

MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MSUFCU Headquarters
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Option to Join via Remote Technology
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MEETING MINUTES May 17, 2023

PRESENT:

Andy Chae, Vice-Chair, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Juliette King-McAvoy, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Monica Wyant, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Dr. Felicia Wu, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
David Williams, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Dr. Tim Boring, Director, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairman Chae called the meeting of the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development to order at 10:30 a.m. on May 17, 2023. Chair Chae called the roll with Commissioners Chae, King-McAvoy, Wyant, Wu and Williams and Director Boring present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: COMMISSIONER KING-McAVOY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MEETING AGENDA FOR MAY 17, 2023. COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL OF MARCH 15, 2023, MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: COMMISSIONER WYANT MOVED TO APPROVE THE MARCH 15, 2023, MEETING MINUTES. COMMISSIONER KING-McAVOY SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

The next scheduled meeting is July 26, 2023, meeting location and time is currently to be determined.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND TRAVEL

Commissioner Wu discussed her recent travel to Ethiopia for her job at MSU to work on a trial on milk nutrition.

Commissioner Wyant was excited to share that Michigan asparagus harvest was underway, and that her team at Meijer was excited to welcome the crop in the stores.

Chairman Chae explained his farm has started planting and field work for their summer vegetable crop. He had also traveled to Lansing to be part of a round-table discussion with Congresswoman Slotkin on the pending Farm Bill.

Commissioner King-McAvoy shared cherry and apple trees were in bloom, but it was too early to know what the crop this fall will look like.

Commissioner Williams explained his farm was in full swing of planting their row crops for the spring.

Commissioners Chae, King-McAvoy, Wyant, Williams and Wu traveled to attend today's meeting. There was no other travel submitted for approval.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER KING-McAVOY MOVED TO APPROVE THE COMMISSIONERS' TRAVEL. COMMISSIONER WYANT SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

COMMISSIONER ISSUES

Chairman Chae reviewed the retirement resolutions before the Commission recognizing Paula Dankert, from the Food and Dairy Division, and Ahmed Jama, from the Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER WYANT MOVED THE RESOLUTIONS FOR PAULA DANKERT AND AHMED JAMA BE ADOPTED. COMMISSIONER KING-McAVOY SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Boring introduced himself to the commission as the new director of MDARD. Dr. Boring discussed broad priorities of the department, including, but not limited to environmental stewardship. Dr. Boring informed the commission of the discussions with the legislative bodies regarding the Farm Bill, the upcoming state budget and all legislative matters affecting the department. Dr. Boring explained he will maintain visibility in Michigan agriculture. He explained they had attended the Michigan School Lunch Hero event in Detroit a few weeks prior. The next day, Dr. Boring would be participating on a tour of Michigan Asparagus, and how that industry is important to Michigan agriculture. Dr. Boring explained the executive team was meeting one-on-one with multiple stakeholder groups, and expressed the department will continue to be accessible to all those involved in the industry.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Cheryl Ruble, representing the Michigan Sierra Club, gave public testimony on CAFOs history in the state of Michigan.

Tom Progar, representing Michiganders for Just Farming System, expressed concerns for a proposed CAFO site in the Sister Lakes area.

Lauren Wiitorp, representing herself, expressed concerns for a proposed CAFO site in the Sister Lakes area.

Kimberly Korona, representing Michiganders for Just Farming System, expressed concerns for a proposed CAFO site in the Sister Lakes area.

OVERVIEW OF COMMISSION POLICIES: Brad Deacon, Director of Legal Affairs and Emergency Management

Mr. Deacon gave an overview of the commission policies, and what they entail for the commission. Mr. Deacon informed the commission they are renewed every two years, making 2023 the year for review. Mr. Deacon suggested a timeline of September for approval. Commissioners discussed the timeline and said the department would conduct their internal review and present at the July meeting, then the approval would be placed on the September agenda.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE INVESTMENT FUND REQUEST: Jamie Zmitko-Somers, Division Director, Agriculture Development Division

Ms. Zmitko-Somers reviewed the Food and Agriculture Investment Fund Requests the commission will be reviewing to help benefit Michigan agriculture and economic growth. Ms. Zmitko-Somers explained all grant applications will be before the commission for approval. Commissioners asked where the funding is appropriated from and how much is funded. Ms. Zmitko-Somers explained it is General Fund/General Purpose funding from the state budget.

Ms. Zmitko-Somers advised two Food and Agriculture Investment Program project requests are being presented for Commission consideration today. The first project is Manthei Inc., DBA Manthei Wood Products., which is in Petosky, Michigan. Joe Zelinski explained the fund request would be to invest in a \$8,730,300 Manthei Inc. plywood production expansion project and will create 10 jobs. This expansion will also increase the purchase of Michigan timber for production.

Ms. Zmitko-Somers advised MDARD is recommending a Food and Agriculture Investment Fund performance-based grant of \$90,000 for Manthei Inc.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED TO APPROVE A FOOD AND AGRICULTURE INVESTMENT FUND PERFORMANCE BASED GRANT OF \$90,000 FOR MANTHEI INC. COMMISSIONER WU SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

The next project is Long Road Distillery, LLC., which is in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The production expansion project will include several large equipment investments and building upgrades at their new facility to accommodate growth. Jon O'Connor explained the company will move all their processing, barreling, storage, and packaging operations to the new facility. This expansion will increase their use of Michigan grown grain to 1 million pounds in the first year.

Ms. Zmitko-Somers advised MDARD is recommending a Food and Agriculture Investment Fund performance-based grant of \$65,000 for Long Road Distillery, LLC.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER WYANT MOVED TO APPROVE A FOOD AND AGRICULTURE INVESTMENT FUND PERFORMANCE BASED GRANT OF \$65,000 FOR LONG ROAD DISTILLERY, LLC. COMMISSIONER KING-MCAVOY SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: Ashley Steffen, MDARD Legislative Liaison

Ms. Steffen discussed the current group of agency led bills before the legislature. She highlighted a few that may have action before legislative summer break, including “Teddy’s Law” and Farmland Preservation updates on solar farms.

ADJOURN

MOTION: COMMISSIONER KING-McAVOY MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER WU SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

Attachments:

- A) *Agenda*
- B) *Agriculture and Rural Development Commission Meeting Minutes March 15, 2023*
- C) *Retirement Resolutions for Paula Dankert and Ahmed Jama*
- D) *Food and Agriculture Investment Fund Grant Request for Manthei Inc.*
- E) *Food and Agriculture Investment Fund Grant Request for Long Road Distillers, LLC*
- F) *MDARD Summary of 2023-2024 Michigan Legislature May 10, 2023*