

MONTGOMERY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
MINUTES
November 13, 2020

Approved
12-11-20

Due to COVID-19 meeting restrictions, the regular monthly meeting of the Board of Supervisors, Montgomery Soil Conservation District (MSCD) was held remotely through GoToMeeting.

In attendance for the Board of Supervisor Meeting were Robert Butz, Chairman, Robert Butts, Vice Chairman, Pam Saul, Treasurer, Tim McGrath, Member, Associates: Tom Linthicum, Chris Miller, Adam Lyon, MDA, Jeremy Criss, Office of Agriculture, Mike Scheffel, Office of Agriculture, Kelly Nichols, Extension, Karen Walker, MSCD, Travis Gorleski, MSCD, Charlotte Brewster, NRCS District Conservationist and John Zawitoski, MSCD District Manager. The meeting officially started at 9:01 a.m.

AGENCY REPORTS

OFFICE OF AGRICULTURE: Jeremy Criss provided his report and he noted that he would not be available for the entire meeting. Mike Scheffel will remain in attendance representing the Office of Agriculture.

Update on the expanded Farm to Food Bank Program: Phase I of this program has been working well for the 6 farmers that are participating and almost 70,000 pounds of food has been delivered to Manna with expectations of another 10,000 pounds to be delivered through the end of December. The participating farmers are being paid competitive prices above the wholesale prices. A total of 22 farmers were approved for Capacity Building Grants totaling \$236K and these farmers will participate in the Phase II program for the 2021 growing season. Jeremy provided a summary of the Farm to Food Bank Program to the Supervisors.

Update on the Solar ZTA 20-01: The Full County Council Work Session was conducted on October 13, 2020. The Council President and Hans Riemer also conducted a Solar Town Hall Stakeholder meeting on November 5, 2020. The Council has created an 8-member Stakeholder Working Group and the first meeting is November 17, 2020 at 6:30 pm. Jeremy discussed his written thoughts prepared by the Office of Agriculture on the Solar ZTA that he hopes will help to expand discussion on many concerns, suggestions, and potential amendments. Jeremy then discussed the proposed Stakeholder Working Group and the members being suggested to participate. Included from the Ag Community was Doug Lechluder and Randy Stabler. The first meeting was well attended, and he informed the Board that Randy Stabler and Doug Lechluder were the meeting presenters. Tom Linthicum noted that the county owns a lot of land and was curious as to what the County's policy is for installing solar on county owned property. Jeremy responded that the county is installing solar on county owned property. Jeremy said the county is installing solar on the closed Oaks Land property and the county previously installed solar on a jail site and Tim McGrath noted that the landfill could be a good spot for solar installation. There was discussion on the importance solar energy plays as an accessory use to farming, but solar strictly for energy generation would probably outcompete farmers for access to rented land given the average rental fees solar companies are offering as per acre rental payments. The Supervisors noted that the Working Group should look at other avenues to meet County alternative energy goals that would not have a negative impact on farmers.

Composting ZTA 20-04: This ZTA was introduced by Council Member Evan Glass on October 27, 2020 and the Public Hearing is scheduled for December 1, 2020. The Office of Agriculture recommends the MSCD should submit a letter of support to the County Council for this Composting ZTA 20-04 that will increase the amount of off-site materials used in the compost process from 20% to 50%. John indicated he would work with

Jeremy to develop written comments for the public hearing. A copy of the link to the proposed ZTA is incorporated below into the minutes.

https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2020/20201027/20201027_6A.pdf

One Acre Farm Virtual Farm Tour: The Office of Agriculture worked with John Zawitoski of the MSCD to develop a virtual farm tour of One Acre Farm owned by Michael Protas. Jeremy thanked John for his help in filming and editing the video associated with the virtual farm tour. A link is incorporated into the minutes for access to the video via YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ReiBgu81aHM>

Legislative Webinar: The Maryland Farm Bureau, Montgomery County Farm Bureau and partner agricultural agencies will conduct a Legislative Webinar on December 3, 2020 at 9:00 am for members of the Montgomery County Delegation and County Council to attend virtually. The agricultural groups are working on a list of questions the panelist will present. Invitations will be sent electronically to members of the ag community including MSCD Supervisors and Associates to register for the event.

