

Agricultural Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes

Monday October 13, 2025 – 7:00 pm

Creeds Ruritan Community Complex

1057 Princess Anne Road, Virginia Beach, VA 23457

Present:

Agricultural Advisory Commissioners:

John Cromwell: Chairman

Ryan Horsley: Vice Chairman

Betsy Morris: Secretary

Jason Dawley: Commissioner

Ryan Dudley: Commissioner

Liaisons:

Council Member Barbara Henley, City Council Liaison - **ABSENT**

David Trimmer, Director of Agriculture, City Staff Liaison

Agriculture Staff:

Jenny McPherson, Rural Community Coordinator

Sarah Grimstead Cotten, ARP Coordinator

Cathy Rogers, Administrative Specialist II

Virginia Beach Cooperative Extension Staff:

Roy Flanagan, Agriculture Agent

Other Individuals Present:

Victoria Eisenberg, Deputy City Attorney

Don Horsley – VB Development Authority

Diana Hicks – Chairman of ITA Commission

Michael Mauch – Planning Commission

David Whitley – VB resident

Myles Pocta – MAP Environmental, Inc., Board of Zoning Appeals

Andrew Pocta – MAP Environmental, Inc.

I. Welcome and Call to Order

Formal meeting called to order by Commissioner John Cromwell, Chairman. The meeting was convened at 7:00 pm. Secretary Betsy Morris conducted roll call and reported all commissioners were present. Commissioner John Cromwell welcomed Sarah Grimstead Cotten as the new ARP Coordinator and welcomed all the guests.

Approval of July 14, 2025, AAC minutes: Commissioner John Cromwell called for a motion to approve the minutes from the Agricultural Advisory Commissioners meeting held on July 14, 2025. Motion was made by Ryan Horsley and seconded by Jason Dawley. The minutes were unanimously approved by all commission members.

Approval of the AAC Annual Report for 2024/2025: Commissioner John Cromwell called for a motion to approve the AAC Annual Report for 2024–2025. The motion was made by Ryan Horsley and seconded by Jason Dawley. The AAC Annual Report for 2024–2025 was unanimously approved by all commission members.

II. Staff Updates:

Jenny McPherson – Rural Community Coordinator and Sarah Grimstead Cotten, ARP Coordinator – ARP Updates:

- Job offer was processed to hire Sarah Grimstead Cotten as our new ARP Coordinator; Sarah joined our staff on September 4th.
- Working with Sarah to train her on all things ARP, to update ARP application files and process final payouts, transfers and wiring requests.
- Assisting with application files and payment questions.
- Distributed the ARP application to some interested landowners.
- Helped with final payment for the Juanita Pendleton property.
- Assisted with change of payment type for GIN-PHIL, LLC.
- Transfer request processed for June Morris Estate to Scott and Betsy Morris.
- Working on Bonney Bright application, which is pending approval by City Council at the hearing on 10/21.
- Interest rates remained above 4.8% on average for this quarter and closed Friday at 4.728%.
- ARP application status report is available for more details.
- Participated in Apple Extravaganza at the Farmers Market, Farm Days at Hunt Club Farm and Triple R Ranch.
- The draft ARP Fiscal Year 2025 Report was distributed. The final report will be available on the City's website soon.

Jenny McPherson – Farmers Market News:

- A request for proposal, RFP for the former Moosewood Creek spaces, was reposted by Facilities Management and closed on October 6. We only received one proposal that is not being entertained at this time due to incompatibility. A third RFP will be issued soon to hopefully receive more responses.

- Princess Anne County Grill has been completing their final preparations to open the restaurant soon. Anticipating an opening in late October or early November.
- The fall season started with the Apple Extravaganza on September 20th. Harvest Fair was rescheduled due to weather from last weekend to this weekend, October 18th. Fall Festival will be November 8th, and Santa's Workshop will be December 6th.
- Repair work is still anticipated for some of the outside plywood on many shops. Upgrades to our center circle stage area should be made in the first two quarters of 2026.
- The Market continues to hold pop-up markets with crafters, sponsors, and food trucks, usually on the first Sunday of the month. An additional pop-up is scheduled for October 25th and others maybe scheduled around the holidays. Please check our Facebook page for details on these events and more: www.Facebook.com/VBFarmersMarket

Other Agriculture Items:

- Participated in plan reviews as needed for site plans, subdivision requests, and Conditional Use Permits
- Attended the Northeast North Carolina Ag Expo
- Helped coordinate our Agriculture in the Classroom workshop with area teachers.
- Directional agriculture signs were changed for pumpkins.
- Assisted with the State Fair of Virginia Youth Livestock shows.
- Assisted with Farm Days for the Virginia Dare Soil and Water Conservation District in Virginia Beach and Chesapeake.

Roy Flanagan – Virginia Cooperative Extension – VCE Agriculture Agent

- VCE agents are now fully staffed
- VCE lost a SNAP agent position that was housed in Virginia Beach
- Down two nutrition assistants for WIC and SNAP
- Master Gardeners intern class is closing soon for new intern applications.
- Desmyn Owens is our new 4-H agent and is doing well.
- Agritourism conference has been postponed from November 6th to February 26th.
- Pesticide recertification will be December 3rd.
- Crop Conference and the Fruit and Vegetable meetings will be held the first of the year in February
- Farm Days for the Virginia Dare District were held in Virginia Beach and Chesapeake. Over 1570 kids attended during the four days.

Director David Trimmer:

- We are 9 months away from the City's new budget

- Comp Plan will be presented on October 14th to City Council; comments are due by October 30th.

Diana Hicks – Chairman of ITA Commission

- Will be outlining feedback to provide to staff, planning commission and City Council for some further clarification on the Comp Plan. Once finished she will share with the AAC.

V: Adjournment:

Commissioner John Cromwell mentioned the next AAC meeting will be January 12, 2026, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.