

# Agricultural Advisory Board Agenda

March 11, 2024



1. Call to order
2. Moment of silence
3. Invocation
4. Pledge of allegiance
5. Approval of minutes
  - February 12, 2024
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

#### BOARD MEMBERS

Kim Alexander, Chairman, District I	Trent Smith, District II
Rex Blanton, District III	Vacant, District IV
Charlie Whiten, District V	Nathaniel Duncan, At-Large
Tessa Moxley, Secretary, At-Large	Chris Talley, Ex-Officio

## Oconee County Agricultural Advisory Board

### When & Where

6:00 PM

March 11, 2024

#### Farm Café

2454 SC 59 Westminster CS  
29693

#### Staff contact

846-638-4218

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

# AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

District 5



MONDAY  
MARCH 11  
2024  
AT 06:00PM

The Farm Cafe

2154 Hwy 59 Westminster, SC 29693

## Minutes

6:00 PM, Monday, February 12, 2024  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

### Members Present

Tessa Moxley  
Charlie Whiten  
Nate Duncan  
Kim Alexander  
Trent Smith

### Staff Present

James Coley

### Media Present

None

1. **Call to order-** Ms. Alexander called the February 12th meeting to order at 6:01pm.
2. **Moment of silence**
3. **Invocation**
4. **Pledge of allegiance**
5. **Approval of minutes-** January 8, 2023. Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the minutes seconded by Mr. Whiten and approved 5/0.
6. **Discussion-** Farmer's Breakfast
  - Ms. Moxley gave a summary of the Farmers' breakfast in January and notified the Ag Board of the upcoming breakfast on February 28th at 7:30am at the Ag building in Walhalla. Jason Davis will be presenting about cost-share opportunities through NRCS.
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. **Discussion** [to include Vote and/or Action on matters brought up in discussion if required].
  - Letter of support

Mr. Whiten made a motion to draft a letter in support of the RFSI grant funds going to the FARM center if they decide to apply, seconded by Mr. Smith and approved 5/0.

- Agricultural Education in Oconee County
  - i. West Oak High School is compiling a list of farms for students to potentially do SAEs and could use some assistance getting contacts.
  - ii. Seneca High and Walhalla High have started teaching a new class, Equipment Operation and Maintenance and Ag Mech. They both

- expressed that there is a need for more types of farm equipment in order to teach the kids the ins and outs of farm tech.
- iii. Orchard Park Elementary does not currently have an ag ed class, but they have started an after school program that happens once a week called “Garden Gurus”
    - 1. They are currently the only elementary school with an ag related program
    - 2. Just won a Bee Grant for beekeeping
  - iv. Jeff Blackwell-beekeeper facilitating the installation of observation hives. Every school in the county currently has one, but there has not been much of a return on the investment, as some of the hives have not been maintained and there has been no growth.
  - o Ms. Alexander presented the idea of a Contest to promote Ag in Oconee County for the students in k-12. This would be teacher-sponsored, and the ag board would be responsible for the prizes to be awarded.
  - o Some of the ideas and input from the teachers present included:
    - 1. High school kids could present their SAE projects as posters
    - 2. Research based-create a map of the types and locations of farms in oconee county with potential farm spotlights
    - 3. Poster contest: “Ag in Oconee County”
    - 4. Ms. Swaggert of Seneca High suggested that there is an opportunity for the elementary students to do a project based off of the heritage fair Ag Learning Day

Ms. Moxley Made a motion to do a poster contest supporting agriculture in Oconee County for high school and middle school students in the spring of 2024 with the deadline being may 1st, to be judged by the planning department, and awards to be presented by County Council in May. The Elementary School contest will be held in the Fall. The motion was seconded by Mr. Whiten and approved 5/0.

- Discussion ensued about the potential programs that could be run through Ag Ed in the County, and the type of buy-in that would be required from farmers, farm organizations, Clemson University, and the school district. The general consensus was that the youth are the future of Ag in the county, and they do not currently have the resources and education required to give them a good start.
- Further discussion ensued about the needs for Ag teachers to be better equipped to improve Ag Ed in Oconee County. Teachers expressed that they are currently working many more weeks worth of days than they are being paid for, due to the extent of care required to properly maintain Ag programs in regards to animal and plant care and quality curriculum.

Mr. Smith made a motion to write a letter to the School Board stating that Ag teachers in the county must be better supported in order to run successful Ag Ed programing in the county, therefore should be put on the 240 day salary. The motion was seconded by Mr. Whiten and approved 5/0.

