

AAB Agenda

June 14, 2021



1. Call to order
2. Approval of minutes
 - May 13, 2021
3. **Public Comment Session** [3 minutes per person]
If you are not able to attend in person and you have a comment, you may submit it by contacting the Planning Department at planninginfo@oconeesc.com or 864-638-4218, so that we may receive your comment and read it into the record.
4. **Mike Smith, Planning Commission, Chairman – Boards and Committees working together toward a common goal**
[to include Vote and/or Action on matters brought up for discussion, if required]
5. **Discussion**
[to include Vote and/or Action on matters brought up for discussion, if required]
 - Road Safety and Agriculture
6. **Letter from Trixi Derosa-Davis – Strengthening Local Food Act**
[to include Vote and/or Action on matters brought up for discussion, if required]
7. Adjourn

Oconee County Agricultural Advisory Board

When & Where

4:00 PM

Monday, June 14, 2021

Council Chambers

415 South Pine Street

Walhalla, SC 29691

Alternative participation

YouTube: “YourOconee”

Radio: F.M. 92.3 (within

500’ of Council

Chambers)

Staff contact

846-638-4218

planninginfo@oconeesc.com

BOARD MEMBERS

Debbie Sewell, Chairman, At-Large

Tessa Moxley, Secretary, At-Large

Rex Blanton, District III

Charlie Whiten, District V

Kim Alexander, Vice-Chairman, District I

Larry Cantrell, District II

Ashley Townsend, District IV

Kerrie Roach, Ex-Officio

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

415 South Pine Street - Walhalla, SC



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

Minutes

4:00 PM, Thursday, May 13, 2021

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

OCONEE COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLEX

Members Present

Charlie Whiten
Debbie Sewell
Kim Alexander
Tessa Moxley
Kerri Roach

Staff Present

Laura Zimmerman

Media Present

None

1. Call to Order – Ms. Sewell called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

2. Approval of minutes from April “” – Ms. Alexander made a motion to approve the minutes, with corrections (Kerrie Roach was not present) seconded by Mr. Whiten and approved 4/0.

3. Public Comment- none

4. Presentations to AAB [to include Vote and/or Action on matters brought up for discussion, if required]

- Foothills Agriculture Resource and Marketing Center / Stanley Gibson, Chairman of Board
 - Farm center in operation for four years. 501C3. Purchased by county, 50-year lease to Farm Center. Website: www.farmoconee.org.
 - “Thrive” summer concert series. First concert, June 5th. July 10th to be the second event.

- Facilities are available for events put on by other organizations. Facilities can accommodate up to 5,000 people.
- Kicking off sponsorship drive--looking for sponsorship at the Summer Concert Series, Foothills Heritage Market, Farm Center, Heritage Fair.

The Farm Center is requesting support via social media, finding grants, reaching out to potential sponsors and educating the public on what the Farm Center does.

Discussion regarding Farm Center

- Ms. Roach asked about fair board meetings
2nd Tuesday of each month
- Ms. Alexander asked if the farm center would like an appointed liaison from the Ag board.
- Mr. Gibson was in support of the AAB forming a work group for the Farm Center.
- Further discussion about whether or not a work group is needed for the Farm Center.
- Ms. Alexander made a motion to form a workgroup called “The Farm Center Workgroup” from members of the AAB. Seconded by Mr. Whiten and approved by 4/0.
- Mr. Whiten made a motion to write a letter of support for the Farm Center, seconded by Ms. Moxley.
 - *Discussion:* Ms. Roach suggested including details about sponsorship opportunities in the letter.
 - Motion approved 4/0.
- The Oconee County Food Council Committee / Gwen McPhail
 - Oconee food summit 2020 recap
 - Covid-19 highlighted some weak spots in our county’s food system
 - Oconee food summit regroup event 2021 recap
 - Zoom event
 - Group formed to address food system needs. “Food Council Committee”.
 - Request for funds from county (letter presented by Gwen McPhail).
 - The Food Council Committee requested a letter be written by the AAB in support of the fund request.

