

**AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD
FOR FARMLAND PRESERVATION MEETING
Friday, January 19, 2007
8:00 a.m.**

The Agricultural Advisory Board held a public meeting Friday, January 19, 2007 in the Board of Commissioners meeting room. The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Chairman Harvey Roberts. The following members were present: Wade Morgan, Harvey Roberts, Martin Jarvis, Sidney Garrett, and Jerry Wright. Mike Doxey, Kim Ferrell (Soil & Water Conservation); Kate McKenzie (County Attorney) and Sarah Keifer, (Planning Director) were also present.

The minutes from the last board meeting (February, 2006) were read and approved as submitted. Mr. Roberts added that the Board of Commissioners retreat has been rescheduled for next week (Jan. 22 & 23). Information was received showing the Federal Farmland Preservation Program will be accepting proposals starting February 1st with a deadline of May 1st (90 days/approximately). More information will be forthcoming.

Mr. Roberts commented that since the last meeting there still is some interest in participating within the program, but additional funds from agencies such as Clean Water Management Trust Fund may be needed to secure waterfront lots such as the Tice family farm. Mr. Tice is in the process of meeting with an estate and financial planner to decide what to do with the farm. The average price paid per acre within the state is about \$3,500 per acre, with \$7,000 – \$9,000 being the highest price paid per acre. There are tax credits/tax deferrals that were just passed to allow for tax deferral for 10-15 years, this may help generate interest.

Mr. Wright stated when counties secure multiple funding sources, applications rank a lot higher. We need to designate areas within the county that will be farmed 20-30 years from now. Open space must be compatible for farm use/forest use.

Mr. Doxey added to participate in the federal program, easements must be permanent.

Ms. Keifer gave some background information on Delaware's Farmland Preservation Program. It is state run, USDA organizes it and they apply for federal matches. It starts out as a 10 year program; landowners get paid yearly for 10 years and qualify for tax credits. At the end of the 10 years, they can opt out of the contract or apply for permanent easement status. All applications go through a ranking process. At the end of 25 years, landowners have the option of buying back the land at full market value. Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) is another option that works well in certain areas. Areas are designated through land use plan and zoning. Developers pay farmers/landowners for TDR's from one area to another.

Mr. Wright added that Forsyth County was one county that had used TDR's.

Ms. McKenzie added that this board needs to recommend to the BOC what areas they want to see preserved.

Mr. Roberts questioned the funding source for Delaware. How much are landowners paid per acre/per year??

Ms. Keifer stated she will find out and pass information onto the board. Some funding is through the state, the county gets their funding from the general fund.

Mr. Morgan added the program needs to fund itself through TDR's paid by the developer; the 10 year period is a good way to start and it buys some time to decide what to do.

Mr. Jarvis made a motion stating the agricultural advisory board supports the 10 year plan and transfer of development rights (TDR). Mr. Wright seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Wright added that open space subdivisions should be allowed to be used for farming purposes independently of the subdivision, such as growing fruits, vegetables and grapes.

Ms. McKenzie stated the TDR's are not allowed in NC at this time; BOC would have to ask the legislature to allow it. Forsyth County probably got special legislation. Ms. McKenzie added that former applicants need to be contacted to see if they are still interested, since there is a deadline approaching for submittals to the federal program.

Mr. Doxey added the Board may want to write a letter to the BOC requesting additional funding for this fiscal year.

Mr. Jarvis made a motion to have another meeting within the next 2-3 weeks to discuss this information further, motion was seconded by Harvey Roberts.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

W. Harvey Roberts

Harvey Roberts, Chairman

Kim D. Ferrell

Kim D. Ferrell, Recording Secretary

**This was a paid meeting.

