

Economic Development Agricultural Advisory Board

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 19, 2025
Harford County Agricultural Center

Attendance:

(X Indicates Absence)

Henry Holloway – Service (Chair)	Derek Hopkins – FFA
X - Kate Dallam – Member At Large (Vice Chair)	Kimmi Doran – Agricultural Coordinator*
Alice Archer – Harford County Farm Bureau (Secretary)	Reese Jones – Nursery
	Andy Kness – University of Maryland Extension
Jen Wilson – Ag Land Preservation	Candace Lohr-Pearce – Vegetable/Fruit
X - Janet Archer – Dairy	Donald Lyons – Grain
X - Nick Bailey – Retail	X** - Michele Magness-Hill – Member At Large
David Boniface – Deer Creek Watershed Assn.	Greg Murrell – Member At Large
Quintin Cornwell – Harford Soil Conservation District	X - Jim Reilly – Harford County Council
Emmy Dallam-Beavers – Young Farmers	Victoria Stone – MAEF
X - Tracey Gay - Equine	Bob Tibbs – Livestock
	Mitch Hopkins – Member At Large

Others Attending:

Karen Holt – Director of Economic Development
Lisa Krysiak – Administrative Secretary, Department of Economic Development
Jodi Marschhauser – Tourism Manager, Department of Economic Development
Aurora Kahoe – Representing Councilman Reilly

*Agricultural Business Development Associate, Department of Economic Development

**Excused Absence (Reading for Ag Literacy Week)

Welcome

The meeting was opened by Henry Holloway, Chair.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the January 15, 2025 meeting were approved as presented.

Director's Report

Karen Holt, Director of Economic Development, announced that Business & Focus magazine will be highlighting Harford County as a business technology and recreation destination. The website for the new tourism marketing campaign -- Hello Harford -- will launch on April 1. Karen thanked everyone who has volunteered to read for Ag Literacy Week.

Agricultural Coordinator's Report – Kimmi Doran

- USDA Meat Processing Facility

Matson Consulting was here last week for meetings and site tours. There are now four potential sites for the facility, with the Ag Center property identified as the priority. This will involve working with the Department of Public Works and BGE (due to the gas transmission line). The draft document is almost complete.

- Agricultural Literacy Week

Readers are scheduled to visit 200 elementary school classrooms and read to about 4,000 students this week. In collaboration with MAEF, the book “The Soil in Jackie’s Garden” will be read and then provided to each classroom.

- Agricultural Education Initiatives

Presentations to North Harford High School students were held on Monday, February 10. The presenters were Mitch Hopkins, Nathan Holloway, Evan Johnson, and Kimmi.

- Agriculture Night at Ripken Stadium

This event is scheduled for Thursday, August 28. The planning committee will be meeting soon to provide activities and displays starting at 5:00 PM (when the gates open) through 7:00 PM (when the game starts).

- Senior Coupon Program

A new program is being developed through the Office on Aging to collect produce from selected farms (Lohr’s Orchard, Jones Family Farm, Brad’s Produce, and Third Way Farm, so far) and deliver it to seniors with lower income who are residing in 11 specified housing centers.

- Farmers Markets

A one-time “Healthy Living” event at APG is being coordinated by the cohort team. This will be a daytime event in June, allowing participants to meet the participating farms and then develop an ordering system.

The Edgewood Farmers Market will be held monthly on first Sundays, beginning in April and going through November.

Vicki Stone recently attended the Future Harvest Conference. She will provide additional information to Kimmi about developing a non-profit food hub for purchasing and delivering food.

- Legislative Update

Crossover was on Monday, March 17. Solar siting and PFAS issues are still in play.

EDAAB Membership

Henry Holloway announced that Kate Dallam has resigned from the EDAAB. Her position as a Member At Large will now be filled by Mitch Hopkins. Kate also served as Vice Chair. It was recommended and approved that Bob Tibbs serve as the new Vice Chair. These appointments have been approved by the County Council.

Report from Agritourism & Marketing Committee

Reese Jones, along with Tourism Manager Jodi Marschhauser, announced development of the new app for the Passport Program for visits to farms and farm markets. The event is titled “Fresh from the Farm,” using a QR code to identify participating locations. Use of the passport will allow entry into a monthly give-away. So far, five locations are participating. There will also be a link to the Farm Finder app, and this will also tie into Tourism’s Hello Harford app.