Proposed Legislation MC 15-21: Jeremy informed the Board that Delegate Fraser Hidalgo has proposed MC 15-21 that would enable deer harvested under Deer Management Permits to be processed and commercially sold for venison-deer meat. This bill would establish a deer management pilot program in Montgomery County, which would be created and regulated by the State. The purpose of the pilot program is “to develop a commercial market for venison legally taken by a person holding a Deer Management Permit.” The bill would allow the holder of a Deer Management Permit to sell the meat or carcass of the deer within the State. The State would be required to adopt regulations that would include requirements for the processing, inspection, labeling, and sale of wild venison in the State. Under current law, the sale or purchase of meat from wild venison is prohibited in the State. Under a Deer Management Permit is issued by DNR, a holder or the agent of the permit holder would be able to hunt deer outside deer hunting season for the purpose of preventing damage to crops. To obtain a Deer Management Permit an individual must request the Wildlife and Heritage Service unit of DNR to investigate the damage caused by the deer population in the area.

Regarding intrastate sale of venison, the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) has authority to control intrastate requirements for venison. For example, MDH regulates deer meat donation programs. MDA reports that it does not currently have authority to enforce a deer meet inspection and enforcement program. In 2015, a similar Statewide Bill (SB 748) was introduced to allow the holder of a crop damage permit to hunt deer outside hunting season for the purpose of preventing crop damage and sell or offer for sale in the State the meat or carcass of the deer in accordance with regulations adopted by DNR and MDA. The bill failed to advance from the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee. While the Maryland Horse Council testified in support of the bill, there was opposition from sportsman and wildlife conservation groups. Jeremy indicated he felt this bill might not go anywhere.

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

Montgomery County Farm Bureau Board of Directors- November 10, 2020

Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board-November 10, 2020

Montgomery Soil Conservation District-November 13, 2020

Montgomery County Agricultural Advisory Committee-November 17, 2020 @ 5:00

Solar Stakeholder Work Group-November 17, 2020 @ 6:30

MDA: Adam Lyon provided the report for MDA and noted that COVID-19 cases are trending up statewide. The MDA current operating status is that Office Entry and Field Operation protocols remain the same. On

Tuesday, Governor Hogan announced changes to protocol given the recent rise in Coronavirus cases and Adam provided several links (which have been incorporated into the minutes) detailing COVID 19 Updates.

Governor's Announcement:

<https://governor.maryland.gov/2020/11/10/governor-hogan-announces-series-of-actions-to-slow-the-spread-of-covid-19/>)

Restaurants Requirements: <https://governor.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/EO-11.10.20.pdf>)

Indoor Gathering Requirements:

https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/Documents/2020.11.10.03_MDH_Advisory_Large_Gatherings_Travel_Long_Term_Care_Visitation.pdf

MDA personnel are not to attend any in-person indoor meetings and are fully to remain teleworking when possible. Only those employees that have been given specific clearance can work from their office.

Adam provided updates on the Cover Crop program. The final planting date has been extended to December 1st. The requirements associated with the date extension are incorporated into the minutes as outlined below: <https://news.maryland.gov/mda/press-release/2020/11/10/update-deadline-for-planting-cover-crops-extended-to-december-1/>

Adam explained that MDA is preparing to recruit and fill the new positions, including the planner and technician positions slated for Montgomery SCD. The goal is to be able to interview and fill the positions after the New Year. Adam explained that the new MDA truck for Montgomery SCD should be available soon. Adam noted that if the District wants to purchase a cover for the truck bed, please make a request to Byron Petrauskas for approval to use carryover CBTF funds. Adam indicated that MDA is accepting applications for a new relief program for farmers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The program provides payments for contract poultry producers, as well as a 15% bonus payment to eligible farmers who received relief from the first round of the federal Coronavirus Food Assistance Program. Adam then explained that MDA has announced a new Hemp Farming Program that will allow approved growers to raise hemp as a commodity. Lastly, Adam indicated that the PMT Advisory Committee has scheduled a meeting to be held on November 23rd, this is the last chance to delay the PMT before it goes into full effect.

EXTENSION: Kelly Nichols, Ag Agent, Montgomery County noted that the COVID cases are going up and as a result Extension has decided to cancel all in person activities. Kelly then provided information on the following items:

- **Nutrient Management Voucher Training Deadline** - For farmers who must take a nutrient management voucher training by the end of the year, the Maryland Department of Agriculture Nutrient Management Program has announced a one-year extension of the deadline for farmers who do not have an interest in participating in virtual training.
- **In-Person Extension Meetings** (as of Thursday, November 12) - Governor Hogan's announcement on Tuesday provided additional restrictions to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19. In light of this, we are waiting on guidance from the University on if and how to proceed with in-person meetings. We will continue to provide updates as we receive them.
- **Virtual Meetings** - We will be offering a variety of meetings on various topics. These meetings will provide pesticide, nutrient management, and/or certified crop advisor credits, and we encourage you to attend these meetings to obtain credits if you are able.

