



Buncombe County Agricultural Advisory Board

Meeting Agenda for May 16, at 11:00 am
49 Mount Carmel Rd, Asheville, NC 28806

Call to order	Steve Duckett, Chair
Approval of May 16, 2023, meeting agenda	Board
Approval of April 18, 2023, meeting minutes	Board
Board Member Reports	Board
Applications for VAD and EVAD	Avni Naik, BCSWCD
Farmland Preservation Report	Ariel Zipp, BCSWCD
Announcements and Discussion	Board

Meeting Minutes
Buncombe County Agricultural Advisory Board - Buncombe Soil & Water Conservation District
60 Lakeshore Dr., Weaverville, NC 28787
April 18, 2023, at 9:30 am

Ag Advisory Board Members Present: Chair Steve Duckett, Vice-Chair Bruce Snelson, Wayne Welch, Anne Grier, David Lee, Terri Wells.

Others Present: Ariel Zijp, Avni Naik, Jennifer Harrison (BCSWCD Staff), Angelica Tyler, Jill Carter and Sybil Tate (BC Staff).

Meeting was called to order at 9:51am by Chair Steve Duckett.

Approval of the April 18, 2023, Meeting Agenda

- **David Lee made a motion to approve the April 18, 2023, meeting agenda, seconded by Bruce Snelson, and the motion passed on the vote.**

Approval of the March 21, 2023, Meeting Minutes

- **David Lee made a motion to approve the March 21, 2023, meeting minutes, seconded by Wayne Welch, and the motion passed on the vote.**

Bond Criteria Discussion

Staff presented the Board with some feedback that the BOC had on the Ag Advisory Board (AgAB) conservation easement criteria for the Open Space Bond. The BOC questioned the “development pressure” section of the AgAB criteria as they wanted to ensure that criteria didn’t conflict with the affordable housing bond criteria. Staff explained that section of the criteria represents a small portion of the project selection and had been included initially because some grant agencies asked that question in the grant application. However, the question was removed from the bond project selection criteria.

The BOC also asked Staff to consider adding points to a project if additional funding had been leveraged. Staff mentioned that they added a question regarding leveraged funding to the AgAB criteria in lieu of the development pressure but wanted to point out that most farmers can’t donate high percentages of their land value as it is generally their largest asset, so there may be equity issues surrounding preferencing parcels with high donation percentages. Mr. Duckett stated that his suggestion would be to weight that question lower and add weight to the soils section so that leveraged funding is considered but would not put a working farm with good soils at a disadvantage if the farmer was unable to donate a higher value. The Board agreed.

Lastly, the Board discussed and clarified wording in the easement flowchart of what “Up to 50% of easement value” meant. An agreement to clarify that statement in the flowchart was made so that it would read: “The Bond can fund up to 50% of the easement value after other funding sources have been explored/exhausted.” The Board also discussed requiring landowners to donate 25-50% of the easement value in a bond-funded project to ensure fair and consistent compensation to landowners as has been done in the past.

- **Bruce Snelson made a motion to approve the amended ranking criteria, seconded by David Lee, and the motion passed on the vote.**

Board Member Reports: Ms. Wells thanked Staff for putting together the Friends of Ag Breakfast event.

VAD and EVAD Applications (Ms. Naik): Three VAD renewal applications.

Applicant	Township	Acres	Program	Determination	Appl. Date	Phone Number	Appl. No.
Davis, Ronnie Jason	Leicester	47.27	VAD	Eligible (renewal) - Waiting Approval	3/21/2023	828-699-0855	658-Davis
Iris Lanning Curry Rev Tst	Fletcher	70.5	VAD	Eligible (renewal) - Waiting Approval	4/2/2023	828-778-4472	659-Curry
Clyde Denny	Weaverville	27.21	VAD	Eligible - Waiting Approval	3/22/2023	910-512-5785	660-Denny
			144.98				
		VAD Totals		EVAD Totals		VAD/EVAD Combined Totals	
Totals as of March 2023	Number of Farms	308	Number of Farms	20	328		
	Total Acreage	21852.28	Total Acreage	2204.08	24056.36		
New totals for April 2023 (if proposed applications are approved)	Number of Farms	311	Number of Farms	20	331		
	Total Acreage	21997.26	Total Acreage	2204.08	24201.34		