- 9. Adjourn:** Mr. Whiten made a motion to adjourn at 7:18pm, seconded by Mr. Smith and approved 5/0.



## DIVISION 12. - AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

### Sec. 2-420.4. - Establishment.

There is hereby established the Oconee County Agricultural Advisory Board (the "board"), purposed to aid and advise the county on all matters related to agriculture in order to ensure that the diverse agricultural interests in the county are supported and developed, that communication and cooperation among the varied agricultural concerns in the county are fostered, and that agriculture's vital role in the economy and character of the county is both maintained and developed.

(Ord. No. 2016-17, § 1, 6-21-2016; Ord. No. 2018-29, § 1(Att. A), 10-2-2018)

### Sec. 2-420.5. - Membership.

The board shall consist of seven voting members and one, non-voting, ex officio member, appointed by the council in accordance with the following requirements and recommendations:

- (1) The board shall consist of eight members, selected and appointed by a majority vote of council, with one member selected from each of the five council districts, two members selected at-large, without regard to district of residence and one member selected as the ex officio, without regard to district of residence. Council may receive recommendations for the two at-large seats and single ex officio seat from the county agricultural advisory board.
- (2) Each board voting member's primary residence shall be located in Oconee County; and
- (3) Council shall endeavor to appoint, but not require candidates to be appointed from, the following:
  - a. A member of the Bee Keepers' Association;
  - b. A member of the Fruits and Vegetable Growers (Clemson Extension);
  - c. A member of the Oconee Cattlemen's Association;
  - d. A member of the Oconee Poultry Growers; and
  - e. An Oconee Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner or designee.
- (4) All appointed board members shall have a demonstrated background, experience, and interest in agriculture and actively participate in at-least one of the following areas of agriculture:
  - a. Agri-tourism;
  - b. Certified organic farming;
  - c. Poultry farming;
  - d. Cattle farming;

- e. Fruits and/or vegetable farming;
  - f. Bee keeping;
  - g. Silviculture and forestry operations;
  - h. Aquaculture;
  - i. Agri-business; or
  - j. Another agricultural pursuit, as that term is commonly understood.
- (5) Interested candidates for the board will be requested to complete the "Questionnaire for Board/Commission" and submit it to the clerk to council for distribution to council. Council is not required to select a member from the submitted questionnaires; members of council may directly solicit a candidate for any appointment by the board. However, all potential candidates, whether those submitting questionnaires on their own or those solicited for appointment by members of council, must complete the "Questionnaire for Board/Commission" and submit it to the clerk to council for distribution to council before being appointed to any county board or commission by any member of council.
- (6) All appointments to the board will be made upon recommendation by a council member and an affirmative vote by full council.
- (7) The ex officio member shall have expertise in relevant agricultural technologies, programs, and policies as well as providing expert analysis and opinion to the voting members of the board. The ex officio member is a non-voting member and the ex officio member's attendance at meetings does not count towards quorum.

(Ord. No. 2016-17, § 2, 6-21-2016; Ord. No. 2018-29, § 1(Att. A), 10-2-2018)

Sec. 2-420.6. - Term of members.

- (a) The length of the regular term served by each member shall be four years, beginning on January 1 of the year of appointment.
- (b) For the purposes of implementing the standards of this section and thereby establishing a reappointment/replacement schedule of the membership of the board to staggered terms, the following shall apply:
  - (1) All members appointed by council district shall serve for the same length as the remaining term of the council member who appointed them, after which the term of such board members shall be equal to and coincide with the term of the council member appointing or reappointing them, with all terms or parts thereof beginning January 1 of the year of appointment or reappointment.
  - (2) The first at-large member appointed by council after adoption of the restatement of this section shall serve for four years, and the second such at-large member shall serve for two years, after which the term of each such at-large member shall be four years following

appointment/reappointment, with all terms or parts thereof beginning January 1 of the year of appointment or reappointment.

- (3) In the event the regular term of a member in good standing expires prior to reappointment or replacement by council, said member shall continue to serve until his or her replacement is appointed and qualified. The date of reappointment or replacement, however, in no way alters the scheduled length of the term.

(c) Removal.