- 1) Crop Production Meetings: The Agronomy, Forage, Fruit and Vegetable Meetings have been scheduled. To get the details, agenda and registration for each meeting visit. go.umd.edu/WinterAgMeetings.
- 2) Herbicide Resistant Workshops: These virtual workshops will consist of two 2-hour sessions. Session 1 will highlight the principles of herbicide resistance and how to select the proper herbicides. Session 2 will highlight integrated weed management tactics. Farmers can choose to attend either the morning or afternoon session. Pesticide and certified crop advisor credits will be offered. Registration information, when available, will be online at go.umd.edu/FCagmeetings
- 3) Session One: Tuesday, December 8, from 8:00 am-10:00 am OR 6:00 pm-8:00 pm.
- 4) Session Two: Tuesday, December 15, from 8:00 am-10:00 am OR 6:00 pm-8:00 pm
- 5) Online Self-Paced Webinars Pre-recorded webinars are available for those who wish to watch at their own pace. To view the webinars, visit www.extension.umd.edu/grain/pesticide-applicators
- 6) and follow the information under the “2020 Pesticide Renewals”, Option 2. Both pesticide and nutrient management credits are available through these webinars.

Field Research Two research projects were conducted this year:

1) Overlapping Residual Herbicides in No-Till Pumpkins – Curbit was applied to all plots as a PRE herbicide. Over the top application of Dual Magnum were made 2 and 4 weeks after planting at either 0.75 or 1.5 pt/A. No crop injury and no reduction in yield was observed with any of the Dual application rates and timings. Weed control of common summer annual broadleaves (i.e. pigweed) was fair to good. Waiting 4 weeks after application may be too late for a residual herbicide. Dual appears to be a good option; however, other control tactics will need to be added in order to control grasses and harder to control broadleaves (i.e. morning glory).

2) Planting Populations in Full Season Soybeans – Five populations (80, 100, 120, 140, and 160 thousand plants per acre) were planted to determine the effect on yield. In 2019, there were two on-farm locations in Frederick; in 2020, this was expanded to 5 locations across the state. In 2019, we only saw a few bushels per acre difference in populations, and none were statistically significant. Yield data is still coming in for 2020. Kelly said that she will keep the Board posted on COVID-19 and the impact it has on programs and program changes.

December 16th was mentioned as the date for Nutrient Management updates. Adam shared that he believes that is the date, however, the date has not been posted on the MDA website. Adam suggested that the Supervisors consider attending this meeting as it will cover filing AIR Forms electronically. The chair, Robert Butz suggested getting the word out to Montgomery County Farmers about filing the AIR forms electronically. John said that he will contact the MSCD webmaster to post the information on MSCD Website and it will be an article in the upcoming newsletter.

FSA: John provided the report for FSA and conveyed the following FSA information. He reported on the “Coronavirus Food Assistance Program” and detailed information concerning the deadline for CPAP2 signup. Missy’s information indicated that signup is straight forward but if producers need assistance, FSA can certainly help. FSA already has the cropping information so it’s easier for FSA to start the application. She also noted that FSA staff is working on updating payment eligibility information for 2021. Producers are updating their payment operating plans and completing Average Adjusted Gross Income forms for 2021. She noted that small grain and cover crop acreage reporting is due to FSA by Dec. 15th. and that folders with maps are ready for producers to pick up.

SECRETARY/ TREASURER'S REPORT

Before making her presentation to the Board, Karen noted that with the pending organizational changes, there are several items requiring the Board's Approval. Mike shared his insight on how another Soil Conservation District addressed an organizational change and the Treasury position. Taking this advice into consideration the Board conducted a special election to nominate a Supervisor to fill the Treasurer position. The Board members present discussed nominating Tim McGrath to replace Pam as Treasurer.

