



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY
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**HOWARD COUNTY AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION BOARD (APB)
AND STATE AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD (APAB)**

October 25, 2021

Attendance:

Board Members: Mickey Day (Chair)
Cathy Hudson
Ann Jones (Vice Chair)
Abby Gibbon
Savannah Kaiss

Staff: James Zoller, Executive Secretary/Agricultural Coordinator (OCS)
Joy Levy, Program Administrator, (ALPP)
Morenike Oyenusi, Senior Assistant County Solicitor
Beth Burgess, Chief, Resource Conservation Division
Matthew Hoover, Administrative Aide, (OCS)
Mary Kendall, Deputy Director, (DPZ)
Lauren McDonald, Planner One, Resource Conservation Division

Guest: David Plummer – Howard Soil Conservation District
Kevin Baker – Council Member Liz Walsh’s Office

Action Items

1. Minutes from the meeting of August 23, 2021

No additions or corrections. Ms. Jones motioned to approve, and Ms. Kaiss seconded the motion. All board members in attendance approved the minutes.

Discussion Items

1. Howard County Soil Conservation District Presentation ([Site](#))

Mr. Plummer provided background information and answered some questions the Board had about the Howard County Soil Conservation District. The Soil Conservation District provides guidance on the planning, design, and construction for a variety of best management practices (BMP) which focus on protecting and improving water quality. Their focus is on sediment erosion control review on the urban side and helping farmers put BMPs on the agricultural side. They also do some outreach and education. The Soil Conservation District consist of partners from the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, Howard County and the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) who all work collectively to assist land owners.

The board had questions about what percentage of work they do is for agriculture, how they are funded, and how they come up with the scoring for questions two and three of the Howard County Agricultural Preservation Program 2020 Price Formula worksheet.

Based on their staffing, about 72% of the work they do is for the agricultural sector. Their total FY22 funding is about 1.3 million. \$1,148,300 of the funding comes from the general fund and \$787,000 of that is reimbursed from Agricultural Preservation Fund. Another \$150,000 was received from MDA.

He reviewed the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment system ([LESA](#)) with the Board to help explain how they come up with the scoring for the Howard County Agricultural Preservation Program 2020 Price Formula worksheet.

He also reviewed some of the cost share funding through their programs. Farmers were approved for little over half a million in funding.

2. Review and Discuss “Agriculture in the East” Staff Reports ([West - East Staff Report](#)) ([Addendum to Agriculture in the East Staff Report](#))

This is the continuation of a discussion they had from a previous meeting. They are having the discussion to try to figure out if they should have some type of agricultural program or incentive set up in the east. Mr. Zoller reviewed the report with the APB.

The Board is trying to figure out what issue they are trying to solve. Are they trying to preserve farm land or open space? A suggestion was made that if they tried to do agricultural preservation in the east, they should trade points in the 2020 Price Formula Worksheet to make it more relevant to the east. A few members of the Board brought up the idea of providing a tax incentive for farming in the east. A suggestion was made of building the park and the agricultural easement together. Neighbor Space in Baltimore County was used as an example of this.

3. Continue Discussion of future use of Howard County Agricultural Land Preservation Funds ([suggestions](#))

It was advised there are some guidelines of what can be funded through the Agricultural Land Preservation Fund. If they want to expand the scope of the funding use, there would have to be a change in the law. It is unclear of what a scope change would be, so they are going to get the definition from the Howard County Budget Department.

The [suggestions](#) that were sent to Mr. Zoller were reviewed with the Board. Some additional suggestions were having a cost share program for smaller farms, increased funding for the Agricultural Innovation Grant program and having a low interest rate loan program for new farmers based off a program that already exist, like the [MARBIDCO](#) program.

4. Program Updates

No Program Updates

Public Testimony

No public testimony.

Meeting Adjourned

Ms. Jones moved for adjournment and all board members approved. The meeting adjourned at 9:37 PM.