



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING  
3430 Courthouse Drive      Ellicott City, Maryland 21043      410-313-2350  
Voice/Relay

---

Valdis Lazdins, Director

Fax 410-313-3467

**HOWARD COUNTY AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION BOARD  
AND STATE AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD**

**August 27, 2018**

**Attendance:**

Board Members: Jamie Brown  
Abby Gibbon  
Savannah Kaiss  
Ann Jones  
Mickey Day  
Cathy Hudson

Staff: James Zoller, Agricultural Coordinator  
Matt Hoover, Office of Community Sustainability  
Amy Gowan, Planning & Zoning

Guest: Mary Kay Sigaty, County Council

Public: Richard Meyer – Resident  
Eric Bonner – Oak Ridge Farm

Mickey Day called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. and conducted introductions.

**Discussion Item**

**1) Review of proposed legislation for Code changes to Section 15.500**

Amy Gowan and Mary Kay Sigaty went over changes that were made to the code. The updated version was pre-filed on Friday August 27.

Page four line twenty-four was updated to further articulate the Office of Community Sustainability's (OCS) role in administering components of the act not associated with the Land Preservation Program. Anything not related to easement purchase or stewardships of our easements would fall to OCS.

On page five some language was inserted in the purpose statement talking about agricultural endeavors and investments in the easements. The changes were to make it explicit that the work OCS and James Zoller, the Agricultural Coordinator, does with the board, outside of the easement program, would be funded through the transfer tax.

A Definition section change was made, which was a request from the Agricultural Land Preservation Board (ALPB). It was to make sure that these definitions were only for this act. "All the definitions here only pertain to this act."

On page six some additional language was inserted into the definition of the Preservation Program. Agricultural Preservation isn't just about purchasing easements, but also helping to sustain farming on those easements. This was included, so that the transfer tax use was not limited to just one purpose.

On the Preservation Parcel section, they added line nine on page seven to specify that this only pertains to agricultural land preservation easements.

Moving the qualifications over to the section where the Executive appoints and the Council confirms. It requires that those qualifications to be considered by the Executive and the Council, when they do their appointments. They added in language that the ALPB will also use them to make their recommendations as well.

The current requirement for the Farmer seats for the board is that 50% of their annual income must be from active farming. They were going to replace it with wording that you just had to be engaged with agricultural endeavors, but the 50% language had to be put back in, due to the State requirement. They have asked the Office of Law to confirm if the income is just based on the individual on the board and not the household income. They are going to continue the self-certification process. If it is called into question, they would request the income tax return of the board member. The information is not disclosable under the Maryland Public Information Act. The only time it could be disclosed is if a party was to sue the county and could show that the tax returns were relevant to the party's legal claim against the county. The court could then order the County to produce the returns. It was advised that such a legal claim against the county would be rare, but it is a possibility. The original code was written in 1977 and seems out of date. It was stated that the board should make note of it in testimony with the recommendation to go to the state delegation to look at a rewording for the income requirement, so that it would work better for Howard County.

Number five of the member eligibility section states that no member is eligible is to serve more than two consecutive terms. The Office of Law stated that it means anyone on the board that has served two terms can't come back on the board later. It was recommended that the wording to this should be eliminated.

It was asked if a quorum was four members and it was advised that it was. For a recommendation to pass it must be by a majority vote, which is four for the ALPB board. The board needs five of the seven members to make recommendations on purchases and money.

Page 17 15-515 dedicated easements that were dedicated through the cluster sub-division process were not able to do the land exchange. It could only be purchased, donated or dedicated easements through the density exchange program.

They added in a change to Planning and Zoning's authorization regarding their role, which will continue to be about the acquisition stewardship of the easements.

A discussion about testimony came up. The public hearing is on 9/17/18 and it potentially will start at 6:00 p.m., instead of 7:00 p.m. Testimony will be given from the chair, vice chair or whoever is designated by the board. A letter is going to be drafted by Mickey Day for the hearing.

Charter section 403 requires that there is a reorganization plan and that it needs to be approved by the council through a bill, because it is a reorganization of Howard County Government. They have a reorganization plan that will be sent out to the board, which talks a little bit about the fiscal impact. They calculated how much money OCS will need to staff the board. There is a savings of about \$5000.00 to the transfer tax fund, because of the reorganization.

