

**HOWARD COUNTY AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION BOARD (APB)
AND STATE AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD (APAB)**

February 24, 2025

(Recording)

Attendance:

Board Members: Jamie Brown
 Cathy Hudson
 Chris Rhodes
 Joe Dymek
 Leslie Bauer
 Derek Patrick (Partial Meeting Attendance)

Staff: James Zoller, Executive Secretary/Agricultural Coordinator
 Lauren Longo, Planning Specialist, (DPZ)
 Joy Levy, Program Administrator, (ALPP)
 Lisa Bagrosky, Senior Assistant County Solicitor, Office of Law
 Emily Sizemore, Administrative Aide, Office of Agriculture

Guests: Jackie & Wale Akinpelu, Ryan Boswell, Eric Bushman, Ben Clemmer, Eva Dicocco, Josh Feldmark, Brad Glatfelter, Kevin & Maria Jackson, Kathy Johnson, Ajay & Shivum Kumar, Eric Metcalf, John Miller, Kenneth & Renee Moreland, Leah Nagy, Alessandra Negrini, Sang Oh, Maria Paul, Sahira Rafiullah, Walter Serafqn, Juan Stepter, Takiar Vinod, Archana Vipute, William Welch

Action Items

1. Approval of minutes from the January meeting

The board reviewed minutes from January 27th board meeting. Mr. Brown motioned to approve the minutes; Mr. Dymek seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved.

2. Advisory Comments, Commercial Solar Facility (CSF), Siddiqi property; HO-06-08-PPSC(2); 23 +/- acres (APB)

Ms. Levy reviewed the background information on commercial solar on agricultural property as it applies to both properties on the agenda for this meeting. Ms. Levy reviews the site specifics and staff analysis from the staff report for the Siddiqi property. Ms. Levy reminds the board that this review is the first step in a two-step process that allows the board to provide guidance regarding placement to minimize the impact of CSF on farming operations before solar

companies invest in development and conditional use permits. This board is primarily concerned with farming aspects of the project and the next step, the hearing board, will look at a wider range of topics.

Ms. Levy presents the two location options submitted by the Siddiqui's. Ms. Levy reviews the location options on maps that display of arial, slope and soil. Mr. Brown and Ms. Hudson inquires if the Siddiqui's are present, they are not. The Siddiqui's attorney, Mr. Oh, and representatives from Chaberton Energy, Ms. Negrini, Mr. Boswell and Mr. Miller introduce themselves to the board and are present on behalf of the Siddiqui's.

Ms. Hudson requests to see a business plan for the farming operation from the Siddiqui's, require more input regarding the farming operations. Mr. Brown would like to see more than one year of Schedule F, with what is presented he does not see much farming activity on the property. Mr. Brown agrees with Ms. Hudson that being presented with a business plan that discusses the current and future agricultural operations of the property would be beneficial to the decision making.

Mr. Brown confirmed with Ms. Levy that location option one goes over the 20% permitted by the policy. Mr. Rhodes mentions that when two options are presented but one is not a viable option it only gives the board one option to consider. The board would like to see two viable location options and a business plan for the next meeting before they make their decision.

Mr. Brown opens the meeting to testimonies. The board has no objection to allowing more than 5 speakers if testimonies are kept to 3 minutes. Mr. Zoller calls on names from the sign-in sheet and virtual attendees who wish to testify. Full testimonies can be heard on the meeting [Recording](#).

Mr. Kumar opposed the proposed Siddiqui project.

Ms. DiCocco opposed the proposed Siddiqui project.

Mr. Mooreland opposed the proposed Siddiqui project.

Mr. Welsh opposed the proposed Siddiqui project.

Mr. Akinpelu opposed the proposed Siddiqui project.

Ms. Negrini is in support of the proposed Siddiqui project.

Ms. Paul opposed the proposed Siddiqui project.

3. Advisory Comments, Commercial Solar Facility (CSF), Carroll property; HO-96-04-E; 331 +/- acres (APB)

Ms. Levy reviewed the site specifics and staff analysis from the staff report for Carroll property. Ms. Levy presented the location options on maps that display of arial, slope and soil. Both options meet and policy criteria for size and soil. Both options consistent with CSF policy. Ms. Levy presented two correspondences regarding the farming operations and the limited impact CSF will have on the farming operations. Proposed option one encompasses two areas of property that are not suitable for farming and produce the lowest yields. Ms. Hudson would like documentation that crop yields are lower on the proposed acreage.

Ms. Bagrosky informed the board that Carroll property IPA will not mature until August 15, 2026 and no CSF can be installed until the IPA has matured.

4. Election of Chair and Co-Chair

Mr. Zoller reviewed the roster of current board members and their term dates. Mr. Brown's term is ending in April 2025. The board will elect a new chair and vice chair annually or as needed when the member terms are ending. Mr. Dymek motioned nominating Ms. Hudson for chair. The motion is seconded by Ms. Bauer. The board unanimously approves, and Ms. Hudson accepts the position. Mr. Rhodes motioned to nominate Mr. Dymek for vice chair. The motion is seconded by Ms. Bauer. The board unanimously approves, and Mr. Dymek accepts the position.

Mr. Brown will serve as chair until a replacement for his vacancy is found. Mr. Zoller encourages the board to send him nominations. Board member recommendations are helpful. If anyone is interested in serving on the board, they can email or call Mr. Zoller.

Discussion Items

1. Programming Updates

Ms. Longo shared that Harrison letter is going to Council in April for IPA approval.

Mr. Zoller shared that the Office of Agriculture Connect and Collaborate event is on February 26th at Tony Loco's.

2. Meeting Adjourned

Mr. Dymek motioned to adjourn, and it was seconded by Ms. Bauer. All attending members were in favor of the motion, so the motion passed, and the meeting adjourned at 8:53 PM.