

MINUTES OF THE ST. MARY'S COUNTY RURAL PRESERVATION DISTRICT TASK FORCE
PATUXENT BUILDING * LEONARDTOWN, MARYLAND
Monday, January 4, 2010

Members present were Merl Evans, Joe Wood, John Parlett, and Phil Dorsey. Others present were Donna Sasscer, Bob Schaller, Derick Berlage, Phil Shire, and Jada Stuckert.

The meeting was called to order at 9:32 a.m.

Minutes: Minutes of November 2, 2009 were approved as presented.

Discussion: Mr. Evans stated although there was no quorum at the December meeting a short discussion was held in regards to possibly providing information in the form of a recommendation to the County Commissioners for farm lands. Mr. Evans asked the Task Force for suggestions.

Mr. Parlett stated State and Federal Regulations will affect St. Mary's County farmlands and he is unsure how to make the transition from the buy-out into viable money making farmlands. Mr. Parlett stated he feels we can protect our farmlands through the zoning regulations by increasing buffers etc.

Mr. Schaller stated his point at the December meeting was that the Task Force needs to draft a text amendment to foster help for farmlands and get it on the table now. Mr. Schaller stated we need to figure out what to do to help the farmers and asked if there is a way to corral AG groups to discuss the issues further.

Mr. Parlett recommended creating a simplified PUD Process for AG projects. Mr. Parlett stated the process could include lower fees and a simplified structure. Mr. Parlett stated this would allow farmers to come up with their own ideas for their property and simply apply for their ideas through a PUD process. Ms. Sasscer stated farmers have trouble getting through the TEC process, specifically dealing with stormwater management issues. Mr. Shire stated in most cases there is no way around the stormwater management regulations as they are set by the State. Ms. Sasscer stated it is simply too expensive to meet some of the regulations for stormwater management, entrances, parking etc.

Mr. Wood stated it may be wise of the Task Force to categorize their priorities such as 1) Farmland Preservation, 2) Farm Economics, 3) Allowed Uses, 4) Density in the RPD etc. Mr. Dorsey stated this is a good idea. Mr. Evans recommended each member come to the next meeting with their list of priorities.

Mr. Evans asked why the County Commissioners chose 25 acres over the 15 acre lots for the Priority Preservation Area (PPA). Mr. Berlage stated Commissioner Raley's feeling is that at this point the PPA has no real meaning and the State may implement restrictions on what can be done in a PPA in the future.

Ms. Sasscer stated a joint meeting should be held between the AG Advisory Board and the Task Force on January 21, 2010 at 12:30 p.m. to discuss the list of priorities. Mr. Berlage recommended an Agricultural Document be constructed to highlight what we want the Agricultural Area to look like in 20 years.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held on Monday, February 1, 2010 beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 11:24 p.m.