The Chairman, Robert Butz proposed to have one motion address all board actions associated with the November 13, 2020 Board of Supervisors Meeting. Karen then presented the following items:

- The Minutes for the October 9th meeting were received and reviewed and there were no changes noted.
- Financial Reports – Karen shared that the audit is complete and has been filed with MDA. The auditor's invoice has not been received but funding is available to pay the invoice. With the resignation of Pam Saul, MSCD needs to elect a new Treasurer and address the signature authority with Sandy Spring Bank.
- Karen will provide the necessary forms to get the signature authority updated to provide Robert Butts and Tim McGrath signature authority. Karen will coordinate with Chairman Butz to arrange for a visit to the bank. Karen indicated that there are a few checks that contain Pam's signature that will be utilized before she officially steps down. Karen reported that for the month of October, the checkbook and bank statement have been reconciled. Training is the only MDA expense for the month of October. Paul is scheduled to receive training on drone technology. Besides addressing the anticipated audit expense, MSCD has received the annual invoices for NACD and the Envirothon. Karen noted that funds are available to address the expenses and that she recommends approval of all items. After a lively discussion on the annual NACD dues, a motion was made by Robert Butts and then seconded by Tim McGrath and passed approving the following items: The October 9th Board of Supervisors Minutes, Begin the process to make signature authority changes with the Bank of Sandy Springs; Pay the NACD Annual Dues Gold Level \$775; Pay the Annual Envirothon Dues Bronze Level \$750 and to file the October MDA Financials.

APPROVALS, RATIFICATIONS AND REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

Charlotte presented the Activities Report and she thanked Pam for her service and wanted her to know that she will be missed. Charlotte noted that the Activities Report shows a lot of work going on in the District and shared that two Conservation Plans were approved in the Executive Session. Charlotte shared that beginning on November 20, she will be on extended leave and is scheduled to return on March 2021. To help keep our conservation planning and BMP implementation efforts moving forward, Charlotte reported that she is working with John and the SCD staff to prioritize those projects that are in the queue where cooperators will be or have applied for cost share. John asked if her temporary replacement had been selected. Charlotte noted applications have been received but she is not aware of anything officially. She is hopeful to receive the official notice on Monday or Tuesday.

NEW BUSINESS

Summary of October 27th MASCD BOD Meeting-John shared details from the meeting and listed all the bullet points on the screen. Listed are some of the original highlights from the meeting. **NRCS Matters:** Business Plan for FY21 – Priority will be Financial Assistance Programs; Operating under a continuing resolution for funding through Dec 12th; Agency has receiving an increase in their Budget Cap for new Positions and NRCS has received authority for direct hiring capacity. **MDA Matters:** Cover Crop Planting Extension until Dec 1st; MDA has seen increase in material costs – considering modification to cost share flat rates; Nov 23rd will be final meeting of PMT advisory Committee; Every 5 years state has to collect Soil Phosphorus data – 2021 is a 5th year; AIR is going to an electronic filing system; Training for MDA's new Buffer Management Program (11/9 or 11/12); MD CPAP Relief Program; MDA moving ahead to fill 45

positions statewide (announced in a few weeks); New Vehicle pickup for MSCD is still Pending; Approval for purchasing COVID related Supplies; the webinar on composting horse manure on October 30th went very well; November 3rd – Election Day – State Employees are off and MDA status reviews due January 15th. **SSCC:** Reported they are still meeting virtually for the time being due to COVID; Reported on the Horse Manure Workshop. The MSCD produced a video featuring Dr. Mess. Link to the Video is incorporated into the minutes as follows: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JO5hTujLYf8> **MASCD:** Still playing wait and see about Winter meeting. Probably will not have a legislative luncheon; Summer meeting 2021 at this point is still on the calendar, Since Jen Nelson lives in Delaware the POA and Registered Agent need to be from MD. A motion was made to provide Marguerite Guare with both POA and Registered Agent status; A lobbyist Group called Providence Strategies has been hired by MASCD to conduct all legislative outreach and will be coordinating any legislative interactions with State and Federal Legislators on behalf of MASCD. Mike Mason is our point of contact for Providence Strategies; Envirothon: Right now, planning on a 2021 State competition scheduled for Mt. Saint Mary's June 22nd and 23rd; Looking for guidance from local SCD's on what they will do in 2021.

Status of 2021 Winter Meeting and other Matters related. – This item was addressed in the Summary of Board of Directors Meeting.

Proposed Ag/Legislator Webinar (12/3)- For the past two years, the MSCD in partnership with all the other ag agencies and organizations have sponsored a legislative luncheon workshop. Due to COVID-19 a webinar has been proposed in lieu of a luncheon. John has provided some questions to be asked on behalf of the SCD during the webinar including special recognition and thanks for supporting the Governor's budget that provided funding to MDA to move forward in hiring the 50 positions and providing MSCD with a Planner and Technician in support of our local WIP. John encouraged Supervisors to contact him if they have additional questions they want addressed during the webinar. Invitations to register should be sent soon. The webinar will be Dec 3 from 9 am until 10:30 am

MACS Status Reviews -Due January 15, 2021 - We have a total of 7 cooperators and 8 BMPs that require spot checks for 2020. All status reviews will be assigned to the appropriate staff at our weekly staff meeting on 11/17. We fully expect to have each status review completed ahead of the 1/15/21 deadline.

