

MONTGOMERY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
December 11, 2020

Approved
1/15/21

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, Tom Linthicum, Associate, Adam Lyon, MDA, Jeremy Criss, Office of Agriculture, Mike Scheffel, Office of Agriculture, Kelly Nichols, Extension, Karen Walker, MSCD, Mitchell LeMuiex, Acting NRCS District Conservationist and MSCD District Manager, John Zawitoski.

Chairman Butz called the meeting to order at 9:20 am. As at the start of the meeting, some of the individuals giving agency reports had not yet logged on. To make efficient use of the time, Chairman Butz asked of the Board to take some of the items out of sequence. The Board was supportive of this request.

The first order of business was the approval of the Board Minutes. Motion was made by Pam Saul and seconded by Robert Butts. With no additions to the Board minutes, the motion to approve the minutes passed by a vote of 4 to 0.

APPROVALS, RATIFICATIONS AND REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

Following the approval of the minutes, the District Activities report was delivered by acting District Conservationist Mitchell LeMuiex. Mitchell walked the Supervisors through the report and asked if there were any questions. Supervisor McGrath made an inquiry about Greg Glenn's conservation plan status. John indicated that it was for the new ground he acquired to rent from Sugarloaf Citizens Association. John explained that Greg wishes to start a new livestock enterprise on the rented ground and has a great need for certain infrastructure that is not fundable through the cost share programs. More specifically, the need for exterior fencing and the costs associated with solar powering for remote watering facilities. Mike Scheffel indicated that there could be funding for exterior fencing through a Chesapeake Bay Foundation grant and indicated he would send the contact information for Greg to follow up on. The only other matter of business discussed by Mitch was to note that January 8th is the last day for EQIP. This announcement is being promoted via social media.

AGENCY REPORTS

MDA: The MDA current operating status for State employee Office Entry and Field Operation protocols remain the same. Maryland's 7-Day positivity rate is currently 7.71% as of today. MDA personnel are not to attend any in-person indoor meetings and should remain teleworking to the fullest extent possible. Only those employees that have been given specific clearance by MDA are allowed to work from their office. MDA continues to prepare to recruit and fill new positions, including planner and technician positions slated for Montgomery SCD. The goal is to interview and fill the positions after the New Year. The new 2020 Chevrolet 1500 4-door pickup slated for Montgomery is in the process of being transferred. Adam will inform Paul Meyer when it can be picked up. Adam noted that the new WIP III 2020 draft progress sheets have been sent out to all SCDs. Adam shared that he was thankful for meeting with John Z., J. Harne and Elizabeth Hoffman to identify strategies to help achieve the WIP goals. Adam shared that the Maryland Conservation Buffer Initiative website. A link to this information is incorporated into the minutes as follows:

https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Pages/conservation-buffer-initiative.aspx. Adam reviewed with the Board other information relating to promoting this program and thanked the Montgomery SCD Board of Supervisors and staff thus far for everything they are doing to promote this new program! Lastly, Adam shared that the Nutrient Management Update training will be held virtually on December 15th and that he will

be attending. If farmers are in need of Nutrient Voucher recertification credits, they should also plan to attend. Also, Adam noted that Paul's performance evaluation is due on January 15th.

OFFICE OF AGRICULTURE: Jeremy Criss provided the report for the OAG.

