



Agriculture, Seafood and Forestry Board - Aug 13 2026 Minutes

Thursday, August 13, 2026 at 12:00 PM

26737 Radio Station Way, Suite C., Leonardtown, MD THIS AGENDA IS TENTATIVE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE - TIMES ARE APPROXIMATE A part or all of the meeting may be conducted in closed session

1. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Call to Order

2. ROLL CALL

- A. Confirmation of Quorum

Members present:

Scott Bacon, Forestry, 3rd term expires 12/31/2030

Ben Beale, Ex Officio University of Maryland Extension

Bonnie Browne, Community Member, 1st term expires 12/31/2029

John Delozier, Agriculture, 1st term expires 12/31/2030

Zachary Garnes, Member, 1st term expires 6/30/2031

Sydney Garner, Ex Officio St. Mary's County Department of Economic Development

Connie Gunn, Real Estate Community Representative, 1st term expires 12/31/2029

Erin Melanson, Agriculture, 1st term expires 12/31/2030

James Moore, Agriculture, 1st term expires 6/30/2027

Jeffrey Pharis, Seafood, 1st term expires 6/30/2030

Alan Polk, Forestry, 2nd term expires 12/31/2029

Robert Wentworth, 1st term expires 6/30/2031

Members not present:

Justin Cheseldine-Gass, Seafood, 1st term expires 6/30/2027

Kaitlin Fraer, Community Member, 1st term expires 6/30/2029

Priscilla Leitch, Agriculture, 1st term expires 12/31/2029

Bruce Young, Ex Officio St. Mary's County Soil Conservation District

- B. Welcome Guests

Emily Lacey, St. Mary's County Department of Economic Development

Daniel Pratson, University of Maryland Extension

3. Approval of Minutes

I move to approve the minutes of the June 4, 2026 Agriculture, Seafood and Forestry Board Meeting.

Moved by: Ben Beale; seconded by: James Moore

Motion Carries

4. PRESENTATION

Forestry Presentation - Daniel Pratson, University of Maryland Extension

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Agricultural Reconciliation Committee (5 minutes)

Subcommittee membership includes John Delozier, Kaitlin Fraer, Connie Gunn, Erin Melanson, and Jeff Pharis

No update at this time.

B. Agriculture Land Preservation Advisory Board (5 minutes)

Subcommittee membership includes Scott Bacon, John Delozier, Priscilla Leitch, James Moore, and Alan Polk

The Agriculture Land Preservation Advisory Board met at the conclusion of this meeting.

I move to approve the landowner request to remove the restriction to request release of the lots in sequential order for MALPF File Number 18-99-13e .

Moved by: Richard Polk; seconded by: James Moore

Quorum not met

6. OLD BUSINESS

A. Agriculture Updates (5 minutes)

Sydney Garner presented updates on the Maryland Department of Health on Farm Food Service Facility and the St. Mary's County Farm to School Program.

B. Seafood/Aquaculture Updates (5 minutes)

Sydney Garner played a video for the Oyster Marketing Campaign which can be found on YouTube. Jeff Pharis thanked the Department of Economic Development and Visit St. Mary's for the oyster marketing campaign efforts.

Ms. Garner also announced that Justin Cheseldine-Gass has submitted a letter of resignation from the Agriculture, Seafood & Forestry Board.

Mr. Pharis stated that crab harvest has been good this summer, however oysters are at risk of diseases because of the drought.

C. Forestry Updates (5 minutes)

No update at this time.

D. Maryland Agriculture Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) Updates (5 minutes)

Ms. Garner stated that 12 FY27 MALPF Application were submitted to the state for consideration on July 1st.

E. Rural Legacy Updates (5 minutes)

The Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust has 1 easement of 87 acres awaiting Department of Natural Resources review and another 83 acres easement coming to a close.

Events sponsored by the Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust can be found on their website or facebook.

Each year annual inspections are conducted on preserved easements to certify the terms of the easements are being met and that there are no violations. In the past few years, neighboring property encroachment has been noted and these violations have been dealt with legally.

F. Farmers Market Updates (5 minutes)

Emily Lacey shared that the Barns at New Market Seasonal Market is now operating. The Value-Added Building is open Saturdays from 9 am until 3 pm. The Seasonal Building is open Monday - Saturday from 9 am until 4 pm.

The California Farmers Market is open Saturdays from 9 am until 12:30 pm.

The Home Grown Farm Market is open year-round on Saturdays from 9 am until 1 pm.

Ms. Garner shared that the Barns at New Market has a part-time staff position posted on the County's website.

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. Board Member Open Comment Period (15 minutes)

Robert Wentworth shared The County Times article about the College of Southern Maryland's program for Agribusiness

B. Partner Updates - time permitting (5 minutes)

No update at this time.

8. ADJOURN

I move to adjourn the August 13, 2026 Agriculture, Seafood, and Forestry Board Meeting

Moved by: Scott Bacon; seconded by: James Moore

Motion Carries