It also talks about reorganizing the Executive Branch of County Government, pursuant to section 403 of the Howard County Charter, to allow OCS to act as the Executive Secretary to ALPB. This is a critical component that they would want the other Council members to know they discussed and that the ALPB is supportive of it.

The work session will be on 9/24/18 at 4:30 p.m. If there is no opposition to this, it could be possible there is no need for a work session. The voting will be on the first Monday in October.

Jamie motioned to vote on the recommended changes to the bill and Ann Jones seconded it. All members in attendance were in favor.

### **Action Items**

#### **1.) Minutes from the meeting of 6/28/18**

No additions or corrections. Mickey Day called for the approval of the 6/28/18 meeting minutes. Jamie motioned to approve and it was seconded by Ann Jones. All members in attendance approved of the minutes.

#### **2.) Minutes from the meeting of 7/23/18**

No additions or corrections. Mickey Day called for the approval of the 7/23/18 meeting minutes. Ann Jones motioned to approve and Jamie seconded the motion. All members in attendance approved the minutes.

### **Discussion Items (Continued)**

#### **3.) Program Updates – James Zoller advised there are no program updates, but he advised some solar things are coming.**

### **Announcements**

- 1.) A large easement is going to be a donated. The easement is 63 acres and located on 144 in Cooksville.
- 2.) The Farm to Table dinner is on 10/2/2018 and it starts at 6:00 p.m.

#### **Discussion Items (Continued)**

- 4.) James Zoller gave a rundown of existing Howard County programs. He is bringing this up, so the board can review the programs and give input or suggest new programs. His goal is to figure out how can we improve what we have, what are we doing that isn't working and what else can we do?

Howard County Harvest Magazine – Increased volume of magazines printed this year. It has ads and articles on farms. They were distributed at the County Fair and can be picked up at County Offices.

Farmer's Markets – Howard County Economic Development Authority (EDA) helps marketing. They are run by separate boards that are private entities.

The Howard County Fair – Showcases a lot of farms and they also run the Farm Academy during the event.

Annie's Project – It is run through the EDA and it is used to promote women in farming.

Farm Academy – Is a joint effort between OCS, EDA, and Soil Conservation. They started out as tours on the farms but were not getting a lot of exposure, so they decided to move it to the Howard County Fair. This year they handed out passports to kids, which had questions on them and they had to go through the barns to find out the answers. They received over 500 passports back.

Farm Innovation Grants – They were just given out and James will provide a list of who they were given to. EDA takes the applications and then they are brought to DPZ to rate. EDA also has small education grants.

Roving Radish – Is averaging about 300 kits a week. It is a hard to get produce and proteins from local farms this year. The Roving Radish is actively looking into on how they can positively impact protein farmers. They have subsidized kits for people in need too. A common misunderstanding is if someone buys an unsubsidized kit they are taking it away from a subsidized family, which is not true. People that purchase unsubsidized kits helps the program generate a small profit, so it can be rolled back into the program to help make is self-sustaining.

We are HoCo Fresh – Is a brand-new program out of OCS and at the end of this month they will have the first batch of restaurants who will qualify for it. It is to promote restaurants to purchase produce and proteins from Howard County farmers. Restaurants save their receipts and submit them to HoCo Fresh. There are three different tiers, which are bronze, silver and gold. The restaurant gets a sticker for their door, a plaque to hang in the restaurant and is advertised on the HoCo Fresh website.

A question was brought up by James Zoller to ask how can we as a County promote protein purchasing within the county. Could they pull together to sell on a broader market and is there any interest in that?

Another question asked was could the Roving Radish continue to sell meat? James states they could, but they balance a fine line, because they don't want to affect the farmer markets.

[www.hocofarms.com](http://www.hocofarms.com) – Which is a website dedicated to Howard County Farms. Farms can list and advertise on the website. People can also visit the site to see what farms are currently selling.

The Roving Radish has attempted to help farmers with restaurant distribution. They have a website where local farmers can list their products on it for the restaurants to purchase. The Roving Radish will then deliver the goods on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Roving Radish collects a nominal fee for the delivery and collection of payment for the farmers.

James is also involved with the Agricultural Sub Cabinet that meets once a month and he will give updates on what they are discussing. A current item they are discussing is how the County should handle complaints.

Mickey asked if anyone had any other items to discuss. Jamie motioned to adjourn, Ann Jones seconded the motion and all the board members in attendance approved. The meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

  
Matthew Hoover, Administrative Aide  
Office of Community Sustainability