

Agricultural Advisory Commission Quarterly Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 14, 2024 – Creeds Ruritan Community Complex, 1057 Princess Anne Road, Virginia Beach, VA 23456

I. Welcome and Call to Order

Formal meeting called to order by Commissioner Cromwell, Acting Chair. The meeting convened at 7:02 p.m. Commissioner Cromwell welcomed Ryan Dudley to the Agricultural Advisory Commission.

II. Roll Call

Present:

Agricultural Advisory Commissioners:

- John Cromwell, Vice Chair, Acting Chair
- Jason Dawley, Commissioner
- Ryan Horsley, Commissioner
- Betsy Morris, Commissioner, Secretary
- Ryan Dudley, Commissioner

Liaisons:

- Council member Barbara Henley, City Council Liaison
- David Trimmer, Director of Agriculture, City Staff Liaison

Agriculture staff:

- Jody Davis, Administrative Specialist, Recorder
- Julia Hillegass, ARP Coordinator
- Jenny McPherson, Rural Community Coordinator
- Roy Flanagan, VCE Agriculture Agent

Other Individuals Present:

- Victoria Eisenberg, Assistant City Attorney
- William "Billy" Vaughan
- Max Bartholomew
- Michael Kirschman
- Walter Camp
- Diana Hicks
- Laurie Fox
- Dean Bowles
- Mike Cullipher
- John Doucette

Commissioner Morris, Secretary, conducted the roll call and reported that Commissioner Horsley was absent at this time. Mr. Trimmer informed the AAC he had been in contact

with Ryan Horsley, and he is on the way. Commissioner Horsley arrived after the roll call and apologized to members of commission for being late.

III. Approval of the July 8, 12024 minutes

Commissioner Cromwell, acting Chair, called for a motion to approve the minutes as presented from the AAC meeting held on July 8, 2024. The motion was offered by Commissioner Dawley and seconded by Commissioner Morris.

IV. Preservation of the Greenline

Dean Bowels, Parks & Recreation, PDD Manager Planning, Design & Development briefed the AAC on the Interfacility Traffic Area (ITA) Master Plan Update that was given to City Council on October 1, 2024. The presentation to City Council can be viewed at City Council Informal - 10/01/2024. Diana Hicks, Chair, Transition Area/ITA Citizens Advisory Committee, shared with the AAC their committee letter of endorsement to support the ITA Master Plan update and asked for the support of the AAC. Billy Vaughan, past AAC chair, informed the AAC he met with Diana Hicks and supports this update. General discussion ensued among all members present at the AAC regarding the ITA Master Plan update. The opportunities for sports tourism and ecotourism facilities are an essential aspect of the plan and the intent is to have the land remain in agriculture and preserve Open Space. The update also supports and preserves the Green Line in addition to protecting the agricultural and military economy. This is the time to have the plan for the ITA embedded in the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Hicks mentioned the Blue Line also needs to be formalized and the update addresses this. Commissioner Cromwell, acting Chair, asked for a motion to endorse the ITA Master Plan Update. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dawley. Commissioner Morris had to leave the meeting at 8:40 p.m. and was not present for the motion.

V. Dominion Energy Transmission Line Update

Jacob Carasella could not make it to the meeting. Max Bartholomew from Dominion Energy stepped in and gave the Dominion Energy update. Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind, off-shore undersea cables delivering the energy on-shore is at a standstill at this time due to Naval activity at the State Military Reserve (SMR) (Camp Pendleton) but will be starting back up by end of month. On-shore status currently, they are putting in overhead infrastructure coming out of Chesapeake towards Virginia Beach. When all is completed, expected date of late 2026, there will be 176 turbines, 27 to 42 miles off the coast of the SMR. They are in the process of acquiring 1/3 of the Avangrid Project (Kitty Hawk North), approximately 800 megawatts of offshore wind. They have won a 176,505-acre lease about 35 nautical miles from the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay for 17.65 million in a Bureau of Ocean Energy Management auction.

