



## **Carroll County Ag Advisory Committee**

*Meeting Tuesday, July 9, 2024 – 3:00 pm*  
Conference Room A – Carroll County Ag Center

### **MINUTES**

Present: Merrill Folsom, Jerry Culver, Ryan Morris and Kelly Hagen. Absent: Sam Duke, Allison Key and Bill Hodge.

Dee Perry called the meeting to order at 3:15 and a quorum was present. The meeting is recorded for ease of minutes at a later time.

#### *I. Old Business*

- A. Minutes of May 14, 2024 were emailed. There was no discussion. Ryan Morris made a motion to approve the minutes and it was seconded by Jerry Culver. There was no further discussion and the motion carried 4-0.

There being no other old business, the committee moved into new business.

#### *II. New Business*

- A. Dee Perry explained the county's decision to start collecting stewardship fees for successful conservation easements. Monies to be held as a separate line item and preferably in an interest-bearing account for monitoring and legal defense. Dee explained that these fees could possibly be tax deductible and the county attorney as seeking confirmation. Also, stewardship fees are a normal course of business in the conservation easement world. Dee sent a spreadsheet earlier to get an idea of what the county could have been collecting based on the 12 completed conservation easements. Dee also indicated that GALT uses a 2.5% calculation for the conservation easements they hold. Some land trusts use a very complicated formula. Ryan Morris confirmed that the 2.5% would be on the easement value and Dee explained that the easement value is the money the landowner receives at closing. Ryan also confirmed that legal fees would cover if someone tried to break the easement in the future. Ryan had studied this and feels 2.5% was a reasonable number. Kelly asked if we will know the percentage

would be known before the forum. Dee explained that it would be presented at the work session at the end of July to be voted on by the Board of Commissioners at the meeting in August and that was the day before the forum. At this point Dee share the monetary responsibilities of the successful applicant so the committee could see what would be expected from a landowner. There was discussion regarding all the fees. Dee also explained how the agenda for the forum would work so that landowners will understand the fees charged by the appraiser and surveyor. Kelly discussed the size of the track and questioned that situation and if could a minimum. Ryan mentioned that the extra from larger tracks would help support the smaller ones. Dee noted that if the county had collected fees when the program started they would have approximately 26 years with no interest or additions. Kelly Hagan made a motion to approve 2.5%. Ryan Morris seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

- B. The Farmland Owner Information Forum was discussed. Dee explained she would put together application packets with the application and all other pertinent information. The packet will be numbered and applicants receiving a packet would sign a sheet. Ryan Morris suggested there be a sign in sheet so that we could track who attended and follow up with those who did not receive application packages to monitor how the event went and if they had further questions. There was discussion about the Georgia Farmland Conservation Fund.
- C. Kelly explained some of her thoughts regarding the ag portions of Carroll County and brought a zoning map to show how much of the county is zoned ag. Kelly brought up Gilmer County's Adjacency Permits. Dee mentioned she had brought the "Right to Farm" regulation to Avery and mentioned she would discuss it with Kim Dutton at a meeting she has the next day. The Committee feels like this is an important topic and should move forward. The new interest in Homesteading was also discussed.
- D. Dee informed the Committee about the proposed quarry in Paulding County and Carroll County's intention to send a letter of opposition to the Paulding County Board of Commission.
- E. Kelly Hagan brought up the continued absence of Sam Duke and that it was in conflict of the Committee's by-laws. Sam has missed five of seven meetings to date. Kelly made a motion to remove Sam from the Committee and ask for a replacement. Merrill Folsom seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

### *III. Adjournment*

- A. Ryan Morris made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Jerry Culver seconded. Motion carried 4-0. Meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.