- Jeremy provided an update on the Solar ZTA 20-01. The Council created 8-member Stakeholder Working Group. The group meetings were held November 17, 2020, December 2, 2020 and the third meeting is scheduled for December 10, 2020. The Council is still assembling information from stakeholders via a google documents file where comments and documents can be uploaded to. Jeremy indicated that Doug Lechlinder and Leslie Elder are both Co-Chairs of the Working Group. Jeremy indicated that the ag groups and other community interest groups have argued that the use of Solar in the AR zone may be in conflict with the Master Plan. There are additional stakeholder meetings that will be scheduled to discuss these matters further.
- Council Member Evan Glass introduced the Composting ZTA 20-04 on October 27, 2020 and the Public Hearing was conducted on December 1, 2020. The AAC, APAB and MSCD all provided letters 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%. A link to this ZTA packet is incorporated into the minutes as follows:
https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2020/20201027/20201027_6A.pdf
- The Maryland Farm Bureau and Montgomery County Farm Bureau Legislative Webinar held on December 3rd was very productive with 58 people attending. The panelists were - Lorig Charkoudian, Marc Korman, Pam Queen, Andrew Friedson, Nancy King, Lily Qi, David Fraser Hidalgo, Eric Luedtke etc. The turnout was larger than the on-farm workshop held last year and was very productive as there were several follow up items and initiatives stimulated by this event.
- 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. MC 15-21 - Montgomery County - Deer Management Permit Pilot Program. The County Executive and the County Council took no position on MC 15-21. Jeremy indicated that this legislation has a long road ahead and would require a significant investment by MDA for hiring meat inspectors. He indicated that the Delegate is looking at other states and learning what they do that enables them to process deer meat for sale.

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

Solar Stakeholder Work Group-December 10, 2020 @ 6:30 pm.

Montgomery Soil Conservation District-December 11, 2020

Montgomery County Agricultural Advisory Committee-December 15, 2020 7:00 pm.

Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board-December 15, 2020

Montgomery County Farm Bureau Board of Directors- January 5, 2021

EXTENSION: Kelly Nichols, Ag Agent, Montgomery County presented her report. She provided details on the reduced planting populations for soybeans and the potential positive news for associated yield increases. She noted that the lower planting populations performed potentially as well as more densely planted populations. Kelly shared that the Maryland Soybean Board provided the funding for the study. The Chair, Robert Butz noted that the numbers look promising and if additional trials and locations were needed, he would be happy to participate. Tom asked about the planting population and Kelly responded and shared details on the findings. She noted that she is still sorting through the details, but the data looks promising.

After presenting information from her graph, Kelly shared that Extension 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.

1) Crop Production Meetings – January & February 2021

Pesticide, nutrient management, and certified crop advisor credits available. To see the agenda for each meeting and to register, visit. go.umd.edu/WinterAgMeetings.

2) 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 and follow the information under the “2020 Pesticide Renewals”, Option 2. Both pesticide and nutrient management credits are available through these webinars.

SECRETARY/ TREASURER’S REPORT

Karen presented the financial reports and noted that the December checkbook and the bank statement have been reconciled. Karen indicated that the Supervisors payments have been processed and mailed. She instructed the Supervisors to sign and return the expense statement to the District via the self-addressed stamped return envelope provided. Karen noted that MSCD has received a renewal for the Bay Journal. In the previous Board Meeting, the supervisors have agreed to establish a GoToMeeting account and Karen is still working to get the account established. She noted that there were no other expense items for discussion and that the Supervisor’s payments will be reflected in the December report. Karen indicated that she has had discussions with Pam Saul about providing assistance for filing the 1099’s for year 2020. Karen indicated she is working with Supervisors to get the bank signature authorization updated.

A motion was made by Tim McGrath and then seconded Robert Butts and passed approving to file the MDA November Financial Report, pay the Bay Journal Renewal and have Pam provide assistance to the District with filing the 2020 1099’s. After the motion passed, the Supervisors, Robert Butz, Robert Butts and Tim McGrath shared that they will review their calendars for a date to get the bank signature authorization updated.

NEW BUSINESS

To make more efficient use of meeting time, Supervisor Butz suggested that information items under New an Old Business be consolidated into a written report. The District Manager will provide this written report to Supervisors in advance of the monthly meeting. The report will be presented during the meeting and Supervisors will have the opportunity to ask questions from the report. If there are no questions, then the contents of the report will be incorporated into the minutes. The focus of other New and Old Business items will be reserved for Board action items. Chairman Butz was very appreciative of John finding creative ways to make these virtual meetings more efficient and noted that this approach would require Supervisors to do some advanced reading of Board meeting materials. While this new process is being floated as a trial, it was supported by the Supervisors in attendance.

