

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

415 South Pine Street - Walhalla, SC



TEL (864) 638-4218 FAX (864) 638-4168

MINUTES

6:00 PM, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2017
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
OCONEE COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLEX

Members Present: Ms. Sewell
Mr. Hollifield
Mr. Marshall
Mr. Land
Ms. Willoughby
Mr. Blanton

Staff Present: Gregory Gordos, Senior Planner – Community Development

Media Present: none.

1. Call to Order

Mr. Marshall called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Blanton requested that on the January 9, 2017 draft minutes, a Mr. Dobbins name be corrected to reflect the correct spelling.

Mr. Land made a motion to approve the minutes from January 9, 2017 meeting as amended. Mr. Blanton seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0 with two members absent.

3. Status Report on County Council Retreat AAB Presentation

Mr. Land presented the first half of a PowerPoint presentation that was previously presented to the Oconee County Council on 2/3/2017. Mr. Land's spoke on the history and current agricultural land uses in the county. Mr. Blanton presented the second half of the PowerPoint related to USDA statistics and other relevant information on county production in comparison to South Carolina as a whole.

Discussion followed on the reception of County Council and the need for outreach to other community members on the role of agriculture in Oconee County.

4. Discussion of Creating a Letter of Support to FARM Center

General discussion took place regarding the current status of the FARM Center, including contractual negotiations with Oconee County and the need for a road encroachment permit from the South Carolina Department of Transportation.

Mr. Land asked if the Planning and Zoning division was at fault for holding up the process; Mr. Gordos stated that Planning and Zoning was not involved in any negotiation nor was there a permit for the FARM Center in this department at this time.

Mr. Marshall made a motion to table the agenda item until the next scheduled meeting. The motion passed 6-0 with one member absent.

5. Old Business

None presented.

6. New Business

Ms. Sewell suggested that the Agricultural Advisory Board consider additional agriculture related topics in addition to the FARM Center. She provided an example of the local beekeeper's club. Board members agreed that communication between the County, the AAB, and local agricultural interests was of everyone's best interest. Discussion on the spraying of crops and the County involvement in that process followed.

Mr. Gordos noted that a portion of the County website (www.oconeesc.com) would be dedicated to Council Appointed Boards and Commissions, including the Agricultural Advisory Board. He noted that as a County employee he hoped to be granted admin privileges for the website by the county IT department and could upload any relevant information in the near-future.

7. Board Correspondence with Outside Agencies

Mr. Blanton invited Mr. Danny Howard to speak before the Board. Mr. Howard introduced himself as an assistant to Mr. Dobbins with Clemson University. He noted that while most regional fairs were closing down, he was encouraged that the Heritage Fair has expanded. Mr. Howard compared his experiences with Greenville County with a focus on local food production and working with county Planners to coordinate efforts. He stated Oconee County has several "gems" worth preserving and recommended if the FARM Center is to succeed, size to expand, dedicated farmer's markets and a commissary are important future goals.

8. Adjourn

Mr. Marshall motioned to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 7:31 PM.