MDA Pilot Buffer Program-John presented this item and shared details on each component of the program. More details on program implementation will be forthcoming from MDA. This program was developed as result of discussions the Ag community had as part of our local WIP meetings.

MD Coronavirus Food Assistance Program-MDA will issue a bonus payment to Maryland farmers based on a percentage (15%) of federal Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 1 (CFAP1) funds received for the CFAP1 period that ended Sept. 11, 2020. CFAP1 provides vital financial assistance to producers of agricultural commodities who have suffered a 5% or greater price decline or who had losses due to market supply chain disruptions from COVID-19. The commodities covered includes aquaculture (finfish and crayfish), corn, cut flowers, dairy, livestock (excluding poultry), nursery, small grains, soybeans, and specialty crops. If you meet the eligibility requirements, fill out the application and mail it to the Maryland Department of Agriculture postmarked by Dec. 1, 2020. Tom shared that Seneca Ayr completed the application online and it was easy. John shared that he will forward the Supervisors both flyers for the state and federal programs and contact MSCD Webmaster to send out a blast about the programs.

Annual WIP Planning Goal - Following the October Board meeting, John has been coordinating meetings with Adam and our staff to review the latest data dump from MDA to discuss a planning goal for 2021. Our target goal is approximately 5,300 acres of planned acres for this year. This number includes both new plans

and expired or expiring plans. Adam commented that he is appreciative that he is included in the District's annual WIP goal planning effort. John explained that while this effort is designed to try to identify any low hanging fruit- of rapidly achievable plans to update, he noted that as we work down the link, the low hanging fruit is getting harder to reach. As time goes out, the additional resources promised will be needed to meet the overall local WIP.

Patuxent 2020 Partnership Meeting -John shared that the dates right now as 12/14-17. The chair, Robert Butz made note of the date. Travis inquired about the additional funding for the Patuxent program and John provided details on how the program works and local matching requirements.

Bank Signature Authority – This item was addressed in the Secretary/Treasurer Report.

OLD BUSINESS

Cover Crop Planting Extension Update- Adam shared this information under the MDA report. The Cover Crop Program will extend the planting date to December 1, 2020. The base payment is \$40/ac and only certain species are accepted. The only planting methods allowed are No-till, Broadcast with Light, Minimum or Vertical Tillage and Conventional. These acres may not be terminated before May 1, 2021.

Close Encounters with Agriculture- The District has completed and finalized all of the video's placed in our charge to develop for the Close Encounters Program. John is very happy with the quality of our videos and believes the videos will be very popular among students and teachers.

Nutrient Management Update 12/16 –In December every year, MDA and Extension host a Nutrient Management Program Update. Due to COVID, MDA is planning on presenting this Nutrient Management Update in the form of a virtual meeting. John wanted to make sure the Supervisors are aware of this event in case they wanted to attend or needed continuing education credits.

MDA Vehicle Update – This item was addressed under MDA report.

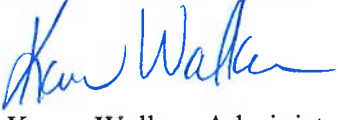
Engineering Workload/MDA Tech Assistance - Since our last Board meeting, Charlotte and John have been working with our engineering staff to go over the engineering workload to get the assignments updated and to assess where additional help is needed. During our last meeting, Adam offered the help of an MDA employee to temporarily help MSCD reduce the engineering backlog. We have identified a cooperator that has several projects in the queue that we believe would be good to assign to the temporary technician. We have provided this information to Adam and depending on COVID 19 and impacts to State workers, we are hopeful MDA can help us with this workload item.

CHAIRMAN CORRESPONDENCE -Mike wanted the Board to know that the Farm Alcohol Production Report is complete and available. Mike will forward the report to John so that he can forward it to them. Robert Butz noted that MSCD needs to establish a GoToMeeting account. John agreed and said that MSCD will explore avenues for virtual meetings.

ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING

The meeting officially adjourned at 11:07 am and the next Board of Supervisors Meeting is scheduled for **December 11, 2020** [December 13, 2020.]

Respectfully submitted,



Karen Walker, Administrative Assistant

<u>MEETINGS ATTENDED</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Butz	80%
Butts	100%
Saul	100%
Stabler	50%
McGrath	100%
*Linthicum	50%
*Joe Lehman	50%
*Chris Miller	60%
*Associate Members	