- (1) A member who is absent from three consecutive meetings or who fails to attend at least 50 percent of the regularly scheduled meetings of the board within any 12 calendar month period without adequate excuse, such as documented illness, shall be reported by the chairperson of the board to council and is subject to replacement by council.
- (2) Any member may be removed or replaced at will by majority vote of council upon the motion of the appointing council member, at any time, unless appointment is required by or regulated by state or federal law.
- (3) Should any voting member of this board move or establish residence outside the county where such member was residing at the time of the appointment to this board, such relocation shall constitute a resignation by the member, and a replacement member shall be appointed to fill the unexpired term of such resigned member.

(Ord. No. 2016-17, § 3, 6-21-2016; Ord. No. 2018-29, § 1(Att. A), 10-2-2018)

Sec. 2-420.7. - Organization, meetings, officers.

- (a) *Officers.* The board shall organize itself, electing one of its members as chairman and one as vice chairman, whose terms must each be for one year. The chairman and vice chairman shall have the right to vote. The board may appoint a secretary, who may be a member of the board or an employee of the county. If the secretary is a member of the board, he or she shall also have the right to vote. Vacancies in such offices by reason of death, resignation, or replacement shall be filled for the unexpired term of the officer whose position becomes vacant, in the same manner as the original election or appointment.
- (b) *Meetings.* The board shall establish a meeting schedule during its first meeting of the calendar year. The board shall meet at least once per month.
- (c) *Bylaws.* In addition, the board shall duly adopt such bylaws as may be necessary for the orderly performance of its duties and functions. Any bylaws which may be adopted by the board for the orderly performance of its duties shall comply with all provisions of the general law of the State of South Carolina and of the ordinance codified in this section, and of all other ordinances of Oconee County, including, but not limited to, the Freedom of Information Act.
- (d)



*Staff liaison.* The board shall have a staff liaison to be designated by the county administrator. The staff liaison may serve as secretary should that be the wish of the board. It is the responsibility of the staff liaison to notify the clerk to council regarding resignations and/or vacancies on any board. It is also the responsibility of the staff liaison to monitor the appointment schedule and inquire and report to the clerk to council if current members wish to be considered for reappointment or replacement.

(e) *[Freedom of information compliance.]* The board shall comply with the provisions of the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA") and the requirements set forth in the Code of Ordinances and subsequent ordinances concerning freedom of information and the conduct of public meetings.

(Ord. No. 2016-17, § 4, 6-21-2016; Ord. No. 2018-29, § 1(Att. A), 10-2-2018)

#### Sec. 2-420.8. - Powers and duties.

The responsibilities and duties of the board shall be as follows:

- (1) To serve in an advisory role to council on any matter concerning agriculture in order to ensure that the diverse agricultural interests in the county are supported and developed, that communication and cooperation among the varied agricultural concerns in the county are fostered, and that agriculture's vital role in the economy and character of the county is both maintained and developed;
- (2) To formulate plans and recommend their implementation to council, including, but not limited to, ways to bolster agri-business, agri-tourism, and agriculture in general;
- (3) To make policy recommendations, through the planning commission, to council regarding agricultural land use;
- (4) To coordinate policy development with other jurisdictions and agencies to better promote the agricultural industry; and
- (5) To serve as an educational and public awareness forum for agriculture related topics.

The board shall report directly to council, or other appropriate advisory boards, commissions, and/or committees as appropriate and necessary in order to carry out the foregoing functions.

(Ord. No. 2016-17, § 5, 6-21-2016; Ord. No. 2018-29, § 1(Att. A), 10-2-2018)

#### Sec. 2-420.9. - Salaries and funding.

Members of the board shall not receive any salary or reimbursements related to serving on the board.

(Ord. No. 2016-17, § 6, 6-21-2016; Ord. No. 2018-29, § 1(Att. A), 10-2-2018)



**PETITION FOR REZONING  
PURSUANT TO SECTION 38-8.6 (SUBSEQUENT REZONING)  
OF THE OCONEE COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES**

"I hereby certify that I own the lot, parcel, or tract of land currently designated by TMS # \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ (the "Parcel"). The Parcel is currently zoned in the \_\_\_\_\_ District, and I hereby request that the Parcel be rezoned to the \_\_\_\_\_ District, and that all appropriate Oconee County records, including the Oconee County Official Zoning Map, be amended to reflect this rezoning request.

In support of my request, I state the following:

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(Attach pages if necessary.)

I acknowledge that the Oconee County Council, Oconee County Planning Commission, and Oconee County staff must take into consideration all relevant information in evaluating this petition, that the final decision rests entirely with the Oconee County Council, and that the approval of this petition is not guaranteed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

