

Agricultural Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes

Monday, July 14, 2025 – 7:00 pm

Department of Agriculture, Building 14

2449 Princess Anne Road, Virginia Beach, VA 23456

Present:

Agricultural Advisory Commissioners:

John Cromwell: Chairman

Ryan Horsley: Vice Chairman

Betsy Morris: Secretary – late arrival

Jason Dawley: Commissioner

Ryan Dudley: Commissioner

Liaisons:

Council Member Barbara Henley, City Council Liaison

David Trimmer, Director of Agriculture, City Staff Liaison

Agriculture Staff:

Jenny McPherson, Rural Community Coordinator

Cathy Rogers, Administrative Specialist II

Virginia Beach Cooperative Extension Staff:

Roy Flanagan, Agriculture Agent

Other Individuals Present:

Victoria Eisenberg, Deputy City Attorney

Max Bartholomew, Dominion Energy

Don Horsley

John Doucette – Reporter for WHRO

I. Welcome and Call to Order

Formal meeting called to order by Commissioner Cromwell, Chairman. The meeting was convened at 7:00 pm. **Chairman John Cromwell** - conducted roll call and reported all Commissioners were present except for Secretary Betsy Morris, who arrived later.

Approval of April 14, 2025, AAC minutes: Commissioner John Cromwell called for a motion to approve the minutes from the Agricultural Advisory Commissioners meeting held on April 14, 2025. The motion was approved by Commission members with exception of Betsy Morris.

II. Staff Updates:

Roy Flanagan – VCE and AG update:

- VCE reported 15 graduates for the latest Master Financial Volunteer Class
- Welcomed the new 4-H Agent, Desmyn Owens
- 120 youths, 7 adults and 18 counselors for 4-H camp, (July 28 – August 1)
- 4 youth and 1 adult volunteer attend the 4-H Congress. There were 2 All Stars tapped, Lily Dawley and Torrence Spreder.
- Successful Show and Sale on May 30th
- Ashton Holliday-Goulart will hold the fall session for Master Gardener intern training on September 26 at the Central Library.
- Starting a new program- Small Space Gardening. Part of the prep for this will be certified in Food Safety so food preservation can be added to the program to help gardeners safely preserve their fruits and veggies.
- Sandbridge has 8 acres of an invasive plant species. (2.5 public, 6 acres private) This was mapped out by a P&R intern from Bayside HS. To eradicate this from private land we are looking for an incentive for the homeowners.
- SE Soybean Field Day will be August 8th at the Dudley Farm- field in AM, lunch at Ruritan Club, ends shortly after. 9 am – 12 pm
- Pesticide Disposal in Chesapeake, August 5th.
- Well Water Testing – July 21-22 pickup, kit drop off July 23, (Chesapeake, IOW Suffolk) HRST subsidized the discounted kits. We have sold about 15 in Virginia Beach
- AG Expo, August 7 at Brook Farms, Locus Grove
- NE AG Expo in Elizabeth City, North Carolina will be on July 31st at the James Brothers Farm (most local growers attend this)
- Crop reporting deadline is July 15, 2025.

Jenny McPherson - ARP Updates:

- Assisted with ARP application files and payment questions as needed
- Helped with payouts for CLK Company and DOK West LLC. Closed in June 2025.
- Change of address request for Venable Real Estate and a wiring request updated for Elizabeth Baum
- Two closings for Bonney Brights applications in June - closed at 5.20%.
- Interest rates remained above 4.75% for the quarter. Market closed at just over 5% today.
- The Kroll ARP application was approved on June 3.
- Jenny provided the ARP application Status Report, which has details on all applications.

- The ARP Coordinator position was posted, and applications were received. Interviews were held on July 11th; job offer is pending.
- Farmers Market: Spaces in the back are still available for lease. RFP started but had to pull back and will be reposted.

Farmers Market News:

- Space renovations have been completed for one space that was vacant in the back of the market, formerly Moosewood Creek. The space has been divided and will be leased as two separate spaces. A request for proposal was shared and will be reposted soon by Facilities Management.
- Princess Anne County Grille was approved by Council to come back to operate the restaurant at the meeting on July 8.
- Repair work is still anticipated for some of the outside plywood on many shops.
- Finished a good spring season at Farmers Market, looking forward to fall.
- 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 details on these events and more:
[www.Facebook.com/VBFarmersMarket](https://www.facebook.com/VBFarmersMarket)

Other Agriculture Items:

- Participated in plan reviews as needed for site plans, subdivision requests, and Conditional Use Permits.
- Directional agricultural signs were changed for strawberries and vegetables.
- David Trimmer asked about the price of T-strips, currently about 5%.
- Six applications that were closed in FY25, about 470 acres that were closed on for ARP.
- David Trimmer asked about FM ADA repairs for the dance floor. Jenny advised that in the first phase, sidewalk accesses were added to the circle. The stage will have a ramp installed, and the two pergolas will be removed as well. Some benches were also added on the new sidewalk area.

Director David Trimmer:

- Into the new fiscal year, everything is going well
- Excited about new ARP Coordinator
- After 10 years, we have a new 4-H Agent Desmyn Owens
- Kolby Snow is our intern, she will help with 4-H. She attends Mount Olive University.
- Goal is 300 acres in the ARP.

Max Bartholomew from Dominion Energy:

- Coastal onshore/offshore wind project going well
- Allowed back under the ocean on May 1st, were previously restricted by North American Right Whale was migrating.
- 110 turbines have had the pylons installed into the ocean bottom.
- Full operation is expected in early 2026.
- Three offshore substations, one is under construction now, the other two are coming from overseas.
- DOM is in a good position from the Federal Government. DOM is about 60% into the 11-billion-dollar budget.
- Solar is moving right along, some of the tax impacts may slow that down.

Councilwoman Barbara Henley:

- Asked for feedback/input from the Commission for the ITA (Interfacility Traffic Area): the last plan update was done in 2017. The area is from PA Road to Chesapeake. Proposed maybe have two plans to see which one the public is in favor of. Mrs. Henley will address this at her next public forum.
- John Cromwell asked Max Bartholomew about what requirements from Dominion Energy would be with a plan like this? Mr. Bartholomew responded that DOM is obligated to respond and would respond accordingly to the initial plan. This is just a proposal currently.
- The new LETA building proposal, estimated at \$82 Million, would possibly go into the area that is designated for public use.
- City Council Retreat will be at the end of August 2025.
- John Doucette asked how much land will be taken out of production for this proposal from Economic Development? Mrs. Henley responds, 300-375 acres for industrial but 200 acres in SW ponds. A lot of the area would be needed for SW ponds because of the poor drainage.

V: Adjournment:

Commissioner John Cromwell mentioned the next AAC meeting will be October 13, 2025, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:13pm.