- **David Lee made a motion to approve the VAD renewals, seconded by Wayne Welch, and the motion passed on the vote.**

Farmland Preservation Report

- Conservation Family Dinner – May 11th at Elida Home Event Center
- Grant & Bond Funding Plan for 2023 – contacting landowners to determine interest
- Open Space Bond –
 - Passive Recreation Lands criteria/evaluation process
 - Land Conservation – Public Input session & website & Info video
 - Land Conservation Criteria & Evaluation – March 21st BOC meeting
- Working with LCAB to commit all of FY23 funding to projects by June
- BOC requested edits to Bond Easement Criteria/evaluation system –
 - Made edits and have revised system to discuss today
 - Present edits to Bond system at Environmental Subcommittee
 - Present revised system to BOC on May 2nd meeting
- 2 donation easements coming to BOC May 2nd
 - Ami Worthen & Jason Krekel – 23 acres in Weaverville/Barnardsville
 - Scott and Susan Soden – 48 acres in Fairview
- Easement Project Updates
 - Larson Easement – survey in progress
 - Wesley Easement – survey & forest management plan in progress
 - SAHC Garrett – postponed because of SAHC approval process - survey in summer
 - SAHC Teague Property Easement – closing postponed due to boundary dispute
 - Sluder Easement–NCDAR reviewing survey and Deed
 - Ramsey Easement – Survey approved, deed in review, baseline & EA in the works

- Jasperwood Farm – All phases – survey in review with NCDA
- Splendor Valley LLC Easement –waiting for subordination agreement approval by lender
- Clark Easement –Banks reviewing subordination agreement
- Berner Easement – all approved – closing March 24th

During a previous discussion with the AgAB, Staff had discussed defining the AgAB's relationship with the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board as the District Board is the easements holder. After speaking with the County Attorney, one of the options suggested was to take the easement projects to the SWCD board for approval and then taking it to the Ag Advisory Board – just so that the SWCD is familiar with the easement project that they will hold if it is approved. The AgAB suggested creating a MOU between the two boards that would be renewed annually instead of needing the SWCD Board to approve each project as the AgAB was tasked with the approval process. Staff stated they would take the suggestion to the County Attorney.

With no other announcements, the meeting was adjourned at 11:02 am.



Buncombe County Ag Advisory Board Meeting

Farmland Preservation Program Report

May 16, 2023

Ariel Zijp & Avni Naik

- Conservation Family Dinner – May 11th at Elida Home Event Center
- Working with LCAB to commit all of FY23 funding to projects by June
- Suzy Rankin AAB application coming to BOC meeting May 16th meeting for appointment
- All FY23 funding will be committed by June 6th BOC meeting
- Open Space Bond – May 2nd – Land Conservation Criteria APPROVED!
- Ranking Bond projects & preparing plan for Grant season
- Easement Project Updates
 - Larson Easement – survey in review
 - Wesley Easement – survey & forest management plan in review
 - Sluder Easement– finishing baseline, Deedwork and Appraisal
 - Ramsey Easement –finishing baseline & resolving Phase II EA findings & appraisal in review
 - Jasperwood Farm – all phases – Starting Deedwork and Appraisal, contracting for EA
 - Splendor Valley LLC Easement –ready to close – but subordination agreement still in review
 - Clark Easement – postponed - banks reviewing subordination agreements
 - Worthen & Krekel – Budget approved now scheduling Letter of Intent Signing
 - Scott and Susan Soden – Budget approved now scheduling Letter of Intent Signing
 - Scott Fisher – Waiting to hear back from NCDA grant on funding
 - Rogers Family Farm – Waiting to hear back from NCDA grant on funding
 - David Rogers– Waiting to hear back from NCDA grant on funding
 - Russ Roberson– Waiting to hear back from USDA grant on funding