

Henderson County
Farmland Preservation Taskforce: June 24, 2024

The Farmland Preservation Taskforce held a meeting on June 24, 2024, at 6:00 PM in the King Street Meeting Room located at 100 N. King Street.

Taskforce Member	Present	Absent
Commissioner Rebecca McCall, Chair		✓
Commissioner David Hill, Chair	✓	
Hunter Marks – Planning Board	✓	
Danny McConnell – Soil & Water Conservation District	✓	
Gary Steiner – NC Cooperative Extension	✓	
Jimmy Cowan – NC Farm Bureau	R	
Joffrey Merrill – AgHC	✓	
Randy Newman – Hendersonville Board of Realtors	✓	
Jason Edney – At large	✓	
Justin Patwin – At large		✓
Linda Pryor – At large		✓
Alan Ward – At large	✓	
Danielle McCall – At large	✓	

Also present:

Chris Todd, Business & Community Development Director
 Autumn Radcliff, Planning Director
 Liz Hanson, Planner I
 April Hoyt, Soil & Water Conservation District
 Jonathan Wallin, Soil & Water Conservation District
 Dr. Terry Kelley, NC Cooperative Extension
 Kieran Roe, Conserving Carolina
 Tom Fanslow, Conserving Carolina
 Jeffrey Darnell, NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services

R = attended remotely

Commissioner David Hill, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance:

Commissioner and Taskforce Chair Mr. Hill lead the invocation and pledge after the meeting was called to order.

Adjustment and Approval of Agenda:

Taskforce member Joffrey Merrill motioned to approve the meeting agenda as presented. Taskforce member Gary Steiner seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment for this meeting.

Adjustment and Approval of June 24, 2024, Meeting Minutes:

Commissioner and Taskforce Chair David Hill motioned to approve the June 24, 2024; meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Guest Speakers:

Loren Hendrickson, Farmland Preservation Coordinator – Wake County Soil & Water:

The Taskforce heard from Wake County's Farmland Preservation Coordinator, Loren Hendrickson, virtually. Mr. Hendrickson detailed the Wake County Farmland Preservation Program and his role in preserving farmland. Mr. Hendrickson also spoke about conservation easements and other tools Wake County utilizes to preserve agricultural lands. The Taskforce had an opportunity to ask questions after Mr. Hendrickson's presentation.

Christian Hirni, Land Conservation Manager – Orange County Natural & Cultural Resources:

The Taskforce also heard from Orange County's Land Conservation Manager, Christian Hirni, virtually, to learn about their efforts to preserve agricultural land and other types of open space. Mr. Hirni described projects that Orange County has completed to preserve farmland, such as the Lands Legacy Program. The Taskforce had an opportunity to ask questions after Mr. Hirni's presentation.

Discussion:

Staff member, Liz Hanson, presented to the Taskforce a new grant that will be offered by the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Farmland Preservation Division. The focus of this grant is on Agricultural Growth Zones. Ms. Hanson briefly described what these AGZ's are and some of the grant specifics in regard to eligibility and applying.

The Taskforce discussed the next steps in the creation of a Farmland Preservation Program in Henderson County. Several taskforce members requested Staff to present the County Present-Use Value rollback amounts at the next meeting. Staff were also requested to schedule representatives from Blue Ridge Community College's Horticulture Program to speak to the Taskforce at a future meeting. The Taskforce also discussed Conserving Carolina, the Soil and Water Conservation District staff, and the NC Cooperative extension, meeting to create a framework for the potential Farmland Preservation Program.

After discussion, Taskforce member Gary Steiner made the following motion: *"I move that once a program structure is presented to the BOC, the Taskforce recommends there is a need for an employee of the County to be created that would be housed in the Soil and Water Conservation District to oversee and administer the program and request that the BOC approve the program and funds to hire this new employee"*.

Taskforce member Alan Ward seconded the motion. The motion was carried with two opposing votes.

Next Meeting:

The next scheduled meeting for the Taskforce is July 8, 2024, at 6:00 PM in the King St Meeting Room. Commissioner and Chair Mr. Hill motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:29PM. Motion carried.

Commissioner Rebecca McCall, Chair and Commissioner David Hill, Chair
Henderson County Farmland Preservation Taskforce