

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

415 South Pine Street - Walhalla, SC



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

MINUTES

6:00 PM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2016
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
OCONEE COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLEX

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

Staff Present: Gregory Gordos, Senior Planner – Community Development

Media Present: none.

1. Call to Order

Mr. Gordos called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Land made a motion to approve the minutes from November 14, 2016. Mr. Hollifield seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0 with one member absent.

3. Election of Officers

Mr. Gordos called for nominations for the office of Chair. Mr. Land nominated Mr. Marshall. Mr. Marshall was elected as Chair with a vote of 6-0 with one member absent. Mr. Gordos called for nominations for the office of Vice-Chair. Mr. Marshall nominated Mr. Land. Mr. Land was elected as Chair with a vote of 6-0 with one member absent.

4. Discussion re: FARM Center/fairgrounds site

Mr. Marshall invited Mr. Stanley Gibson to present on the progress of a proposed agricultural center along U.S. 123 in Oconee County. Handouts were provided to the Board. Topics of discussion included the following facilities: market building, cold storage, covered arena, barn/show ring, fairgrounds, amphitheater, and incubator farm. Mr. Gibson noted that the group is actively working with Oconee County for a Contract to Operate.

Discussion by the Board followed. Board members noted the change in County Council may impact progress and agreed to invite individual Council members to future meetings of the Agricultural Advisory Board. Mr. Land expressed concerns over the percentage of taxes to be used to fund the proposal. Ms. Alexander suggested ATAX funding sources and explained to the Board the structure of these hospitality taxes including a "HAT" tax. The Board expressed support in County Council placing the facilities in a line item in the budget, as well as seeking additional funding partners such as Clemson University or Oconee County Public Schools.

Mr. Gibson was asked what short-term items were needed to progress with the site. Mr. Gibson stated in addition to capital funding a S.C. Department of Transportation traffic study was in progress and that the design firm Populous was in negotiations for creation of a site plan. Multi-purpose buildings and individual buildings are both still in discussion. Mr. Hollifield asked which building is the number one priority.

Discussions concluded with a consensus that it is the responsibility of the Agricultural Advisory Board promote the need for the facility, both to the general public and the County Council, although no formal motion was made.

Mr. Blanton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Land, to invite a Dr. Thorston to attend the January 9, 2017 meeting. Ms. Alexander volunteered to be the contact person.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Land made a motion, seconded by Ms. Alexander, to invite a Dr. Dobbins to attend the January 9, 2017 meeting. Mr. Blanton volunteered to be the contact person.

The motion passed unanimously.

5. Old Business

None presented.

6. New Business

None Presented.

7. Board Correspondence with Outside Agencies

Mr. Blanton expressed to the Board that he had spoked to representatives of the Farm Bureau regarding the Agricultural Advisory Board. Mr. Hollifield noted he is vice president of the Bureau.

6. Adjourn

Mr. Marshall motioned to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 6:50 PM.