

MONTGOMERY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
May 13, 2022

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Supervisors, Montgomery Soil Conservation District (MSCD) was held in-person at 18410 Muncaster Road, Derwood, MD and remotely on the GoToMeeting virtual platform on Friday, May 13, 2022.

People Present:

Robert Butz, Chair
Robert Butts, Vice Chair
Tim McGrath, Treasurer
Linda Lewis, Supervisor
Doug Tregoning, Supervisor
Tom Linthicum, Associate Supervisor
Joe Lehman, Associate Supervisor
Chris Miller, Associate Supervisor
Jeremy Criss, Director OAG
Mike Scheffel, OAG
Adam Lyons, MDA
Sam Engler, District Conservationist (NRCS)
John Zawitoski, District Manager (MSCD)
Ibraheem Jastaniah, MDA
Karen Walker, Office Service Coordinator (MSCD)

The District Chairman, Robert Butz welcomed everyone back to in-person meeting and officially called the meeting to order and invited Jeremy to present his report.

Agency Reports:

OFFICE OF AGRICULTURE: Jeremy Criss provided the report for the OAG and reported on the following items:

- Regarding **Bill 40-21- Individual Water Supply and Sewage Disposal Systems – Amendments**, Jeremy reported that he didn't have any new information to report. He recapped that all Agricultural Groups opposed the Bill 40-21 during the November 30, 2021, Public Hearing. The Transportation and Environment- T&E Committee work session is still pending. The Council is working on the CIP and Operating Budgets through early May.
- Jeremy then provided an update on **ZTA 21-07 Height and Density Allocations for MPDUs-Affordable Housing**-The OAG staff and MNCPPC have been working together to review and update the status on the use of both TDRs and BLTs. The OAG is encouraged by the MNCPPC responses regarding their preliminary findings. Jeremy indicated that the group is getting closer to confirming the number of remaining TDRs in both the Sending Area=Agricultural Reserve Zone and the TDR Receiving Areas = Overlay Zones. We learned that a report issued in 2012 from MNCPPC to County Council staff was never released to the public. This report will help to demonstrate how use of TDRs are being deemphasized including a recent finding the no new TDR Receiving Areas have been approved over the past 10 years.
- Jeremy's next item focused on the **Final Reading of Bill 16-21-Environmental Sustainability-Building Energy Use Benchmarking and Performance Standards-April 19, 2022.** He was sad to

report that after three T&E Committee work sessions on Bill 16-21, the County Council did not recommend agricultural buildings be exempt from this Bill 16-21. The T&E Committee stated that they would like all buildings 25,000 square feet and larger including churches to be covered by this Bill 16-21. There was some discussion about how this bill would apply to existing structures and how the County would go about in enforcing the requirements for all buildings under this legislation. In short how the County will review existing building and what would be required has not been determined yet. Jeremy had hoped the County would follow the lead of the State of Washington whereby all existing and new ag buildings are exempted.

- The next item concerned an Update to the **Rustic Roads Master Plan Update-** The OAG is continuing to refine the power point presentation they developed entitled “**The Rustic Roads Through the Eyes of the Farmer**” that will feature pictures of Rustic Roads along with testimonials from farmers regarding their views of the Rustic Roads program and MCDOT maintenance and improvements. There are about 10 farmers that have responded so far. The APAB has prepared a very informative letter outlining the concerns the Board has with the Rustic Roads. The OAG remitted comments to the MNCPPC staff on the April 21, 2022, Planning Board Briefing document that contains recommends minimizing drainage ditches along the Rustic Roads and it provides recommendations and guidelines for foliage and tree maintenance along Rustic Roads. Jeremy informed the Board that MNCPPC was reluctant to attend the Board meeting today. John followed up by saying that he had reached out to MNCPPC, and they indicated they would try to attend the June 10th Board meeting.

Doug remarked the MNCPPC has started a public information outreach campaign in a video that gives a distorted view of the Rustic Roads program and that the video thanks everyone including bikers and noted farmers were not mentioned at all. There was some healthy discussion about the need to make sure all farming interests are served with proper representation on the Rustic Roads Advisory Committee. There was also some discussion with engagement with the insurance industry. The bottom line with Rustic Roads is that they must be safe for the farmers and County residents that use these roads every day. Tim asked if signage to inform drivers to yield for Ag Equipment could help address the safety issue. The Chair remarked it would be a challenge to implement and lead to a lengthy discussion that most people either don't read signs or give them much thought. Incorporated into the minutes below are two links associated with the Rustic Roads Master Planning Process.

