

DRAFT
MONTGOMERY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
MINUTES
February 10, 2017

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Supervisors, Montgomery Soil Conservation District (MSCD) was held at Waredaca Brewery, Laytonsville Road, Gaithersburg, MD Friday, February 10, 2017.

People Present:

Robert Butz, Chair
Robert Stabler, Board Member
Wade Butler, Board Member
Tim McGrath, Associate Supervisor
Jeremy Criss, Office of Agriculture (OAG)
John Zawitoski, Office of Agriculture (OAG)
Mike Scheffel, Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA)
David Plummer, District Manager
James Myers, District Conservationist
Karen Walker, Administrative Assistant

The Chair, Robert Butz called the meeting to order at 12:08 p.m.

AGENCY REPORTS

MDA

Mike provided the report for MDA and noted that items of importance to MDA were addressed at the 2017 MASCD Winter meeting. Mike shared dates on items that are of interest to the District and he noted that Cover Crop will be done on-line and that MDA has set up 3 training dates and locations for staff to learn the new system. David shared that 3 MSCD staff (J., Mike, and Karen) will be attending the Cover Crop training in Columbia, Maryland. David needs to check on the training for Howard SCD. Listed below are the dates for upcoming events:

Upcoming Activities

March 1st Cover Crop TAC – Meeting in Annapolis
April 4th MACS-TAC Meeting in Annapolis
MACS Spot Check forms are due by March 31st.
Engineering Spot checks for Montgomery County will be May 15-16.

OAG

Jeremy provided the report from Office of Agriculture and noted that the report had been emailed earlier and Karen put a copy of the report in the handout packet. Listed below are the items that Jeremy shared with the Board.

ZTA 16-02 Agricultural Zone-Transferable Development Rights Requirements:

The MCFB, AAC, APAB, have provided comments supporting this MNCPPC staff draft ZTA that removes requirements for TDRs on dwellings that remain accessory to the farm. The OAG is monitoring the Planning Board agenda for this ZTA. Jeremy was glad that all the ag groups supported this ZTA and noted that Wade should pay close attention to this ZTA. Jeremy noted that Tom Hartsock included the term Farm labor housing unit. Wade felt that it should be left as tenant use. Jeremy provided a definition of the term. Wade said that the unit is not being rented to the general public but for laborers that work on the farm. Robert Stabler and Wade share the same perspective and situation in reference to housing. The goal is to get TDR reinstated.

The OAG Farm Coloring Book:

The Office of Agriculture and Linda Lewis (Lewis Orchards) are working together to create “*A Year in Montgomery County Agriculture*” - an educational coloring/activity book that will feature coloring pages created from actual photographs of Montgomery County farms. Please let us know if you would like your farm to be included. We would like to have them available for the County Agricultural Fair. Butler’s Orchard is participating in the Coloring Book.

Bill 37-16 Taxation-Development Impact Tax-Transportation and Public Schools:

The County Council approved Bill 37-16 and exempted Farm Tenant Dwellings from the Transportation Improvements component which totals \$21,822.

The tax rate for Child lot=\$22,654.

In response to a thank you letter from the AAC, Council Vice President Reimer and his staff contacted David Weitzer since he is currently requesting approval for a child lot for his daughter and her family.

The AAC letter included how Frederick County exempts farm lots for both children and grandchildren from their Development Impact Tax-David Gordon.

MC 21-17 Sunday Deer Hunting and MC 10-17 Archery Safety Zone

The Montgomery County Delegation met last Friday and approved the Sunday Deer Hunting bill and the Archery Safety Zone Bill. Both bills will move to the Senate Delegation where they will also need to be approved. The MCFB met with many Delegates and Senators on Wednesday as part of Farm Bureau Day in Annapolis. The MCFB was successful in getting Senators Feldman, Manno and Zucker to support the Sunday deer hunting bill and MCFB met with Senator Kagan’s Chief of Staff Justin Fiore. The DNR staff will support the proposed start and end times for 11 additional days of Sunday hunting. Sunday Hunting will have start and end time. The Montgomery County Delegation supports this initiative and now we are looking for support from the Senate. There is a need to get 5 votes from the Senate.

