

# Agricultural Advisory Board Agenda

## May 8, 2023

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1. Call to order
2. Moment of silence
3. Invocation
4. Pledge of allegiance
5. Approval of minutes  
April 10, 2023
6. Presentations [to include Vote and/or Action on matters brought up in discussion if required]
  - Mission goals and vision
  - Members of the board and contact information
  - Partner organizations
  - Citizen initiated zoning
7. Public discussion 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](mailto:planninginfo@oconeesc.com) or 864-638-4218, so that we may receive your comment and read it into the record.*
8. Adjourn



## Oconee County Agricultural Advisory Board

### When & Where

6:00 PM

Monday, May 8, 2023

### Farm Center

2063 Sandifer BLVD

Seneca SC 29678

### Staff contact

846-638-4218

[planninginfo@oconeesc.com](mailto:planninginfo@oconeesc.com)

### BOARD MEMBERS

Kim Alexander, Chairman, District I

Rex Blanton, District III

Charlie Whiten, District V

Tessa Moxley, Secretary, At-Large

Trent Smith, District II

Ashley Townsend, District IV

Joshua Owens, At-Large

Chris Talley, Ex-Officio

## Minutes

6:00 PM, Monday, April 10, 2023

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

OCONEE COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLEX

### Members Present

Charlie Whiten

Rex Blanton

Kim Alexander

Ashley Townsend

Tessa Moxley

### Staff Present

James Coley

### Media Present

None

1. **Call to order-** Ms. Alexander called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.
2. **Moment of silence**
3. **Invocation**
4. **Pledge of allegiance**
5. **Approval of minutes-** March 13, 2023. Mr. Whiten made a motion to approve the minutes with a correction on the date, seconded by Ms. Townsend and approved 5/0. Mr. Whiten made a motion to approve the minutes with corrections, seconded by Mr. Blanton. Ms. Alexander called for a vote. The motion passed 5/0.
6. **Review of Agricultural Task Force Report**
  - Ms. Alexander suggests that we focus on the recommendation regarding the designation of an area in the county as a Voluntary Ag District.
    - i. There is a misunderstanding amongst folks that getting ag exemptions for tax purposes automatically zones the land “Ag” and gives their land Ag protections. This is incorrect.
    - ii. Discussion ensues regarding the nature of Voluntary Ag Districts and what one in Oconee County could look like, as it is up to each county to set the parameters.
7. **Report to Planning Commission for May 15, 2023**
  - In regards to the Agricultural Advisory Board’s current activities
    - i. Educating the public on what it means to zone land as Agricultural.
    - ii. Task force report-drafting a Voluntary Ag District
8. **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](mailto:planninginfo@oconeesc.com) or 864-638-4218, so that we may receive your comment and read it into the record

- **Emily Hitchcock:** happy to hear discussions about the voluntary ag district.
  - i. Speaking as a former chair of the OCCB:
    - 1. \$321 per acre-what the county spends to preserve land.
    - 2. Funded 11,000 acres; 6 of the 11 grants were for farm land.
    - 3. The bank has less than \$300,000 remaining.
    - 4. Currently there is a backlog of eligible applicants, as there has been an influx of applications over the past year.
    - 5. It will take less than 3 years for the bank to exhaust their funds.
  - ii. Ms. Hitchcock requests that we prioritize the following:
    - 1. County needs to fund the two positions recommended by the task force
    - 2. The OCCB needs funding
  - iii. Ms. Alexander asked if the OCCB has looked into getting further money from Duke Power, as they were the largest donor at the establishment of the Conservation Bank Board
    - 1. Ms. Hitchcock-The last money from Duke Power was due to a licensing issue and was donated as a form of settlement. There are no current grants or endowments through Duke Power that the OCCB is eligible for.
  - iv. Andy Smith is the current Chair of the OCCB, and should be contacted directly with further questions and ideas.

**9. Discussions** [to include vote and/or action on matters brought up in discussion if required]

- Ms. Townsend made a motion to move forward with the Voluntary Ag District Matrix, seconded by Mr. Whiten and approved 5/0.
- Mr. Whiten made a motion to work on a document addressing the economic impact of Agriculture in Oconee County to present to the County Council, seconded by Mr. Blanton and approved 5/0.

**Adjourn:** Mr. Whiten made a motion to adjourn at 7:01pm, seconded by Mr. Blanton and approved 5/0.