

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

415 South Pine Street - Walhalla, SC



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MINUTES

6:00 PM, MONDAY, MAY 8, 2017

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

OCONEE COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLEX

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

Staff Present: Gregory Gordos, Senior Planner – Community Development

Media Present: none.

1. Call to Order

Mr. Land called the meeting to order at 6:12 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Blanton made a motion to approve the minutes from April 10, 2017 meeting. Ms. Sewell seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.

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

Mr. Blanton stated that he had drafted a letter of support as a part of the 4/10/2017 Backup information for the meeting. The template was applicable to Council as well as outside agencies.

Ms. Sewell noted that Oconee County is not the only agriculture board in the state; the Charleston County Agricultural Issues Advisory Committee was recognized as the first.

Mr. Land encouraged the Board to complete the letter of support as soon as possible, as the first hearing of County Council regarding the FARM Center was held on May 2nd, 2017. Mr. Gordos noted that pending any delay, the Third and Final Hearing would tentatively be scheduled for June 6, 2017. There was a consensus to hold a special hearing to vote on the Letter of Support and its content prior to June 6th. Mr. Gordos was asked to tentatively schedule the Council Chambers for a hearing on May 22, 2017.

Mr. Hollifield made a motion to consent Mr. Blanton to work with Mr. Marshall, Chair, to finalize the text of the Letter of Support with Mr. Blanton to present on May 22nd. Ms. Sewell seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.

4. Discussion on Creating an AAB Mission Statement, AAB Proclamation, and potential AAB Partnerships

Mr. Blanton introduced the matter before the Board, noting that the discussion regarding the letter of support also applied to the draft mission statement and list of partner agencies. These draft documents had been handed out at a previous meeting for review and edit by the Board members. Ms. Sewell recommended boiling down the language in the mission statement for brevity. Mr. Hollifield recognized Mr. Blanton's work as looking professional and a good starting point.

Mr. Land requested a motion to draft a two-sentence recommendation; Ms. Sewell requested that the Board wait until full membership was present.

Mr. Denny Howard requested to speak, noting that mission statements are typically brief, whereas further detail into the board could be detailed later similar to a job description. He encouraged the Board to continue their efforts.

5. Old Business

Ms. Sewell noted the progress on the FARM Center lease with Oconee County. The Second Reading of Ordinance 2017-12 was scheduled to be held on May 16th and Ms. Sewell volunteered to represent the Agricultural Advisory Board and also speak in favor of the ordinance.

Mr. Gordos noted his correspondence with Janet Hartman of Oconee Economic Alliance and their generous offer to assist the Board once a consensus has been reached on a outreach strategy.

6. New Business

Mr. Gordos noted Planning and Zoning efforts to bring new board and commission member training to Walhalla with the assistance of the Appalachian Council of Governments. As the AAB is advisory to Council and not directly considered a planning-related board, attendance would be optional.

Ms. Sewell spoke on the opportunity for food trucks and progress with the local farmer's market.

Mr. Land requested that a sign showing the economic impact agriculture has on Oconee County be placed at a major roadway entrance to the county, similar to examples in Toccoa, Georgia.

Mr. Hollifield spoke of the success of the local Farm Bureau and encouraged new membership.

7. Board Correspondence with Outside Agencies

None presented.

8. Adjourn

Mr. Land motioned to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 7:04 PM.