-level using the rubric and will go through all the necessary due diligence as has always been done – the priority map will only be one added question when looking at a project. The Board also

discussed wanting to create contiguous tracts of protected lands – preferably larger tracts – to fill in missing pieces. They also discussed how conservation easements could provide farmers a way to retain private ownership of their properties while financially benefiting from them without having to sell for development purposes.

Mr. Duckett also wanted the board to consider the gap between the new and older generations of farmers and potential ways of closing that gap and forming connections between the two. He talked about the shift in farming to small-scale crop production vs. traditional larger-scale agriculture and how to draw in farmers that have experience working with large-scale equipment. Ms. Zijp mentioned the potential of housing a variety of rental equipment in one area so that farmers are able to access what they need in one place without having to travel far. The board also discussed the Farm Link program that aims to bridge the generational gap between farmers and the SAHC Farmer Incubator program. Ms. Zijp mentioned they have been considering some transition/estate planning trainings that may be helpful when talking with farmers.

**Announcements and Discussion:** With no other announcements, the meeting was adjourned at 12:01 pm.