Update on County Executive Appointment process/Candidates for SCD Board - Following the November Board meeting Supervisors sent John the top 3 to 5 names of individuals they wanted him to reach out to. From this list John reached out to the following individuals to encourage them to apply to the County Executive (CE) to serve on the Board. The top 6 names included:

Bob Cissel – Agricultural Advocate (Ag Preservation but Term is up) - Applied

Patrick Jamison – Turf and Grain (Ag Advisory) - Declined

Doug Tregoning – Retired Extension Agent/Farmer - Applied

Susan Butler – Orchard/Cidery - Declined

Billy Willard – Small Grain Farmer – Considering applying

Linda Lewis – Fruit and Vegetable Farmer – will apply

John also reached out to all three associate supervisors and encouraged them to apply.

Joe Lehman – Small grains and Hay – Associate Supervisor - Emailed and encouraged to apply.

Chris Miller – Local Brewery – Associate Supervisor – Emailed and encouraged to apply.

Tom Linthicum – Small grains – Associate Supervisor – Spoke on the phone about applying.

The application deadline closed on Dec 3rd. John indicated that we should be hearing shortly whether the CE's office wants the Board to do interviews. This has typically been the practice. At this point, he is aware that 3 of the 6 individuals he contacted have indicated they will apply.

Recap of December 3rd Legislative Webinar. - The Legislative Webinar that was held on December 3rd had over 50 individuals in attendance including 12 members of the Montgomery County Delegation and local and federal legislators. The event began at 9 am and ended at 10:30 am. Elected officials responded to questions raised by our local agricultural groups. While COVID-19 created challenges in hosting our annual legislative luncheon, the webinar format was a way to engage our legislators about agricultural issues as we approach the 2021 Legislative Session. It is John's hope that this webinar format will provide a springboard to enable the District to conduct similar virtual one on one sessions with our Legislative Delegation once the session begins.

Mt. Prospect Pond Breaches

These ponds are associated with subdivision of the old Hanson farm property. - The District has been coordinating with this project with Mark Etheridge at the County DPS and together we have been trying to figure out what the Developer is trying to do with these existing farm ponds. What the Developer wants seems to be a moving target. Central to the issue is that the Developer wants to leave the ponds as a land use amenity as they are not being maintained for any agricultural use. The County will not approve the Erosion and Sediment Control for the additional phase of this subdivision project until the integrity of the dams on both ponds was determined. The Developer hired an engineer to ascertain the integrity of the dams. It is John's understanding that their engineer confirmed the dams were not structurally sound and would need to be reconstructed. The County informed the Developer that since the ponds were not associated with the stormwater management of the development project, that they would not review the pond reconstruction design and suggested they reach out to the District/NRCS to see if this would be something we could review.

In consultation with Warren Johnson, NRCS Area Engineer, we informed the Developer that NRCS could conduct a functional review of the design to ensure it would meet the 378-Pond standard as well as the District coordination with the small pond approval. However, NRCS informed them that they would not be able to do this functional review until after the first of the year. This timetable did not sit well with them and is now the reason they are exploring the breach alternative. It appears MDE will claim jurisdiction for the breach project and the Developer will work directly with MDE through the Joint Application Approval Process.

New Mark Commons Rockville Dam Inspection Findings and Notice of Required Action - The District was copied on a letter sent to the land management company under contract with the New Mark Commons subdivision homeowners association. This letter details findings of an October 15, 2020 inspection of the stormwater management pond conducted by the Dam Safety Inspection and Compliance Division of the Maryland Department of the Environment.

During the inspection the Dam was determined to be in need of repair. The attached letter outlines the findings of the inspection and a prescribed schedule for required actions for discussion at the upcoming Board Meeting on December 3. The letter presents two options (much like the Mt. Prospect ponds) to bring the ponds up to 378 or breach the dam. We have been copied on this letter in the event the homeowner's association wants to conduct a breach. If they do, we may be contacted about providing assistance. As this is not an agricultural

project and the homeowner's association should work directly with MDE through the Joint Application approval process.

