

MEETING NOTES

Catawba County Farm & Food Sustainability Plan

Working Committee

November 8, 2012

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ken Arrowood, Barbara Beatty, Mike Burris, Jeff Carpenter, Jeff Elmore, Martha Green, Clarence Hood, Nathan Huret, Jeremy Lee, Dave McCart, Danny Montgomery, Susan Proctor and Der Xiong

STAFF PRESENT:

Mary George and Sue Ballbach with Planning, Parks, and Development; Mary Furtado and Haley Kadish with County Managers Office

OTHERS PRESENT:

Alex Fulbright, City of Newton Planning Department

REVIEW OF EDUCATION PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Mary George welcomed everyone in attendance. She then had each facilitator (Jeff, Haley and Mary) review the draft Education Program Recommendations which were developed at the last meeting in break-out groups. There were some clarification changes made to several action items, such as noting that the youth education programs should be for all schools (public, private and home-schools). Also a couple of new action items were added. A website for countywide information, including resources available, agri-tourism sites, etc. was added to the Public Education action items. Also a recommendation was included under Children/Schools Education to have agricultural education in all high schools (currently it is in four county system high schools). She asked the Committee if there were any other ideas to be incorporated. The Committee noted that this sufficiently covered the Education Programs. The revised Education Programs section will be reviewed at the next meeting for the Committee to give final endorsement.

Jeff informed the Committee that the feasibility study for the Gaston Aggregate Processing facility has been complete. The study showed that there was more interest in meats than fruits/vegetables; however, they are proceeding with looking at potential sites.

Mike Burris noted that MDI would like to work with farmers to get local produce in the stores. He gave a list of the following produce that he would like to purchase:

- Blueberries
- Broccoli crowns
- Corn
- Pumpkins (Halloween carving-type)
- Strawberries
- Asparagus
- Red Peppers
- Hot house tomatoes
- Leaf lettuce

In regards to farm transition and rental farmland, Jeremy commented that Carolina Farm Credit has a listing of farm rental sites on its web site under the “Lands in Transition” section. It was noted that due to the demand for farmland, a County web site would not be very productive since most land would be rented before it could be put on to the site. Instead, it may be more beneficial to have a listing of smaller tracts (2-5 acres) which could be put into vegetable/fruit production.

PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS –SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Mary broke up the Committee members into small groups to develop the Partnership Program recommendations. The three groups then individually discussed partnerships between farmers, farmers with institutions and farmers with youth. The small group action items along with responsibilities will be presented to the Committee as a whole at the next meeting.

NEXT MEETING

Mary indicated that the Committee has two more scheduled meetings for the year. At these meetings, the final Partnership recommendations will be approved and the Implementation Partnerships will be finalized for the Policy and Program recommendations (based upon the Committee’s survey results). Mary said she will email the results of the Implementation Partnership survey to the Committee so they can review them before the next meeting, which is scheduled for November 29.

There being no other business, the Committee adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary George, Project Manager