

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Buncombe County Agricultural Advisory Board**  
**Buncombe Soil & Water Conservation District**  
**49 Mount Carmel Road, Asheville, NC 28806 with optional Zoom**  
**August 23, 2022, at 11 am**

**Ag Advisory Board Members Present:** Bruce Snelson, Terri Wells, Steve Duckett, Chase Hubbard, Ed Bulluck, Alan Lang, and Anne Grier.

**Others Present:** Ariel Zijp, Avni Naik, Mary Ann Brigman, Mark, and Max Taintor (virtual)

Meeting was called to order at 11:04 am by Bruce Snelson.

**Approval of the August 23, 2022, Meeting Agenda**

- Alan Lang made a motion to approve the August 23, 2022, meeting agenda, seconded by Steve Duckett, and the motion passed on the vote.

**Approval of the July 28, 2022, Meeting Minutes**

- Steve Duckett made a motion to approve the July 28, 2022, meeting minutes, seconded by Chase Hubbard, and the motion passed on the vote.

**Board Member Reports** – Mr. Snelson and Mr. Duckett spoke about their visit to the Roger’s Family Farm. They both spoke in favor of the project stating it is a traditional farm in the Leicester community that has been around for a long time. It is in proximity to other farms and easements and is a former dairy with good bottomlands.

Mr. Bulluck and Ms. Wells attended the Scott Fisher farm visit, and both spoke in favor of the tract. Mr. Bulluck stated the property has extraordinary views and is in an area with high development pressure. They mentioned Mr. Fisher will be leaving the property to his niece as she is his next of kin and he is hoping to conserve the property before passing it down (she is aware that he is going through the easement process). Ms. Wells stated Mr. Fisher is a beef farmer and the property has some low slopes where there is potential for crop production. She expressed appreciation for Mr. Fisher’s land stewardship and love of the land stating that the property is well-maintained.

Mr. Duckett and Mr. Lang attended the Harlan site, and both spoke in favor of the property. There is some crop production, and the property abuts Pisgah National Forest. There are water resources on the property and the landowners are involved in outdoor education with the Friends of Big Ivy organization.

The Board discussed the site visit to Mary Anne Brigman’s property. It is a forested tract in a high development pressure area and has been in the Brigman family for more than a century. Ms. Zijp stated she is unsure if the project will be eligible for USDA or NEDA funding, so she talked through the different routes that the project could go. Ms. Brigman stated she will take some time to think through the different options and also talk about them with her niece, who will be inheriting the property from her.

**VAD and EVAD Applications:** Presented by Ms. Naik. One new VAD application. Applicant Joan Walker is applying to be on the Farm Heritage Trail and being a part of the VAD program is a requirement.

Applicant	Township	Address of Property	Acres	Program	Determination	Appl. Date
Joan Walker (Fiddlesticks Farm)	Alexander	278 Old NC 20 Hwy, Alexander NC 28701	2.68	VAD	Eligible - Waiting Approval	6/13/2022
			2.68			
		<b>VAD Totals</b>		<b>EVAD Totals</b>	<b>VAD/EVAD Combined Totals</b>	
<b>Totals as of June 2022</b>	Number of Farms	299	Number of Farms	20	319	
	Total Acreage	21376.7	Total Acreage	2204.08	23580.78	
<b>New totals for July 2022 (if proposed applications are added)</b>	Number of Farms	300	Number of Farms	20	320	
	Total Acreage	21379.38	Total Acreage	2204.08	23583.46	

- **Terri Wells made a motion to approve the VAD application(s), seconded by Alan Lang, and the motion passed on the vote.**

Mr. Bulluck discussed the potential of the bond and increased involvement of the Board if it were to pass. He wanted to emphasize that the Chair and Vice-Chair's presence during meetings will become even more critical as funding increases and the program expands. He wanted to ensure that the Board – but those positions in particular – is aware of the commitment and will make changes as necessary if they are unable to make the commitment.

Other than Ms. Brigman, landowners were unable to attend the meeting and will be attending the September meeting before the Board votes on the rest of the projects. Ms. Zijp also went over the transaction costs associated with each project.

- **Terri Wells made a motion to approve the Scott Fisher project, seconded by Steve Duckett, and the motion passed on the vote.**

**Easement Purchase Criteria Discussion:** Ms. Zijp went over the edits that she incorporated into the easement purchase criteria based on comments from the Board from the August meeting. She will be having a similar discussion with the LCAB during their meeting the following day.

**Farmland Preservation Report:** Ms. Zijp presented the farmland preservation report.

- Easement Purchase Criteria Process and Flow Charts for LCAB And AAB
- LCAB mapping update and ranking update process
- Coordinating Farm visits, and board visits for new projects: Scott Fisher, Russ Roberson, Will Harlan, Mary Ann Brigman, Roger's Family Trust, David Rogers, SAHC Garrett Cove
- Collecting budget estimates from contactors for new projects
- Updating VAD system and mapping
- Easement Project Updates
  - Survey & Deed work
    - Clark Easement –Survey work
    - Berner Easement –Survey Work
    - SAHC Teague Property Easement – finished survey, SAHC Baseline, Closing 9/12
    - Splendor Valley LLC Easement –survey in review, deed work, baseline/maps
  - Closing Easements
    - Harvey Easement
      - Prepping closing documents and
      - Closing August 9th
  - Waiting on Grant Funding –
    - Sluder Easement – NCDAs approved, waiting on USDA funds
    - Ramsey Easement – NCDAs approved, title commitment and anticipated approval
    - Anthony Cole Farm 38.2 acres– Grant funds awarded - \$172,500
    - Gary Cole Farm 28.9 acres– Grant funds awarded - \$129,000
    - Jasperwood Phase 1 - 113 acres – a Grant funds awarded - \$440,778.80
    - Jasperwood Phase 2 - 98 acres– Grant funds awarded - \$376,171.91

### **Announcements and Discussion**

With no other announcements, the meeting was adjourned at 12:18 pm.