Annual Meeting of the Patuxent Reservoirs Watershed Protection Group -Dec 15th - As an FYI, the Patuxent Workgroup has set December 15th from 10:30 am to 12 noon for the Annual Executive Board Partnership Meeting. This is an annual meeting usually held in person but will be held virtually due to COVID 19. Chairman Butz and John usually attend this event. Just wanted to confirm this meeting date, the agenda is to follow shortly.

Earth Team Volunteer Appreciation -On November 19th, 2020, NRCS recognized the County's Close Encounters with Agriculture Team with an Earth Team Volunteer Award. The partnership the District has with Extension in promoting this program along with team members from NRCS helps them nationally in promoting their Earth Team Volunteer Program.

MASCD Newsletter- Provided in your Supervisors packets is the fall edition of MASCD's Partnership Press, this newsletter contains a great deal of information concerning the activities of the State's Association, Conservation Partnership and the State Soil Conservation Committee. This is provided to Supervisors as an information resource.

OLD BUSINESS

MACS Status Reviews -Due January 15, 2021 -We have completed half of the 8 status reviews we have been charged by MDA to complete. We are on schedule to complete the remaining spot checks before the January 15th Deadline. Melissa Keshisian (Waste Storage), Chuck Gingrich (Grassed Waterways) and Gail Joyce (Heavy Use Areas) are the projects remaining to be spot checked.

MDA Pilot Buffer Program - Since the last Board meeting and MDA's new Buffer program training, the Department has sent out additional information about this new program and guidance on how to implement locally. MDA has provided to Districts:

- 1) program workbook with application, agreement, and CFP;
- 2) NM certification form required at application; and
- 3) Guidance Manual.

The FAQs from training are included in the manual. If any Supervisor would like to see the training video, let me know and I can ask MDA to provide our District access to the video training. In general: **The application window will be January 11-February 5, 2021.**-All application material will be posted to the MDA website, and a link shared with you at a future date. Additional outreach material is being prepared and will also be sent.

Bank Signature Authority - Karen is still trying to get the District's check signature authorities updated. In our last meeting, it was discussed in addition to Chairman Butz, that Robert Butts and Tim McGrath be added. While Karen can provide additional details on the process, it may require all three Board members to visit the Bank. Karen will provide additional details.

Annual WQPC Report (Due in January)- John reported that he is still gathering information to get this report compiled and it is his plan to send the draft report to the Supervisors before the next Board meeting. Our next Board meeting is on January 8th and John would like to remit this report by the end of January to DEP.

Close Encounters with Agriculture- The plan is to roll out the Close Encounters virtual program to all MCPS the week of December 1st. We have received some positive feedback from our pilot school (Little Bennett ES).

“My kids were completely engaged, and they were responding to the questions posed in the Beef video. They willingly took the quiz and were excited that they could see how they did when they were finished. (I even learned a lot myself!)”

“My kids LOVED the Dairy field trip. They were totally engaged.”

“We did the Goats and the Plants we Eat. They were both EXCELLENT! The kids absolutely loved it.

We still need to work out a couple of internet issues with YouTube because some of the videos are big, but we should get things ironed out soon. The Executive Committee met on Wednesday, December 9th to discuss how the initial roll out went.

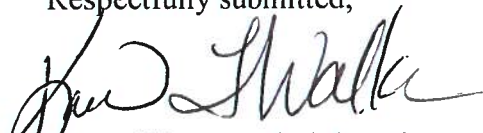
Nutrient Management Update - The MDA Nutrient Management Program has announced that they will hold their yearly update training via Zoom on December 15, 2020. This is a good opportunity to achieve a portion of the credits necessary to maintain your NM certification (12 credits every three years). To sign up, follow the link at this site: https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Pages/nutrient_management_training_program.aspx

CHAIRMAN CORRESPONDENCE -Pam shared that she is thankful for having the opportunity to serve as a Supervisor. She has learned a lot about herself and agriculture. The chair, Robert Butz said that it has been a pleasure working with Pam and noted that she is always welcomed to return. In closing, the chair wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING

The meeting officially adjourned at 10:29 am and the next Board of Supervisors Meeting is scheduled for January 8, 2021.

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	