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/RusticRoadsFunctionalMasterPlan1996ocr300.pdf>

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/transportation/highway-planning/rustic-roads/rustic-roads-master-plans/>

Lastly, Jeremy reported on the **April 25, 2022, the County Council PHED Committee meeting that recommended approval of the County Executive FY 23 Operating Budget for the OAG- Contained within the recommended budget were both the** proposed a new Business Development Specialist – The BDS position will reinstate the BDS position that Kristin Fisher once held and prior to 2010 and the MSCD proposed a new Engineering Position-Technical assistance on small ponds etc. Jeremy also reported on various County and State Staff updates:

Alga Piechocinski-UM Extension-4H retired April 30, 2022-Retirement Celebration was held at the MC Fairgrounds on May 5th. After 45 days, Alga can be hired back under a contract to help assist with 4-H for this year's agricultural fair.

Linda Walters: UM Extension-Master Gardeners will be retiring in July 2022

Rick Walter: UM-Extension Director will be retiring October 2022

Tim inquired about the receptionist on the front desk and Doug and Jeremy shared details on the matter.

Upcoming Meetings and Events: Montgomery Soil Conservation District-May 13, 2022; Agricultural Advisory Committee-May 17, 2022; Farm Tour of the Ag Reserve with MoCo Food Council-May 20, 2022; MCFB Picnic-Sunny Ridge Farm-June 5, 2022; Montgomery County Farm Bureau Board of Directors- June 7, 2022; Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board-June 14, 2022; Farm Tour-July 23 & 24, 2022

MDA – Adam Lyon, the MDA Patuxent Area Coordinator provided his report for MDA. Adam informed the Board that on May 17th, the State will be holding a Statewide Regional Meeting at Sandy Point State Park. Adam indicated that for the most part the meeting would consist of informal meetings and information updates. The goal is to provide updates and have discussions on successes, failures, challenges, and strategy to address the WIP. Adam noted that MDA is continuing to work on recruitment and when the Operations Manager, Byron Petrauskas returns from the avian influenza detail, the next round of recruitment will ramp up. Adam mentioned updates are being drafted for all State employee’s MS22 position descriptions that will be ready for performance evaluations that will include the WIP goals that have been identified for each employee. Additionally, the framework for planners and technicians for performance evaluations will be presented at the Statewide event. Adam explained that it’s a workbook/spreadsheet that reports what they have worked on and assigns a value for work completed. After Adam presented his report, John asked about the status of the budget request package for the general fund and the Chesapeake Bay Trust. Adam responded that he does not have a specific date, but it should be out in a couple of weeks. Adam shared that Byron has been working with Pat Gitlin on the matter. John asked about budget fund carry-overs and Adam responded that carry-overs will be allowed and to let him know if there are any equipment needs. Jeremy mentioned to John to share with Adam that the engineering position that is cost share with Montgomery and MDA has been approved. Adam responded that is fantastic news. John mentioned that we need to work with Byron and have the State cost share assistance for this position identified in our new agreement.

SECRETARY/ TREASURER’S REPORT

Approval of the minutes was next on the agenda and the Chairman shared that all the Supervisors received a copy of the minutes. A motion was made by Doug Tregoning and second by Linda Lewis and passed approving the April 8, 2022, Board of Supervisors Minutes.

Following the approval of the minutes, the Chairman invited Karen to address the financial report. Before addressing the financial report, Karen welcomed everyone and noted that this is the first meeting being held in-person and virtually and we may need to still work out any video or audio issues. She greeted Tom and noted presenters/speakers must be close to the computer/mic so virtual attendees can hear. Tom thanked Karen and noted that he could hardly hear Jeremy’s report.

Karen then shared Supervisors have received their per diem pay-out payment and she mentioned to Tom that his payment will be dropped in the mail. She indicated that the checkbook and bank statement have been reconciled and as always, she is happy to report that they match. She noted that we are nearing the fiscal year-end which is June 30th and in the past the goal was to expense out all the MDA funding so there would be no carry-over. Normally at this time, we are working on the MDA FY23 Proposed Budget, but we have not received the budget submission packets. We have an opportunity to use some of the remaining MDA FY22 funding by paying for the Supervisors attendance to the MASCD Summer Meeting. A question was raised concerning the MASCD request for sponsorships for the summer meeting. Karen asked John to share details he received from Jen Nelson, Executive Director of MASCD. John explained that Jen reported that there are basically unfunded costs associated with the dual meetings of both MASCD and NACD. He summarized these expenses as being an increase in time for MASCD staff, AV Support, Bus Tours and travel expense for guest

speakers. Karen mentioned there is funding available to support a sponsorship of the event. Chairman Butz thought for the benefit of our newest Supervisors to explain to the Board how the District is funded. John and Jeremy together summarized the contributions of our funding partners on an annual basis.