Report from Education & Outreach Committee

There has been recent communication about the future of the Farmers & Community Partnership. This was originally a 1 year project led by Dr. Sharon Stowers which lasted 5 very productive years. The partners (including Andy Kness, Greg Murrell, and Alice Archer) find that the work of this group now overlaps with other efforts. We will need to deal with the funds currently held by Harford Community College.

Greg Murrell provided an extensive update about the agricultural program at North Harford High School, as follows:

- The Ag Magnet Program had 160 applicants, with 94 entering the program in September. Interest came from all over the county, especially from Fallston Middle School. This means that the program will have 400-500 students for the 2025-2026 school year. The areas of study are Natural Resources, Plant Science, Small Animal, Large Animal, and General Agriculture.
- North Harford now has 134 FFA members. The public speaking team will be going to the state competition.
- Thanks were expressed for the recent high school presentations.
- The Banneker/Key is the University of Maryland's most prestigious scholarship. The full Banneker/Key scholarship provides full tuition, room and board, and a book allowance. The partial Banneker/Key scholarship provides \$8,000 annually for in-state students and \$12,000 toward tuition for out-of-state students.
- The Gallery Walk for Capstone projects will be held on Wednesday, May 21 from 6:00-7:30 PM. Everyone is always impressed with learning how the students are able to conduct research at the high school level.
- Local farms and members of the EDAAB were thanked for their support of North Harford students.
- Karen Holt gave kudos to the North Harford GIS students for creating the HEAT map, which identified career clusters and provided a list of businesses and information about them. This was recently presented to MSDE and the Department of Labor. Work will continue with other counties and possibly the State of Maryland to expand this application.
- The Fifth Topic for the Envirothon will be Roots and Resilience Foster Forest Stewardship. The county Envirothon competition will be held on Friday, May 2 at the Anita C. Leight Estuary Center.
- Greg is continuing to work with Vicki Stone of MAEF to develop and promote the 7th Grade curriculum with agricultural lessons.
- North Harford has a new Brown Swiss named Ruby, who will become a fistulated cow. Henry Holloway mentioned that his daughter Cassie worked with fistulated pigs in graduate school.
- Reese Jones asked about the retention of Harford County students returning to the county. Greg replied that 60% of the students study agriculture and 80% are in the STEM field.

Report from Technology & Logistics Committee

Bob Tibbs reported on the tour to the four proposed sites for the meat processing facility, in Perryman, Abingdon, Whiteford, and at the Agricultural Center. The proposed location at the Ag Center will involve the BGE gas transmission line. Bob said there is a good group working on this project. The next step will be to seek funding for the project.

Report from Finance Committee

Quintin Cornwell reported that the Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB) updated the loan process in November 2024, changing County Executive approval from \$50,000 up to \$75,000 and approval up to \$200,000 by the County Council.

The committee will be meeting afterwards to discuss grants available for the meat processing facility. The county's agricultural grant can provide \$30,000 -- \$15,000 for training and education, and \$15,000 for marketing to expand farm capacities.

Agricultural Land Preservation

Jen Wilson reported on how the State Budget will affect funding for Program Open Space, MALPF, and Rural Legacy. Two hearings are being held today, and there may be a special General Assembly Session in the fall. This state funding does not impact the Harford County program.

Harford County hosted visitors from Texas on Wednesday, April 9. They visited The Mill and My Lady's Manor Farm, with lunch at Broom's Bloom Dairy.

Good of the Cause

Relating to recent news from the General Assembly, Karen Holt mentioned the Business Service Tax and its impact on Harford County due to our proximity to Delaware and Pennsylvania. She also mentioned the reduction of the federal workforce and its impact on Aberdeen Providing Ground. At present, there is a hiring freeze but the Department of Defense is being maintained.

Derek Hopkins discussed the implications of eliminating the inheritance tax and how to better protect the spouse and children from high estate taxes.

Reese Jones mentioned that Harford County is currently at the D2 level for severe drought conditions.

Agricultural Tour for Legislators

Quintin Cornwell announced the upcoming tour will be held on Wednesday, June 25. Farms in the southern part of the county and Havre de Grace area will be visited.

Farm Bureau Picnic

Alice Archer announced that there will be a Farm Bureau Picnic at the 4-H Camp/Deer Creek Overlook on Saturday, June 21. Details will be available soon.

Upcoming Events

Numerous other upcoming events were listed on the agenda. Earth Day at Poplar Grove Park on Saturday, April 26 should be added to the list.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held on **Wednesday, May 21, 2025.**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:01 AM.

Recorded,
Alice A. Archer, Secretary