

February 24, 2005

PRESENT: Dr. Charles W. Curry, Chairman
Charles C. Schooley, Vice Chairman
Larry C. Howdyshell
Bruce M. Bowman
Kitra A. Shiflett
Clay Hewitt
Mark Grove
William Bashaw
Garland Martin
Larry Shiflett
Dale L. Cobb
Beatrice B. Cardellicchio

OTHERS PRESENT: F. James Bailey, Jr.
Wendell L. Coleman
Kay D. Frye
Tracy C. Pyles, Jr.
Nancy Taylor Sorrells
Patrick J. Coffield

ABSENT: Betty Jo Hamilton

VIRGINIA: Meeting of the Agricultural Task Force Committee held on Thursday, February 24, 2005, at 7:00 P.M., in the County Government Center, Verona, Virginia.

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Mr. Bailey introduced all of the members of the Board of Supervisors that were present as well as staff. He stated that this committee will be very important to Augusta County and to the future of agriculture. He stated that the Task Force will provide input to the County on sustaining agriculture, evaluate what is being done, review ordinances and policies, and make their recommendation to the Board of Supervisors within nine (9) months.

Ms. Frye stated that she appreciates the committee members doing this. She stated that it is important and appreciates your dedication. She stated that the Board of Supervisors will sell the Task Force ideas to the public.

Ms. Sorrells stated that she is grateful for this group which will help the agriculture business in the future. She stated that Augusta County is #2 in the state for an agriculture economy. She stated that she does not want to see that disappear. She stated that nine (9) months is not much time but there are a lot of tools that you can utilize. She stated that she thinks great things will come out of this committee.

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Mr. Pyles stated that the Board's job was to select good people and then to get out of the way and let this committee get the job done.

Mr. Howdyshell stated that he is glad to be here and serve on this committee. He stated that we are here to reeducate the public on agriculture.

Mr. Coleman stated that he appreciates everyone being here tonight. He stated that farming is not his background but he is very open-minded.

Mr. Bailey stated that the committee will need to elect officers to provide guidance to the committee. Do we have any nominations?

Mr. Howdyshell stated that he would like to nominate Dr. Curry as Chairman of the Agriculture Task Force.

Mr. Bowman seconded the motion, which was carried by a unanimous vote.

Chairman Curry stated that he commends the Board of Supervisors to take the initiative to start this Task Force. He stated that a nine (9) month time frame is a tight schedule. He stated that this group will work very hard at looking at their neighbors in Rockingham County as part of a reference for this task. He stated that we look for opportunities for public contact and input from the citizens. He asked if the committee has a nomination for Vice Chairman?

Mr. Hewitt nominated Mr. Schooley as Vice Chairman.

Mr. Shiflett seconded the nomination, which was carried by a unanimous vote.

Chairman Curry stated that the first order of business is to determine how often the Task Force meets?

Mr. Bowman stated two (2) times a month or more if necessary.

Chairman Curry stated that this committee has plenty of things to do.

Mr. Cobb stated that Rockingham County spent nine (9) months coming up with this report. He stated that the committee might want William Vaughn to come in and go through the document.

Chairman Curry asked if the first and third Thursdays of every month was alright with the committee members?

Ms. Shiflett moved to approve that the committee meet on the first and third Thursday of every month.

Mr. Bowman seconded the motion, which was carried by a unanimous vote.

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Chairman Curry stated that he will read the goal of the committee which is to identify major challenges facing agriculture in Augusta County and recommend ways to assure the future of a strong agricultural economy over the next several decades.

Mr. Shiflett stated that we need to work towards preserving agriculture in Augusta County. Mr. Hewitt stated that we need to have intensive agriculture facilities in order for the farmers to survive.

Vice Chairman Schooley stated that he agrees with that. He stated that poultry houses are true agriculture.

Mr. Bowman stated that Augusta County needs to preserve agriculture and promote it as well.

Chairman Curry asked if the committee could reword the goal of the Task Force?

Ms. Frye stated that the Board is flexible with what the committee members would like to do.

Chairman Curry asked if the committee had a motion to reword the goal of the Task Force?

Mr. Bowman moved that the goal of the Task Force be changed to identify major challenges facing agriculture in Augusta County and recommend ways to assure the future of preserving and promoting a strong agricultural economy over the next several decades.

Mr. Hewitt seconded the motion, which was carried by a unanimous vote.

Mr. Bashaw stated that at the next meeting there should be a brainstorming session. He stated that the committee members should write down their ideas on paper for the next meeting.

Chairman Curry stated that this is a good group of people. He asked that each committee member comment on some ideas about this committee.

Mr. Bowman stated that this committee could look at other Countys for ideas because there are a lot of resources out there.

Mr. Howdyshell stated that this committee could look at how development is putting pressure on agriculture. He stated that people should realize that they are moving into a farming community when they come here.

Ms. Shiflett stated that she is a Planning Commission member and a farmer as well. She stated that we should educate the people as to what farming is all about.

Mr. Shiflett stated that this committee needs to look at the future of agriculture and how the County can help the farmers make money.

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Mr. Hewitt stated that we need to preserve agriculture. He stated that just because there is green space does not necessarily mean that it is agriculture.

Vice Chairman Schooley stated that nine (9) months is a short time. He stated that saving agriculture is very important. He stated that he does not want to see Augusta County turn into northern Virginia.

Mr. Grove stated that in order for the farms to remain profitable change has to happen. He stated that this committee wants to keep agriculture strong so that it does not fade away.

Mr. Bashaw stated that the County should help farmers so that they remain in business. He stated that Augusta County should have a slaughterhouse instead of sending cattle out elsewhere.

Mr. Martin stated he is right in the middle of all of the industry. He stated that this committee needs to determine how do we mix industry with farming.

Chairman Curry stated that there needs to be a balance between industry and business and agriculture and residential. He stated that Augusta County is growing rapidly with residential development. He stated that preserving the agriculture is a positive thing. He stated that the public has to look at farming in a positive prospective.

Mr. Cobb stated that he deals with educating the people on farming every week. He stated that the general public needs to be educated. He stated that staff is here to line up programs and to help the committee out in any way they can.

Chairman Curry asked Mr. Cobb when Rockingham County might be willing to come in to go over their plan?

Mr. Cobb stated that he could possibly line that meeting up on the 17th.

Chairman Curry stated that at the next session the committee will brainstorm some ideas on agriculture and what the committee needs to work on. He stated that maybe staff could arrange to have a facilitator at the next meeting.

Mr. Coffield recommended Darryl Crawford from the Planning District Commission.

Chairman Curry stated that staff should have someone from Rockingham County in for the March 17th meeting. He also stated that on the April 7th meeting we might want to review the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances with staff.

Mr. Coffield stated that the committee could use the media to educate the citizens. He stated that if the media is not here to write articles the committee could use Ms. Frye, Ms. Hamilton, or Ms. Sorrells to compile something for the public to read.

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Chairman Curry stated that this committee should educate citizens on agriculture and be proactive in sharing information.

Mr. Cobb stated that the Board of Supervisors approved a compensation to show their gratitude for being on this committee.

Chairman Curry stated that he thought this was a good start to the committee. He stated that the next meeting will be March 3rd.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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Chairman