After the funding sources and an explanation of carry-overs were addressed, the Chairman noted the cash statement balance, and the real question is how much the District would be willing to sponsor for the upcoming MASCD/NACD summer meeting. John suggested a range of \$250 - \$1000, and the chair inquired if a \$500 sponsorship would be appropriate. Following the continued discussions on the MASCD sponsorship, a motion was made by Tim McGrath and seconded by Doug Tregoning to file the financial report and to provide a \$500 sponsorship donation to MASCD. After the motion was made to file the report and to provide MASCD sponsorship, John shared information for the summer meeting, and explained this summer's meeting would be much different than our typical summer meeting. Karen indicated that following the meeting, that she would follow up with making arrangements for Supervisors that were planning to attend the summer meeting. Tim asked if there would be any required course like sexual harassment that was done last year, and John responded no, but because of NACD meeting running concurrently, there would be tours and other social gatherings to attend.

District Activities Report and Program Update

John invited Sam to present the Activities Report and address the Request for Assistance. Sam mentioned there are several conservation plans in progress as listed in the report and he noted four conservation plans are ready for the board's approval. He noted that the conservation plan for Murtagh is associated with a preapproved EQIP contract. Sam indicated that all the plan approvals would be addressed in the Executive Session. John mentioned the report reflects a lot of survey work and most of the projects are for cost-share and he noted there was one Request for Assistance (RFA). The RFA is for Stephanie Sumer, an equine operation, called "Crossfire Farm" and he explained that Travis is already providing assistance with her. After discussing the Activities Report, the Chairman requested a motion to approve the Activities Report and a motion was made by Tim McGrath and seconded by Doug Tregoning and passed approving the Activities Report.

District Managers Report - May 13, 2022

John explained that all Supervisors have received his report and he would be highlighting some of the more important items but would also incorporate his written report into the minutes.

Under New Business, John reported that it was that time of year where we consider the location for our annual cooperator's dinner. The location rotates between the East side and West Side of the County. This year the dinner is scheduled to be held on the west side of the County. John explained that in advance of the Board meeting, that he reached out to Chairman Butz to see if he would be willing to host us at his winery for 2022. Robert indicated that he would welcome hosting our event in September. He recommended a Tuesday evening as that is one of the days the winery is closed and we would have free rein of the location. Robert suggested Tuesday, September 20th for the event. John explained this was a great suggestion, given MASCD summer meeting is so late this year, it would give us an extra week to get things ready for the event. Jeremy suggested that since the Council have committee meetings on Tuesday and that the Agricultural Advisory Committee also meets that Tuesday, that perhaps we should consider an alternative day. There was general agreement on this, and Robert indicated that we could hold the event on Monday, September 19th. The Board reached consensus on this suggestion and the 2022 Dinner would be held on September 19th. Supervisor Tregoning thanked Robert for his willingness to host our event.

John then explained that the **2022 Summer Meeting Registrations** were now open. This year, the registrations would be taken online. The dates for the 2022 MASCD Annual Meeting/ NACD Northeast Region Meeting being held at the Hyatt Regency in Cambridge, MD, will be August 28th-31st, 2022. The conference theme this

year is “Strength Through Connection”. Doug wanted to make everyone aware that the costs for the tours and crab feast are not included in the registration packet. There would be additional costs to attend these events. Karen shared that she would follow up with all Supervisors for the Summer Meeting attendance.

John then informed the Board, that given the schedule for the MASCD/NACD meeting was so tight, that it was suggested that all of the area meetings be conducted before the Summer Meeting. Van Funk, MASCD Central Area Committee Chair suggested a **July MASCD Area Meeting**. These Area Meetings are to be held virtually sometime in the month of July. John indicated Supervisors should have received a doodle poll with proposed meeting times. John said following this meeting, he would resend the doodle poll information out again to all Supervisors and asked them to please respond for this meeting. Van Funk, our Central Area Committee Chairman has suggested that the central area meeting be conducted the Week of July 11th.

