

MINUTES

Farmland Protection Program Durham Soil and Water Conservation District

Meeting Number: 1 (Farmland Protection Advisory Board) Date: January 16, 2025

Advisory Board Present:

Nicole Connelly – Chair, Little River VAD
David Heeks – At Large
Talmage Layton – Falls VAD
Kenny Browning – Eno River VAD
Deborah Luecken – DOST Representative
David Harris – SWCD Board Representative
John Cowan – Cape Fear VAD
Matthew Eagle – At large
Samantha Gasson – At Large
Neil Frank – At Large

Others Present:

Lisa Marochak – Soil & Water
Sherry Scully – Soil & Water
Dustin Brewer – Soil & Water
Celeste Burns – Open Space & Real Estate
David Bradley – Open Space & Real Estate
John Lyttle – Cooperative Extension
Raina Bunnag – Cooperative Extension
Helena Cragg
Justin Wooley
Heidi Grable
Donna Stainback

The regular monthly meeting of the Farmland Protection Advisory Board was held on Thursday, January 16, 2025 at Durham Farm Bureau following Farmer Breakfast. This meeting was called to order at 10:19 am by the chair, Nicole Connelly.

1. Nicole Connelly opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. All present introduced themselves.
2. **Approval of December Board Minutes** – Motion made by David Harris to approve the December meeting minutes as submitted. Kenny Browning seconded the motion. Nicole called for vote; motion passed.
3. Planned presentation on new UDO by Durham City/County Planners was cancelled due to new legislation being approved in December of “**Session Law 2024-57 (Senate Bill 382)** and its potential impact on current planning projects, including the development of our new Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).” Discussion held by board and guests to discuss what Senate Bill 382 entails and the impact it may have on the UDO. Subcommittee will meet before the next meeting to prepare thoughts
4. **Easements/Open Space** – Celeste Burns provided report on the extensive work of land acquisitions she and her staff have been involved with throughout Durham County in 2024. Maps and photos were shared with the Board.
5. **Financial Report** – Lisa provided balance of account, the costs that are expected for the VAD materials needed, and requests from teachers (for ag related projects), and the possible need for Community Engagement event snacks. Discussion led to motions on allocating these funds.

David Harris made motion to support Riverside’s request of \$378 for their EC program projects in the greenhouse. Samantha Gasson moved to provide Jordan High School Ag program the cost requested for animal clippers at \$325. These motions were both seconded by David Heeks. Chair, Nicole Connelly called for votes. Motions both passed.

Neil Frank made motion to allocate up to \$300 in additional funding toward VAD sign material costs. Talmage Layton seconded the motion. All in favor; motion passed.

For the Community Engagement event scheduled for February to support the Farmland Protection Plan revision, staff requested funds be earmarked for purchases as needed for this event. David Harris moved to support this request in the amount of \$300. Motion seconded by Samantha Gasson.

6. **Membership Update** – Lisa Marochak reminded Board that there is still a vacant, at-large board appointed position and requested members to please let Nicole, Lisa or Sherry know, if there is anyone who would like more information for this position.
7. **Farmer Breakfast Update** – Sherry Scully reported on this morning’s Farmer Breakfast. Participation number is not confirmed at time but many interested in great speaker, Annette Hiatt’s conversation on farm law.
8. **VAD Update** – Sherry Scully reported that two signs were built by Southern High School last quarter and three are planned with class for this quarter.
9. **FPP/Ordinance and Community Engagement Event Update** – Save the date for Farmland Plan Community Engagement Event on February 20th @ 6pm at Bahama Ruritan Club – this event will be led by contractor, Foothills Regional Commission.
10. **Durham Cooperative Extension Update** – John Lyttle announced a USDA Resource Outreach Meeting for Historically Underserved Farmers, Ranchers and Landowners that will be held at Durham Cooperative Extension or online on January 28 from 11-12:30. Lunch will be provided.

New Business – Nicole Connelly made Board aware that the Roots Farmers’ Market will not reopen this spring due to farmer participation. The funds remaining in the Roots Market account will be distributed to three other markets in Durham: South Durham Farmers’ Market, Black Farmers' Market, North Durham Farmers’ Market.

Adjourn – With no additional business, Chair Connelly adjourned the meeting at 11 pm.

Nicole Connelly
Chairman

Sherry Scully
Soil and Water

March 20, 2025
Date approved