Meeting with the Secretary of DNR Mark Belton on Statewide Deer legislation:

The OIG, OAG and members of the County Delegation (Eric Luedtke, David Fraser-Hidalgo and Jim Gilchrist) met with DNR Secretary Mark Belton and DNR staff to discuss Statewide Deer legislation. The DNR agreed to begin a Bi-Annual review of hunting regulations this fall and consider extending the season to the end of February and one additional week of Shotgun for hunting deer. The DNR also said they would help to promote the County Deer Donation Program for hunters to take donated deer to K & S Kuts 12415 Prices Distillery Road Damascus, MD and the cold box in Poolesville. Jeremy also noted that DNR is not opposed to the start and end time for Sunday Hunting. 10:30 am is the proposed end time to shoot and this program is set for 5 years. Robert Butz stated that the time restriction will be enforced by complaints. There

was a big discussion on the cold box for the deer. The cold box in Poolesville is up and running. The cold box that was at Seneca Ayr stopped functioning and it has been recycled. Jeremy shared the details about the cost to maintain the cold box and he noted that information on deer donation is on the OAG website. The program takes in about 150 deer per season and that K&S Kuts is now included as part of the Deer Donation Program.

MOUs between the County-OAG and the (MSCD and UM-Extension)

The OAG staff and County Attorney have reviewed and revised the MOUs between the County Government and the (MSCD and UM-Extension). We hope to have these MOUs executed to memorialize the partnerships between the agricultural agencies including the county funding used to support the agricultural agencies. Jackie has forwarded the revised MOU to everyone and Jeremy provided a detailed summary. Jeremy would like to move forward.

FY 18 Mandatory Savings Plan for the County OAG

In December 2016, the OAG was required to submit a 2% savings plan for the General Fund portion of the appropriation for FY18. Outlined below you will see the breakdown of how the 2% savings was applied to each of the agricultural agencies of the OAG.

MSCD	\$6,680	General Fund Operating Expenses
OAG	9,195	
UM-Extension	4,055	
Total	\$19,930	=2% of the General Funds allocated to OAG

The OAG is working with the OHR to discuss reclassifying the District Manager position. Summary of August 4, 2015 Letter from the Director of OHR. "With your position transferring to an entirely new County department, the Office of Human Resources will evaluate your duties and responsibilities within 6 to 12 months to determine if your current position, grade, and status are consistent with the work being performed in the new department." The MSCD requested the MSCD Manager Position-David Plummer be advertised broadly and OAG will start the process once the reclassification process is completed. There was a lengthy discussion on the job reclassification and Jeremy noted that it will take some time. Robert Butz asked for a timeframe for the reclassification and Jeremy responded that all the employees of DED received that notice about job reclassification in 2015. Jeremy noted that with the job being vacant, the process should be easier. Without having a clear timeframe on filling the vacant District Manager position, it was decided that there is a need to have an Acting District Manager. A motion was made by Robert Stabler and seconded by Wade Butler and passed approving John Zawitoski as the Acting MSCD District Manager.

Minimum Wage Bill 12-16 See Attachment

The OAG has prepared a one-page summary of the minimum wage amounts for the County, State of Maryland and the Federal Government. The AAC is preparing a letter to the County Council that supports the County Executive's recommendation to exempt small business from the County minimum wage making sure that agricultural businesses are included.

Urban Agricultural Tax Credit Bill 31-16.

The Government Operations Committee recommended approval of Bill 31-16 that will make residential properties between ½ acre and 3 acres eligible for a 5 year property tax credit

providing the property is used for Urban Farming under the zoning code definition and more than \$5,000 is generated in income from farming. The Tax Credit may be 80% of the tax bill which includes the residence. The property owner may reapply for the property tax credit every five years. The OAG will determine eligibility and forward recommendations to the DOF to process the property tax credit.

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

Please note AAC meetings for 2017-Jan, Feb, March, and April will be on the 3rd Wednesdays of the month and not the 2nd Tuesdays.

February 15, 2017 Room D

March 15, 2017 Room D

April 19, 2017 Room D

Montgomery Soil Conservation Board of Supervisors-February 10, 2017 @ 12:00pm

Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board-February 14, 2017 @ 7:00pm

Agricultural Advisory Committee-Wednesday February 15, 2017 @ 7:00pm

Annual Farmers Market Training-February 16, 2017 @ 9:30 am

Winter Agronomy Update-February 22, 2017 Urbana Fire Hall

Montgomery County Farm Bureau Board of Directors-February 7, 2017 @ 7:00pm

Annual Meeting for Montgomery Weed Control- March 21, 2017 @ 9:30 am

SECRETARY/ TREASURER'S REPORT

The minutes of the January 13th meeting were received and reviewed and there were no noted changes. A motion was made by Robert Stabler and was seconded by Wade Butler and passed approving the January Minutes.

Karen had not received the bank statement and therefore could not provide the financial reports. However, David shared with the Board that MSCD Cash Statement has dramatically increased from 2003. David provided a copy of the 2-28-03 MSCD Cash Statement with an end balance of \$81,454.64 and the 11/30/2016 Cash Statement reflected an end balance of \$273,790.66. It was noted that MSCD financial standings has improved.