John explained there is an item on the agenda about our July meeting. Since our July meeting falls during the 4th of July week and many have 4th of July vacation plans, John suggested that we either cancel the July meeting or moving it to the following Friday which would be July 15th. If we are going to have a July meeting, we would need to stay away from July 15th for the area meeting, unless the area meeting could be held in the afternoon. The Chairman suggested to skip the July Board of Supervisors Meeting and host the August Board Meeting virtually. The entire Board was in agreement with this suggestion and unanimously supported cancelling the July meeting and holding the August meeting virtually at 8 am on August 12th to give staff the time to set up for the fair later that morning.

John then provided a **summary April 29th WIP Discussion – John explained that in addition to himself, that both Doug and Tim attended this meeting.** Elizabeth Hoffman, of MDA’s WIP Team, led the Discussion. They would like the District to focus on practices that have the greatest WIP benefits. This includes Forest and Grassed Buffers, Animal Waste Storage Structures, Land Retirement and Stream Fencing. Most of the livestock in the County are horses which create challenges with achieving WIP goals associated with animal waste management systems. During the meeting we discussed with MDA, going out and doing some surveys of horse operations that are using roll off dumpsters to manage their manures. We can get Resource Improvement (RI) credits in the Bay Model for this. We also learned that we could obtain RI’s outside of developing a formal conservation plan for the operation. Obtaining RI’s may offer the best opportunity in meeting this goal. John also shared information on services provided by the District for stormwater management associated with ag structures and noted credit in the model is not available for the work we have done. John provided information on state law and requirements for stormwater management. There must be a way for the District to get credit for this within the Conservation Tracker and ultimately the model. Tim shared information on the dam in PA and noted a scheduled emergency release is planned and all the debris will be deposited in our watershed. There was a lengthy discussion on this matter and the Chairman shared that it’s a model and that unfortunately, District’s really aren’t afforded the opportunity to provide input for the model.

John briefly discussed the matter concerning the **MDA GF and CBTF budget requests**. He indicated that normally during the May meeting we are discussing the MDA budget submissions for CBTF and General Fund. He wanted to give the Supervisors a heads up on this as it is very likely will be a quick turnaround request from MDA. We may have to handle this via email if requests are due after the June meeting.

John then reported on a few **Old Business Items**. **John provided a quick update concerning the new Practice Keeper Planning Tool**. John explained that we have begun the build for the practice keeper planning tool platform. Each week we have a standing meeting with the developer to discuss the progress of the build and to define roles and responsibilities for end users. We hope to be up and running with this tool shortly after the start of the new fiscal year. John mentioned as a sidebar that other districts are looking at this software planning tool and NRCS will be presenting during the May State Soil Conservation Committee about how they

may be able to make updates in CD easier for Districts. All District's have been encouraged to attend and provide input.

John informed the Board that the **District's Annual Report** was published on April 29th on the District Website and would be republished in our June newsletter. John also reported that we have completed 7 submissions for the **MASCD Annual Awards** for our District. Each submission was transmitted to MASCD ahead of deadlines imposed by the Association. John then reported on the **FY23 Cover Crop Program Sign up**. He indicated signups would begin on July 1st and run through July 18th. John informed the Board that for our June Newsletter, there will be a crop update including the details about what we know concerning the New Cover Crop Plus Pilot. Lastly, John reported that our local **Envirothon Competition would be held on May 25th**. John explained we have a total of 6 teams that will be competing at our local Envirothon program. Our winning team from last year (Team of Juniors) are back as seniors and we are expecting big things from this team. The winning team will go on to represent our County at the State Competition that will be held in Howard County in June.

Chairman Correspondence: The Chairman, Robert Butz shared details on a visit from MDA representative in reference to pesticides and mentioned the MDA representative was looking at his records of applications, notifications and trainings for staff. The Chairman mentioned this matter as a general reminder for farmers that use pesticides and that if the same level of review and scrutiny is applied to commodity agriculture production, this could be burdensome to farmers. There was a lengthy discussion on this subject and specialty growers.

ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING

The meeting officially adjourned at 10:14 a.m. and the next scheduled Board of Supervisors Meeting is June 10, 2022.

Regards

Karen Walker, Administrative Assistant

<u>MEETINGS ATTENDED</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Butz	100%
Butts	92%
McGrath	100%
Linda Lewis	100%
Doug Tregoning	100%
*Linthicum	58%
*Joe Lehman	70%
*Chris Miller	92%

*Associate Member