Discussion regarding Food Council Committee letter

- Ms. Alexander made a motion for the AAB to write a letter to Oconee County Council in support of the fund request by the Food Council Committee, seconded by Mr. Whiten, approved 4/0.

5. Discussion Items [to include Vote and/or Action on matters brought up for discussion, if required]

- Discussion regarding summary of AAB Workshop
 - Ms. Alexander suggested waiting on discussion until all members of the board are present
- Discussion regarding scheduled time for future AAB meetings
 - Ms. Sewell proposed continuing with 4pm meetings on every 2nd Monday of the month.
 - Ms. Sewell made a motion to have meetings at 4pm on the second Mondays of June and July, Mr. Whitten seconded, approved by 4/0.

6. Adjourn—Ms. Moxley made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:20pm, seconded by Ms. Alexander , and approved 4/0.

DRAFT

E. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The table of goals, objectives and implementation strategies (GOIS) summarizes the actions that will be undertaken in the coming decade to achieve the goals and objectives identified in the Agriculture Element. The Agricultural Advisory Board of Oconee County will be a driving force and an accountable agency for all goals, objectives, and strategies below.

Goals/Objectives/Strategies	Accountable Agencies	Time Frame for Evaluation
Goal 8.1. Support and Protect the Agricultural Industry in Oconee County.		
Objective 8.1.1. Recognize important agricultural land as a valuable natural resource to protect for future generations.		
Strategy 8.1.1.1. Advocate use of "Best Management Practices" in farmland and forest operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil & Water Conservation Commissions • Oconee County • Clemson Cooperative Extension (CCE) • SC Forestry Commission 	2025
Strategy 8.1.1.2. Encourage and support collaboration between landowners and public and private agencies in the development of ecologically and economically sound plans for preservation and restoration of farmland and forests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • CCE • Conservation groups 	2025
Strategy 8.1.1.3. Work with SCDOT and other state and regional agencies to ensure projects for infrastructure facility maintenance and expansion will not be detrimental to the continuation of agriculture and silviculture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • SCDOT • Oconee County Chamber of Commerce • Municipalities 	2021
Strategy 8.1.1.4. Limit non-agricultural development in productive and prime agricultural areas to densities and development patterns that are consistent with the continuation of economically viable agriculture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County 	2021
Strategy 8.1.1.5. Support state legislation that links incentives to continue farming (such as state income tax credits or differential assessment for property taxes and affirmative supports for the business of agriculture) with controls preventing conversion of the recipient's agricultural land to non-farm uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Oconee County Chamber of Commerce 	2025



Goals/Objectives/Strategies	Accountable Agencies	Time Frame for Evaluation
<p><u>Strategy 8.1.1.6.</u> Seek grants and take advantage of state and federal programs to assist with the purchase of development rights and agricultural easements on prime agricultural land.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Oconee County Cooperative Extension Service • Oconee County Chamber of Commerce • Conservation groups 	<p>2023</p>
<p><u>Strategy 8.1.1.7.</u> Ensure that the impacts to adjacent farms and forest land is part of the deliberation and decision making for proposed public projects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Oconee County Cooperative Extension Service • Oconee County Chamber of Commerce 	<p>2021</p>
<p><u>Strategy 8.1.1.8.</u> Work with the state Real Estate Licensing commission to add an "Agricultural Disclosure Act" to ensure that potential home/land/business purchasers are made aware that agricultural activity is occurring on land adjacent to the purchaser's property of interest.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • State Real Estate Licensing Commission 	<p>2023</p>
<p><u>Strategy 8.1.1.9.</u> Activate vacant and underutilized County owned property to facilitate a program that invites entrepreneurs, non-profits, residents, and other groups to begin entry-level agricultural businesses, community gardens, and pilot programs for engaging residents in the agricultural processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • NGO • Not-for-Profit organizations • CCE • Municipalities • Agriculture Organizations • School District of Oconee County (SDOC) 	<p>2023</p>
<p><u>Strategy 8.1.1.10.</u> Create a staff position of Agricultural communication and coordination to coordinate and communicate with farmers, foresters, local governments, agricultural groups, and the public on agricultural and forestry matters.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County 	<p>2023</p>
<p>Objective 8.1.2. Enhance agricultural operations and opportunities.</p>		
<p><u>Strategy 8.1.2.1.</u> Work with state and federal agencies to attract agribusiness-related grants and revenue sources and support efforts to establish pilot programs related to new agricultural technologies and products.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County 	<p>2021</p>
<p><u>Strategy 8.1.2.2.</u> Provide appropriate assistance to expand non- traditional and specialty agribusiness opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County 	<p>2021</p>
<p><u>Strategy 8.1.2.3.</u> Ensure the ability of a farm to have a farm-related business onsite.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County 	<p>2021</p>