After David shared the information on the cash statements Karen wanted the Board's approval for two items. The first item was to purchase her a new laptop \$1689.32. Karen's computer is outdated and has had many problems. Diane Coppola, the NRCS IT/Specialist recommended that the District purchase a new computer. The second item was to reimburse David C. Plummer for items that he paid for on behalf of the District. To keep the MSCD Website up and running, David's personal credit card was used and was automatically annually charging his credit card. David has dropped this credit card off the website provider so that he will no longer be charged. In addition to the website charges David paid for some expenses at that the 2017 MASCD Winter meeting. The total amount due is \$307.04. A motion was made by Robert Stabler and seconded by Wade Butler and passed approving to purchase a new laptop computer and to reimburse David's expenses totaling \$307.04

APPROVALS, RATIFICATIONS AND REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

The activities report was in the handout packet and Jim shared that he had two Requests for Assistance (RFA) and several Conservation Plans for the Board's approval. Jim noted that the

staff has been working on several feasibility projects that involve fill. In addition, there is an operator that would like a stream crossing and Jim provided details on the project. Jim questioned whether there was a BMP associated with the fill activity. It was noted on the Activities Report that Jim and Brandy attended a MIDAS software training that FSA uses to support their programs.

Next, Jim shared information and details on the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and noted that it is a partnership with NRCS and non-governmental organizations. After sharing items from the Activities Report, Jim recommended that the Board approve the RFA and Conservation Plans. A motion was made by Wade Butler and seconded by Robert Stabler and passed approving two Requests for Assistance and seven Conservation Plans.

NEW BUSINESS

- District Manager Position-This item was addressed under OAG report.
- Soil Conservation Planning Research Support-The Board Notes document was included in the handout packet. Shelly Ingram, the Equine Resource Conservationist is working on completing her Master's Degree in Agricultural Communication. There are 106 licensed stables in Montgomery County and only 29 have recorded and signed Conservation Plans. Her proposed study was detailed in the Board Notes document. David provided details on the project and noted that the study would help MSCD better market our services, and understand our client's conservation needs. The funding would also be used to transcribe discussions from interviews with clients. Shelly was available for additional questions. There is currently over \$5K in the Horse Study account and the funds would be beneficial for our outreach efforts. Jeremy shared information on the equine community and noted that the funds should be utilized. It was noted that conservation plans are on a volunteer basis and we need to make an effort to get the equine community on board. The Board Notes included questions for the survey and the questions are not set in stone. Shelly provided more information on the project and all agreed that it is a good initiative to support. A motion was made by Robert Stabler and seconded by Wade Butler and passed approving a \$2,000 expenditure for this project. Jeremy offered a suggestion to Shelly for developing a plan to utilize the remaining Horse Study funds.
- Tuition Reimbursement Request-Mike Weyand who is a Contractual Conservation Engineering Technician that receives no benefits, is requesting the Board of Supervisors support in tuition reimbursement. Mike is working on his Master's Degree that corresponds with the work effort of MSCD. He provided an Official Grade Report and he received an "A" in his 2016 Fall course in Principles of Ecology. There was a discussion about the merits of his studies and that other Districts and agencies provide employee tuition reimbursement. Jeremy noted that Montgomery County provides 70% tuition reimbursement and Mike Scheffel shared that some Districts provide an 80% tuition reimbursement. The Board agreed that providing employee tuition reimbursement is a good thing and Wade noted that there are funds available in the Grants' and Donation account. The course cost was \$1,455.00 and a reimbursement rate of 80% would be \$1,164.00. A motion was made by Robert Stabler and seconded by Wade Butler and passed approving the 80% tuition reimbursement in the amount of \$1,164.00 for Mike's fall 2016 classes. The Board will consider tuition assistance for his future course on a case by case basis.

OLD BUSINESS

- 2017 MASCD Winter Meeting- The meeting was great and it sounds like the legislators are supportive of reinstating MACS funding. Mike shared that the 2010 Chesapeake Bay Trust Funds will always be available.
- Agronomy Update Meeting is scheduled for February 22nd at the Urbana Fire Hall.

CHAIR REPORT

Robert Butz shared that he had no additional items and the Board of Supervisors wished David “Good Luck” in his new position as District Manager of Howard SCD. David thanked everyone for all of their support and friendship throughout the years. He emphasized how much he appreciated all the hard work of the MSCD staff and Supervisors and wished them all the best in the future.

ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING

The meeting adjourned at 1:48 and the next scheduled meeting will be held on March 10th at the Ag History Farm Park.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Walker, Secretary

<u>MEETINGS ATTENDED</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Butz	100%
Butler	92%
Saul	92%
Stabler	92%
*McGrath	100%
*Butts	83%

*Associate Members