

# Economic Development Agricultural Advisory Board

## MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, September 17, 2025  
Harford County Agricultural Center

### Attendance:

(X Indicates Absence)

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

Guests: Karen Holt - Director of Economic Development  
Lisa Krysiak – Administrative Secretary, Department of Economic Development  
Jodi Marschhauser – Tourism Manager, Department of Economic Development

\*Agricultural Business Development Associate, Department of Economic Development

### Welcome

The meeting was opened by Henry Holloway, Chair.

### Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the May 21, 2025 meeting were approved as presented, with two name corrections under the Director's Report on page 2. Relating to personnel changes, Bonnie Barresi moved to a State position and Michelle Taylor retired.

### Agricultural Coordinator's Report – Kimmi Doran Lyons

- USDA Meat Processing Facility

There are on-going discussions around ownership and business models. The group met with the OSU Professor and Co-Op Specialist yesterday to discuss a closed membership model, with more discussion and examples coming. The process of setting up the business with the State of Maryland has begun. The Providence Strategies, LLC proposal for funding is being reviewed. Site selection finalization is underway, with one last effort to find other properties.

- Past Events – Hosted or Attended Since Last Meeting

- North Harford High School Capstone Gallery Walk – Great display of projects.
- Homeschool Association Ag Day at The Grove – About 35-40 kids participated in 8 activities.
- Harford County Farm Bureau Picnic – New Farm Bureau "Royalty" are already at work.

- Harford Soil Conservation Farm Tour on Wednesday, June 25 for local, state, and federal legislators. Visited Indian Spring Farm, Shadow Springs Farm, Kent Meadows Farm, Third Way Farm, and Hopkins Brewery.
  - Governor's Buy Local Cookout – Ice cream from Broom's Bloom Dairy was featured.
  - Harford County Farm Fair – Great weather, turnout, and events, and a record-breaking Livestock Sale.
  - Maryland State Fair – Harford County rocked it. Harford County Farm Bureau dipped ice cream.
  - The Mill's Crop Showcase – Great vendor turnout and demonstrations.
  - Ag Night at Ripken Stadium – 10 vendors and 1,100 fans.
  - Havre de Grace and Bel Air Farmers Markets Anniversary Celebrations
  - Deer Creek Overlook's 100th Anniversary Party
- Upcoming Events – Between Now and Next Meeting
    - Tuesday, September 23 – APG Farmers Market
    - Wednesday, October 8 – Maryland Ag Council Tours
    - Thursday, October 9 – Cultivating Connections: Farm to School Summit
    - October 20-24 – Maryland Economic Development and Business Appreciation Week
    - Thursday, October 23 – Harford Soil Conservation District Cooperators Dinner
    - Lots of fall festivals and events!
- Special Topics
    - Met with the new Health Officer – Went over some of the past issues between the Health Department and the agricultural industry. Was assured that repairing the reputation is of the utmost concern. Working to develop checklists and requirements for different ag businesses.
    - New edition of *Homegrown Harford* launched at the Farm Fair. Copies are available for distribution.
    - The Ag Education and Outreach Grant has closed, with 6 applicants. The Finance Committee will be meeting to discuss the applications.
    - Roadway Safety – There has been an increased number of accidents and close calls with farm equipment on roads. An email message was sent to the Sheriff's Office with ideas on working together to help mitigate the risk. No response has been received yet. Department of Emergency Services (DES) is willing to help with promotional materials.

## **Director's Report**

Karen Holt, Director of Economic Development, provided a written report and mentioned the following highlights.

- Thanks to Mike Allen and Scott Elliott for their gracious hospitality for the EDAAB Summer Social at Ripken Stadium on Thursday, June 5.
- Procurement – A detailed RFP process to contract for marketing support and media placement for the second year of Hello Harford's regional market outreach. Board of Estimates approval is slated for September 23.
- Grants – E-FIP has secured \$200,000 for façade improvements related to Edgewood Road and Pulaski Highway. Applied activity has been responsive, with excitement about this pilot opportunity.
- Staffing and Office Update – Steve Overbay has joined OED as Administrator, managing staff operations related to the OED Strategic Plan and serving as Council Liaison. Ryan Lina has joined OED as a Tourism

Specialist, supporting Jodi in data related apps and platforms. Kim Szparra joins as a new Finance Liaison supporting workforce technical training grants, our loan program, and some aspects of grant reporting and compliance. A Strategic Marketing Coordinator is anticipated to join during Economic Development Week in October. The office is an active construction site, resulting in new office space to support staffing and storage for Hello Harford promotions and displays. The welcome center in the lobby will also be transformed with more Hello Harford branding, merchandising, and attraction and event information.