VI. STAFF UPDATES

a. AGRICULTURE RESERVE PROGRAM (ARP) – JULIA HILLEGASS, ARP COORDINATOR

Ms. Hillegass is out of the office on vacation, so Jenny McPherson gave a brief update on ARP. The Roman property closed on September 18, a little over 57 acres and 4 development rights. Public hearings and approved by City Council are the applications for Venable Real Estate LP (Blackwater Rd) and Heafner (Pleasant Ridge Rd). Title work in progress for Melvin Eaton property. Kroll, Bright (2) and Gilbert have accepted ARP offers. Gilbert is tentatively scheduled for Public Hearing on November 19 and City Council vote on December 3. The Gilbert property has over 101 acres and 19 development rights. Kroll and Bright (2) have been presented to closed session and City Council has given approval to move forward with title work then public hearing. A lot of calls have been received on the Indian River Rd property previously owned by John White asking what you can and can't do with the property since it is in ARP. The original house is gone, and it can only be replaced. Interest rates have remained solidly over 4% for most of the quarter.

b. FARMERS MARKET – JENNY MCPHERSON, RURAL COMMUNITY COORDINATOR

Ms. McPherson gave an update on the Farmers Market and other agriculture items. Three Request for Proposals (RFP) were issued in the summer. Lisa's Tinker Treasures and Chapman's Market on the inside circle will be renewing their leases. One space on the outside circle that was formerly Moosewood Creek did not receive any bids. Building Maintenance needs to complete some repairs and consider space modifications before another RFP is issued for this space. Collaborated with Public Works and the Treasurer's Office to improve invoice processing to the merchants for their monthly rent and fees. Renovations of the restaurant have been completed. A RFP should be posted this week on the Public Works website for interested parties to bid on the restaurant space. RFP's will be accepted until December 6 at 3:00pm. A recommendation to Council is tentative to occur in January. We are still awaiting the merchant's approval to move forward with the lease for Holland Produce that has been delayed. The fall season kicked off with Apple Extravaganza and Harvest Fair. A new event of Spooky Saturday Family Movie Night is being held on Saturdays in October. This is sponsored by Low Country Café Food Truck. The Friday Night Hoedowns finish up this month on October 25. Our remaining special events for the fall are Fall Festival on November 2, and Santa's Workshop on December 7. The Market continues to hold pop-up markets with crafters, sponsors, and food trucks, usually the first Sunday of the month. Please check our FaceBook page for more information on these events.

Participated in plan reviews as needed for site plans, subdivision requests, and Conditional Use Permits. Hosted two events with Virginia Agriculture in the Classroom and Farm Bureau for local educators. August 6 was a bus tour of Virginia Beach farms and August 7 was a professional development workshop at the Public Utilities building with visits to the Farmers Market afterwards.

Minutes are not verbatim. They are "action" minutes only.

c. VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION – ROY FLANAGAN,
AGRICULTURE AGENT

Mr. Flanagan updated the AAC on various topics. The Master Gardener Orientation new training class is scheduled with 25 interviews. The 4-H position is still vacant, but the Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) hiring process is in play. VCE currently has two nutrition assistant's vacancies. These positions will be able to be filled until October 2025.

On the agriculture side, there will be a Pesticide Recertification on December 3 at Creeds Ruritan Community Complex. International Soil and Tillage Research Organization Conference held in Virginia Beach on September 22. The 2024 Epsilon Sigma Phi (ESP) Conference, which is the Extension Professionals Organization, is being held October 27-31 in Virginia Beach at the Marriott Oceanfront.

Mr. Flanagan is available to help anyone with their soybean yield entries. The new horticulture agent, Ashton Holliday-Goulart is doing a great job and becoming a good team member.

At this time Councilmember Henley informed everyone there is a public meeting on Pungo Ferry Road. A lot of issues are being worked through and an environmental impact study will need to be done. The public meeting is scheduled on October 23, 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Creeds School. She strongly urges everyone to spread the word and to attend the meeting.

VII. Director's Update

David Trimmer deferred; too early in the budget process to give an update.

VIII. Adjournment

Commissioner Cromwell, acting Chair, mentioned the next AAC meeting is January 13, 2025, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.