

**Henderson County
Farmland Preservation Taskforce: July 8, 2024**

The Farmland Preservation Taskforce held a meeting on July 8, 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	✓	
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:

R = attended remotely

Chris Todd, Business & Community Development Director
 Autumn Radcliff, Planning Director
 Jonathan Wallin, Soil & Water Conservation District
 Dr. Terry Kelley, NC Cooperative Extension

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance:

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

Adjustment and Approval of Agenda:

Commissioner and Taskforce Chair Rebecca McCall motioned to approve the meeting agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Public Comment:

Lynn Williams gave a public comment regarding her support for the farmland preservation program.

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

Taskforce member Jimmy Cowan motioned to approve the June 24, 2024; meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Staff Updates:

Staff provided an update on the Agricultural Growth Zone (AGZ) grant. Staff let the Taskforce know that they reached out to Evan Davis at the NC Farmland Preservation Division and were informed that more information on the AGZ grant will be made available in mid-September. The application period for the AGZ grant is from October 2024 – December 2024. Staff will update the Taskforce as more information becomes available. At their last meeting, the Taskforce requested information on the Present-Use Value Program rollback amounts. Staff contacted the County Finance Department and were able to receive the PUV rollback amounts and recapture values from the last several years. Staff shared these amounts with the Taskforce.

Guest Speakers:

Rachel Meriweather, Horticulture Program Lead Instructor – Blue Ridge Community College (BRCC)

The Taskforce heard from Rachel Meriweather, the Horticulture Program Lead Instructor at Blue Ridge Community College. Ms. Meriweather shared the program’s website and provided an overview of the Horticulture Technology Program. The program curricula include courses such as pest management, plant science and soil science, and landscaping. BRCC offers several different certificates, such as in Landscaping and Business of Horticulture. BRCC also offers a Horticulture Technology Diploma and Associate Degree program. After Ms. Meriweather presented the Taskforce had an opportunity to ask questions about the program.

Shanda Bedoian, Director of Corporate & Customized Training – Blue Ridge Community College (BRCC)

The Taskforce also heard from Shanda Bedoian, the Director of Corporate and Customized Training at Blue Ridge Community College. Ms. Bedoian provided the Taskforce with an overview of the Apprenticeship Blue Ridge program. BRCC offers many different apprenticeship “tracks”, such as automotive, electrical, HVAC, manufacturing, and more. The apprenticeship program allows students to work and attend courses while building skills in various industries. Students are also provided with a mentor through support from their variety of local partner companies. The Taskforce has an opportunity to ask questions after Ms. Bedoian’s presentation.

Discussion:

Staff informed the Taskforce that the Planning Department met with the Soil and Water Staff, Conserving Carolina, and the NC Cooperative Extension prior to the meeting. At this meeting, Staff began working on a draft Farmland Preservation Program. Some of the proposed program inclusions are VAD, EVAD, Conservation Easements, and the PUV Program. Staff also shared the NC ADFPTF Application Scoring for Agricultural Conservation Easements. Staff also shared the Mills River Land Preservation Program Scoring for their Conservation Easement program.

The Taskforce requested several items to be discussed at their next several meetings such as the 2010 Agricultural Preservation Plan, funding recommendations, and a draft program ordinance.

Next Meeting:

The Taskforce agreed to schedule a Special Called Meeting for July 29th, 2024, at 6:00 PM in the King St. Meeting Room. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM.



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