



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY
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**HOWARD COUNTY AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION BOARD (APB)
AND STATE AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD (APAB)**

September 12, 2019

Attendance:

Board Members: Mickey Day (Chair)
Ann Jones (Vice Chair)
Cathy Hudson
Abby Gibbon
Jamie Brown

Staff: Joy Levy, Administrator (ALPP)
Amy Gowan, Deputy Director, Planning & Zoning
James Zoller, Executive Secretary/Agricultural Coordinator (OCS)
Sarah Latimer, Planning & Zoning

Guest: Dan O'Leary
Theodore Mariani
Harles Streaker
George Streaker

The Board started off by reviewing the written recommendations from the prior meeting for the Commercial Solar Facility, Clear View Farm, LLC property, HO-86-05-E, 120.77 acres (APB) and the recommendations for the Commercial Solar Facility, MHGH & S, LLC property, HO-90-17-E, 83.22 acres (APB). The recommendations for both requests are the same.

Action Items

1) Minutes from the meeting of August 26th, 2019

A correction was made to number two in the recommendations for Clear View Farm from Mr. to Ms. Hudson seconding the motion. Ms. Hudson motioned to approve, and it was seconded by Ms. Jones. All members in attendance were in favor of approving the Minutes.

2) Recommendation for Agricultural Preservation and Incentives in the East.

Ms. Levy began the discussion and advised that the idea is to come up with suggestions of what could be done for the East to help people who potentially want to farm. It was advised that the East was defined as the area east of the Planned Service Area (PSA) line.

Ms. Levy went over Agricultural Preservation and Incentives in the East. There are currently 68 parcels in the East that are over 20 acres. Parcels in the East can apply for the ALPP if they meet all the requirements. There is only one property in the East in the Agriculture Land Preservation Program. Ms. Levy reviewed a chart with the Board detailing the scoring categories and their relevance for them being used in the east.

Mr. Zoller went over the tax credits of surrounding areas of Howard County and the State's tax credit. The areas he researched were Baltimore City, Prince George's County, Montgomery County and Washington DC who have some type of urban agricultural property tax credits. The acreage guidelines typically follow the state definition of urban agriculture which is 8th of an acre to 5 acres. Most of the tax credits in each area he researched is based off agricultural production for the year.

Mr. Zoller reviewed Howard County Innovation Grants. The funds come from the Agricultural Preservation Fund. The grants are usually between \$1000 and \$10,000. They are awarded for research and development, production building, major fixtures, and processing facilities. The grant applications are accepted throughout the year and they are usually awarded twice a year. Mr. Zoller will email the grant list to the Board, so they can see the projects that have been awarded grant money.

Ms. Latimer reviewed zoning with the Board. It was broken down into the basic definition of farming in the zoning code. She reviewed use restrictions on farming, minimum lot sizes and supplementary use criteria in residential zoning areas. Zoning regulation defines a farm as three acres or more and it doesn't have any definition of suburban agriculture that may happen on a one- or two-acre lots. Farming is permitted by right in most residential districts and as permitted by right in New Town as open space use. In residential districts in the east livestock uses are prohibited on parcels less than 40,000 square feet and chicken keeping is excluded on parcels less than 10,000 square feet. A definition of suburban farming for parcels that are less than three acres would need to be created.

Ms. Latimer brought up community gardens which isn't farming but is an agricultural use. Community gardens are not defined in the Howard County Zoning Code. There are several community gardens that run throughout the east and are in high demand for space. Residents are usually put on waitlist because of the high demand. Columbia Gardeners has a partnership with the Howard County Conservancy in Woodstock and it currently has a waitlist. Ms. Latimer brought this up, because it could be another possibility of promoting Agriculture in the East

The Board discussed possibilities of promoting Agriculture in the East while the information was being presented to them. They discussed the positives and negatives of what could come out of it during their discussions. Ms. Gowan suggested to the Board that she brief the Administration on the conversation they had with the Board. After she speaks with the Administration she will update the Board on what the Administration is interested in doing.

Discussion Items

1) Discuss and review changes to Agriculture Land Preservation Program (ALPP) scoring system

During the last meeting they recommended updating some of the scoring categories and tiers in each category. The Board requested that Ms. Levy test score the last properties that were scored for the Agriculture Land Preservation Program, with the recommended changes, so they could see the difference.

Ms. Levy explained the two charts that she created. She went through a chart that has the six properties listed and the point associated with each of the different categories. For some of the properties the amount per acre was significantly lower. While reviewing the chart they realized some of the point maxes were not correct which affected the scores.

Ms. Levy went over with Board each scoring category and the tiers in each. The Board made some additional suggestions for changes to the scoring and the tiers in each, if applicable. It was asked how the Howard Soil Conservation District comes up with the land evaluation score. Ms. Levy provided a summary of the land evaluation score and advised that she has a chart that she could email to the board, so they could review it.

The Board discussed their points and how they could divide them.

Ms. Levy is going to update the numbers and redo the test scoring using the recommended changes. She will send them out by email before the next meeting.

Ms. Jones motioned to adjourn, and it was seconded by Mr. Brown. All Board members in attendance approved.