Goals/Objectives/Strategies	Accountable Agencies	Time Frame for Evaluation
<u>Strategy 8.1.2.4.</u> Promote the establishment of new farm enterprises through support of training for interested persons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Oconee County Cooperative Extension Service 	2023
<u>Strategy 8.1.2.5.</u> Allow agricultural products processing facilities to locate in areas with convenient access to farms, but ensure that they do not negatively impact rural character or scenic vistas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County 	2025
<u>Strategy 8.1.2.6.</u> Support South Carolina right-to-farm laws and consider adopting a county right-to-farm policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Oconee County Cooperative Extension Service • Oconee County Chamber of Commerce 	2021
<u>Strategy 8.1.2.7.</u> Promote farm stands and farmers markets in rural and urban areas and local food hub(s) with adjoining counties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Oconee County Cooperative Extension Service • FARM Center 	2023
<u>Strategy 8.1.2.8.</u> Consider adopting a Voluntary Agricultural and Forestal Areas program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Oconee County Cooperative Extension Service 	2025
<u>Strategy 8.1.2.9.</u> Encourage and support programs that educate and engage residents of all ages in aspects of farming and agriculture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Oconee Cooperative Extension Service • Agriculture Advisory Board • Organizations such as FFA and the Oconee Cultivation Project • FARM Center 	2023
Goal 8.2. Protect Oconee County's Forest Resources.		
<u>Strategy 8.2.1.1.</u> Maintain an accurate inventory of important forestland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • SC Forestry Commission • US Forest Service 	2025



Goals/Objectives/Strategies	Accountable Agencies	Time Frame for Evaluation
<u>Strategy 8.2.1.2.</u> Coordinate and plan infrastructure and development to protect forestland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • SC Forestry Commission • SCDOT • US Forest Service • Conservation Groups 	2025
<u>Strategy 8.2.1.3.</u> Support efforts to permanently preserve important forestland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • SC Forestry Commission • US Forest Service • Conservation Groups 	2025
<u>Strategy 8.2.1.4.</u> Work with the Forestry Commission to educate citizens about wildfire hazards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • SC Forestry Commission • Rural Fire Departments • US Forest Service • CCE 	2025
<u>Strategy 8.2.1.5.</u> Consider adopting the International Wildland-Urban Interface Code, or relevant portions, to help mitigate wildfire risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Rural Fire Departments 	2030
Goal 8.3. Ensure continuing access to healthy, fresh food.		
Objective 8.3.1. Eliminate food deserts and ensure access to healthy food.		
<u>Strategy 8.3.1.1.</u> Integrate food system policies and planning into County land use, transportation, and capital improvement plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Local food banks • Oconee County Cooperative Extension Service • SDOC 	2030
<u>Strategy 8.3.1.2.</u> Encourage residents to supplement personal food sources with gardening and fresh food preservation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Oconee County Cooperative Extension Service • SDOC 	2025
<u>Strategy 8.3.1.3.</u> Recruit, support, and incentivize businesses that provide healthy food choices in all areas of the County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Oconee County Chamber of Commerce • CCE 	2023
<u>Strategy 8.3.1.4.</u> Revise land use policies to require healthy food access as a part of development standards, prohibit private restrictions that limit gardens, and community gardens, in residential areas when economic incentives are offered by the County to a developer .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Municipalities 	2023



