



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY
3430 Court House Drive ■ Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 ■ 410-313-0700
www.howardcountymd.gov FAX 410-313-3390 TDD 410-313-2323

**HOWARD COUNTY AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION BOARD (APB)
AND STATE AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD (APAB)**

July 27, 2020

Attendance:

Board Members: Mickey Day (Chair)
Savannah Kaiss
Cathy Hudson
Ann Jones (Vice Chair)
Jamie Brown

Staff: James Zoller, Executive Secretary/Agricultural Coordinator (OCS)
Morenike Oyenusi, Senior Assistant County Solicitor
Joy Levy, Program Administrator, (ALPP)
Beth Burgess, Chief, Resource Conservation Division
Matthew Hoover, Administrative Aide, (OCS)
Mary Kendall, Deputy Director, (DPZ)
Leah Miller, (OCS)

Guest: Theodore F. Mariani
Keith Walker
R. Alan Ewing
Ruth White
Dan O'leary
Kristin Ellen Delauney
Guy Feighner
John Forgash

Action Items

1) Approval of minutes from the meeting on April 27, 2020

No changes or corrections. Ms. Hudson motioned to approve, and Ms. Jones seconded the motion. All members in attendance approved the Meeting Minutes from 4/27/20.

Discussion Items

1) Program Updates

Ms. Levy advised that the County Council approved the revisions to the scoring during their July 6, 2020 legislative session. She is in the process of scoring new requests and has about ten applications. They have a list of residents who they are going to contact to let them know about the program to see if they are interested.

The tax credits application deadline is Friday 7/31/20. There are about 307 individual parcels that are eligible and about 250 have applied. She anticipates receiving more applications by the end of the week.

They are in middle of the August group for the installment purchase agreements. There are 16 property owners whose IPAs mature in August.

The next round of the Agricultural Innovation Grant is being reviewed now. They received six applications for this cycle.

2) Review and Discuss Solar Task Force Recommendations ([Solar Task Force Recommendations](#))

Mr. Zoller sent out the Solar Task Force recommendations to the Board prior to the meeting and they are posted online ([link](#)). Ms. Hudson gave a brief synopsis of the recommendations and Mr. Zoller reviewed the recommendations that were most relevant to the board.

The Task Force thinks that the APB should be able to create their own policy for commercial solar on agricultural preservation land. The recommendation of creating a policy is detailed in part three of the Solar Task Force Recommendations.

The Board discussed how they should proceed with their policy and questioned if they should wait for a response from the County Executive and the County Council. The Board questioned when reviewing a Conditional Use request if they are looking at it by easement or by parcel. The board was advised that language from 106.1 Section D 1-a from the Howard County Zoning Code states "On an ALPP purchased or dedicated easement property, the area devoted to Conditional Uses may not exceed a cumulative use cap equal to 2% of the easement."

They also discussed utility scale solar being allowed on agricultural preservation land. The definition for Maryland is anything over two megawatts is considered utility scale. Ms. Jones made a motion to not allow any solar projects over two megawatts to be allowed on agricultural preservation land and Ms. Hudson seconded the motion. After discussing with the board about the motion and solar projects on agricultural preservation land Ms. Jones withdrew her motion.

The Board decided that they should start discussing the possibility of updating their policy at the next meeting. They are also waiting for information that will be provided to them that will assist them when reviewing the policy.

Public Testimony

Mr. Mariani wanted to take his hat off to Ms. Hudson, Mr. Brown of the APB and Mr. Ohlinger from the Farm Bureau who really pushed the process at the Task Force to protect agricultural preservation. Mr. Mariani stated that the current technology is between 4 and 4.5 acres per megawatt for solar projects.

Josh Forgash from SolHarvest Energy reviewed some of the regulations for Community Solar projects and gave some background on why there are some discrepancies for the size of some community solar projects.

Ms. Miller is hoping the Board will consider the Solar Task Force recommendations when reviewing their policy.

Ms. Hudson motioned to adjourn, and it was seconded by Ms. Kaiss. All members in attendance approved the adjourning of the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:29pm.