- A successful tour with Maryland Commerce Secretary Harry Coker visited locations throughout Harford County.
- The DEVCOM Tech Accelerator Summit was held at Southampton Middle School, with 97 attendees and about 8 technologies showcased.
- The first Harford Level Up workshop was on Contracting with the Federal Government. The second workshop on Franchising will be held next week, and Business Planning Tools with AI will be in November.

Karen also shared the following:

As an overview within this Administration, the Department of Economic Development has directly or indirectly seen the creation of 820 new jobs, 2.1M sq ft of space, and \$602M in capital expenditures invested here in Harford County. We've physically visited 40 of our top 100 companies by employee size, 57 farms and ag sites, over 1,000 small businesses, one third of our museums and attractions, and 94% of our hotel and lodging facilities. We've actively engaged with businesses in nearly 1,700 opportunities – from finance incentives to partnership referrals, workforce development, real estate, business navigation, start-up assistance, and guidance in doing business with APG. More than 1,400 of those opportunities successfully resolved, actively working about 250. I am honored to lead a dynamic and skilled team who are making Harford business owners our top priority.

### **Legislative Concerns and Policy Development**

Tyler Hough, Director of Government Relations for Maryland Farm Bureau, will be attending our meeting in November. (Date to be determined.)

Kimmi Doran Lyons outlined the following things to think about.

- As the legislative session approaches, this will be a re-occurring section. Things to think about:
  - Any topics or areas of concern that we want to focus on monitoring.
  - The County is already working with MACO on changes to the solar bill.
  - What are issues that farms are facing that would require a legislative change to happen?
- Last year's big topics were the Renewable Energy Act, cage-free egg operation mandates, and budget cuts to Program Open Space.
- Kimmi will continue to add a summary page of bills to be monitored to newsletters.
- Bills that already have working groups include changes to the Renewable Energy Act (SB931) and DNR eliminating Sunday hunting.

Harford County Farm Bureau is currently reviewing policy for submission to Maryland Farm Bureau in October. Additionally, Lisa Maxwell (Vice President of Harford County Farm Bureau) is currently attending the Council of

Presidents meeting in Washington, DC. Farm Bureau discussion on any topics to be considered by the General Assembly must be included in the Policy Book.

NOTE: Kimmi provided the link to the Maryland Farm Bureau policy development book in an email message dated September 17, 2025.

#### **Report from Agritourism & Marketing Committee**

Candace Lohr Pearce reported that many school tours and family visits are happening. Agritourism is popular, but issues persist to operate as an event venue, with liability requirements, time requirements, and niche demand with no late nights. Review of the zoning codes will probably return to the EDAAB, but the problem is with those pushing the envelope, those who bend the rules, and changing the code versus enforcement.

The MDA definition of agritourism will be coming soon, along with definitions of functions and common language.

#### **Report from Education & Outreach Committee**

Karen Holt recently met with Dr. Theresa Felder of HCC about the possibility of hosting a regional ag symposium next year. This would be an initiative of the Farmers & Community Partnership.

Greg Murrell addressed input to the HCPS curriculum; specifically, where does the initiative come from – the Ag Advisory Board, the County, or MAEF (who has experience with this). Vicky Stone of MAEF talked about the ag literacy survey by grade. Is 7th Grade the right place or the right subject area? For example, short-term projects like Ag Literacy Week or a year-long science curriculum with units. The survey also identified Ag in the Classroom programming, Food for America visits with 2nd Graders, and virtual field trips. It is hoped that Maryland (or even Harford County) virtual field trips can be started. This could also tie Science and Technology to Agriculture.

NOTE: Kimmi provided information about virtual field trips provided by New York Ag in the Classroom in an email message dated September 17, 2025.

#### **Report from Technology & Logistics Committee**

This committee has been working on the Meat Processing Facility.

#### **Report from Finance Committee**

As mentioned above, the Finance Committee will be meeting after this to review the Ag Education and Outreach Grant applications.

#### **Good of the Cause**

Andy Kness announced that the Nutrient Management Advisory position (previously held by Tricia Hoopes) has been posted.

#### **Upcoming Events**

Other upcoming events were listed on the agenda.

#### **Next Meeting Date**

The date of the next meeting will be announced.

**NOTE: The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 18, 2025.**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:47 AM.

Recorded,  
Alice A. Archer, Secretary