Goals/Objectives/Strategies	Accountable Agencies	Time Frame for Evaluation
<u>Strategy 8.3.1.5.</u> Work collaboratively with non-profits and other entities to address the needs of vulnerable populations (e.g. elderly, children, homeless).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Municipalities • Local non-profits • Faith-based community • Farmers@markets 	2023
<u>Strategy 8.3.1.6.</u> Support new opportunities for distribution of locally and regionally produced food.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County 	2023
<u>Strategy 8.3.1.7.</u> Revise the zoning code to require healthy food access as a part of development standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Municipalities 	2023
<u>Strategy 8.3.1.8.</u> Work collaboratively to ensure that regional emergency preparedness programs include food access and distribution and are working toward the goal of establishing regional capacity for feeding the population for 2 to 3 months in an emergency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Municipalities • SC Emergency Management • Private organizations • NFPO • Disaster relief organizations 	2023
<u>Strategy 8.3.1.9.</u> Demonstrate the use of agriculture as a method of mitigating climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • SDOC • CCE • Agricultural groups • Private organizations • Municipalities • Conservation groups • Local non-profits • Faith-based community • Farmers@markets • Oconee County Chamber of Commerce • Local food banks • SC Forestry Commission 	2023



H.R.8431: Strengthening Local Processing Act Summary

Sponsored by Representative Chellie Pingree and Representative Jeff Fortenberry

The Strengthening Local Processing Act provides small plants with the funds needed to grow and expand, and supports a scale-appropriate approach to small scale slaughter and processing. The bill sections include:

Section 2. Scale Appropriate Guidance and Assistance from FSIS

Requires the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) to establish a searchable database of all the peer-reviewed, publicly-available validation studies for Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans for small and very small plants; create and make available to small and very small plants models of HACCP plans for multiple types of small plants, including but not limited to a HACCP plans for slaughter plants and processing only plants, and based on the different types of products processed by plants; and create and publish guidance for public comment and input on how to get your HACCP plan approved.

Section 3. Expanding State Inspection

Increases the amount of cost share USDA will pay for a state Meat and Poultry Inspection Program from 50% to 65% of the total program costs.

Section 4. Expanding Cooperative Interstate Shipment

Requires FSIS to conduct outreach to states with state inspection programs that are not part of the Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) program, and requires FSIS to submit a report to the House and Senate Agriculture Committees each year detailing the activities and the results of the outreach conducted. Increases the amount of cost share USDA will pay for from 60% to 80% of the total program costs. Changes the small plant eligibility size from plants with more than 25 employees to plants with more than 50 employees.

Section 5. Small Plant Grant Program

Creates a new grant program to provide reimbursement grants to help federally inspected, state inspected, and exempt small and very small plants expand infrastructure to increase harvest and processing capacity, including support for existing plants and new small scale meat slaughter and processing plants, and adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic and future market needs beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. Limits grants to not more than \$100,000 for 90 percent of eligible costs and up to \$500,000 for 75 percent eligible costs. Cost-share requirements will be waived for Fiscal Year 2021 grants. Provides \$10 million a year in mandatory funding and \$15 million in discretionary funding.

Section 6. Small Processor Training, Education, and Technical Assistance Grants

Creates Meat Processing Training Program Grants for experts and small and very small plants to assist and train small plant operators, small plant employees, and the next generation of meat processors and butchers. Provides \$10 million a year in discretionary funding.

The following organizations endorse the Strengthening Local Processing Act:

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, The American Association of Meat Processors, The Niche Meat Processors Assistance Network, The National Farmers Union, American Grassfed Association, United States Cattlemen's Association, The National Bison Association, The Center for Rural Affairs, American Pastured Poultry Producers Association, and Family Farm Action