

**Farmland Preservation Board Meeting
January 10, 2013**

Members Present

James Dobson, Chairman
Daniel Allen
Bobbie Williams
Donny Johnston
Charles Carter
Drew Sherrill
Jerry Turner

Staff Present

Matthew Todd, Planning
Nancy Keith, Coop. Ext.
Alaina Dillard, Planning
[Andrew Ventresca](#), Planning

Minutes: Mrs. Williams made a motion to approve the 4/12/2012 meeting minutes. Mr. Turner seconded said motion and all agreed. Votes 7-0

Review of Horizon Plan and land areas under consideration for the Rural Conservation designation: (Map attached to minutes)

Mr. Todd explained the map sent to all the board members. He stated that the purpose of modifying the Horizon Plan was to help farming communities and business in the dark green areas on the map. He stated that he would like to make the rural conservation areas larger. Mr. Todd suggested that we look at who is participating in the tax deferral program and other farming programs to grow the areas.

Mr. Dobson stated that he appreciated all the consideration of the Planning Department of the agricultural districts. He stated that he understood the obstacles of the Planning Department to keep the agricultural districts strong.

Mr. Allen asked if building permits had increased in 2012. Mr. Todd stated yes a bit.

Mr. Dobson stated that lots of industrial businesses have shut down and those buildings are not appealing for other businesses to move in. He stated that new industries are looking for larger tracts of land and that farmers need more protection now since farms are moving out. Mr. Dobson questioned how the Board will deal with these situations.

Mr. Sherrill asked if anything was being done to make more people aware of the agricultural programs offered in Iredell County. Mr. Todd stated that so far no letters or mailings have been sent out but the AC program has been presented at several meetings. Mr. Sherrill asked for suggestions on how to reach others that could be interested in the program. Mr. Todd stated that the farmland Preservation program was very limited on what it does but that the Rural Conservation designation offered more protection.

Mr. Johnston stated that he had discussed the VAD program with others around him in the southern end of the county, but had not had any good responses.

Website:

Mr. Todd stated that he would like to see a website that links different resources for farmers in Iredell County. He suggested that website have such items as a land exchange, hay for sale, list of farms in Iredell and possibly links to farms. Mr. Todd stated that the site would have to be kept updated frequently but could help market Iredell County. Mr. Johnston stated that he would like to see the criteria for Farmland Preservation program on the site. It was suggested that a map locating businesses that cater to the farming community would be beneficial. Mr. Dobson stated that the Iredell County demands for home grown products were not as good as some of the surrounding communities.

Share the Harvest:

Ms. Keith stated that the Share the Harvest program had been successful in other counties. She explained that the left over produce from farmers markets or personal gardens were distributed to food banks and other programs to help feed the hungry. Ms. Keith stated that she would like to present a 15 to 20 minute presentation on the program at different Cattleman's Club and other organizations.

Mr. Dobson asked what the advantages for the Rural Conservation designations were. Mr. Todd stated that there was a 200 foot setback requirement and that some agribusinesses can locate in the district without having to apply for the AC rezoning.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10.