

# MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Constitution Hall – Atrium Level  
Con-Con Conference Room  
525 West Allegan Street  
Lansing, Michigan

Option to Join via Remote Technology  
Dial: 1-248-509-0316; Conf. ID 801 807 163#

## **MEETING MINUTES March 13, 2024**

### **PRESENT:**

Monica Wyant, Chair, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Andy Chae, Vice Chair, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Kathrine Garthe, 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 Wyant called the meeting of the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development to order at 9:00 a.m. on March 13, 2024. Chair Wyant called the roll with Commissioners Wyant, Chae, Wu and Williams, and Director Boring present.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**COMMISSIONER WU MOVED TO APPROVE MEETING AGENDA FOR MARCH 13, 2024. COMMISSIONER CHAE SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

### **APPROVAL OF JANUARY 31, 2024, MEETING MINUTES**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 31, 2024, MEETING MINUTES. COMMISSIONER WU SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

### **NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING**

The next scheduled commission meeting is May 22, 2024.

### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND TRAVEL**

Chair Wyant gave an update on Michigan produce making its way to Meijer locations. She also informed the commission that new “Locally Grown” signage would be placed in stores this coming spring.

Commissioner Williams had attended the Commodity Classic in Houston Texas, an annual meeting for soybean, wheat, and sorghum growers. The meeting hit on multiple topics, including sustainability.

Commissioner Wu recently traveled to the University of Florida for the Global Nutrition Symposium, where fifteen countries were represented, and included discussion on animal source foods and how beneficial they are for maternal and child health. She also traveled to

Cal Tech, the Institute of Technology, to speak at conference related to genetically engineered microbes and how they could be beneficial in agriculture.

Commissioner Chae informed the committee that the farm's season was just getting started. They are currently meeting with new and old restaurants to finalize restaurant orders for the season.

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE COMMISSIONERS' TRAVEL. COMMISSIONER WU SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

### **COMMISSIONER ISSUES**

Chairman Wyant read the retirement resolution honoring John Hill for his 34 years of service with the department. Commissioners expressed their appreciation and congratulations to Mr. Hill

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER CHAE MOVED THE RETIREMENT RESOLUTION FOR JOHN HILL BE ADOPTED. COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

### **COMMISSIONER GARTHE JOINED THE MEETING AT 9:14 AM**

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

The Director updated the commission on new hires as the department continues to adjust to the realignment. Mike Alexander has been hired to lead the Conservation and Stewardship Division and Megan DeLeeuw will lead the Soil, Water and Climate section of the Conservation and Stewardship Division.

The department has presented to the Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittees on Agriculture on the Governor's Recommended budget. The budget process will continue throughout the coming months with final passage expected before summer.

The Director informed the commission that USDA is going to kick off their first regional equity meeting in Michigan on March 26. USDA has been working to address equity issues across agriculture, specifically within USDA, and the director expressed gratitude this process would begin in Michigan, thanks to Poppy Hernandez who has been leading those efforts.

**Chair Wyant informed the commission that Poppy Sias Hernandez, Office of Global Michigan Director, had a schedule conflict, and was unable to attend today's commission meeting.**

### **GENERALLY ACCEPTED AGRICULTURAL AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES SITE SUITABILITY DETERMINATION FOR JONATHAN AND FANNIE YODER POULTRY FACILITY – APPEAL PROCESS REVIEW AND SUMMARY OF DEPARTMENTAL ACTIVITIES:**

Chad Rogers, Interim Division Director for Conservation and Stewardship Division, and Mike Wozniak, Right to Farm Program Manager, Bureau of Environmental Sustainability, gave an update on the appeal that was received from neighbors of the proposed livestock facility on January 31, 2024. In a letter to the Site Suitability GAAMPS Committee, Wozniak stated that the Director asked the committee to organize and review the appeal

received by the department and then submit a report of their findings to the Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development. The Commissioners asked questions pertaining to the GAAMPs siting process.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS**

Jim Scales, attorney representing the appealing neighbors, testified before the commission.

### **PROFESSIONAL COMMITTEE REPORT – APPEAL OF THE GENERALLY ACCEPTED AGRICULTURAL AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES SITE SUITABILITY DETERMINATION FOR JONATHAN AND FANNIE YODER POULTRY FACILITY:**

Ryan Coffey Hoag and Megan Tinsley, both members of the Site Selection Committee came forward to answer questions from the commission. Commissioner Chae asked for clarification of a new vs existing livestock facility. Mr. Coffey Hoag explained this was the one area the committee spent the most time on. He that the committee felt the GAAMP needed to be reviewed for future revisions.

**The commission went at ease, the time being 9:30 a.m.**

**The commission came back to order, the time being 10:00 a.m.**

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

The Commission returned to public comment.  
There was no additional public comment.

### **COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION:**

Commissioners expressed concern on the Site Suitability GAAMP for clarification in class A road, lighting, and sound clarifications, as well as new and existing facilities.

**CHAIR WYANT MADE A MOTION FOR MDARD TO CONVENE THE SITE SUITABILITY COMMITTEE TO REVIEW AND CLARIFY LANGUAGE BETWEEN NEW AND EXISTING LIVESTOCK FACILITIES. COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

**CHAIR WYANT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE MDARD'S SITE SUITABILITY DETERMINATION FOR JONATHAN AND FANNIE YODER POULTRY FACILITY AS AN EXPANDING LIVESTOCK FACILITY. COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

**The commission went at ease, the time being 10:05 a.m.**

**The commission came back to order, the time being 10:17 a.m.**

### **FOOD AND AGRICULTURE INVESTMENT FUND REQUESTS**

Jamie Zmitko-Somers, Agriculture Development Division Bureau Director, introduced the grant applicant Coleman Yoakum, Micah 6 Community Project in Pontiac Michigan. The grant request is to expand a community project at the former Webster Elementary School in Pontiac, MI, which has been vacant since 2007. In total, this is a \$34 million dollar renovation funded in part through tax credits, ARPA funds, philanthropic support, and many small donors over the years. The food related portions of the Webster Community Center

include the food co-op, the commercial kitchen, and a small farmers' market creating six jobs and having an investment of \$1,579,269 for building renovations and equipment. Once building renovations are completed, the facility will feature a rentable commercial kitchen for food entrepreneurs along with wash pack space. There will also be a small food co-op, which will be Pontiac's first new grocery store in over a decade. On the weekends during peak season, the renovated school gym will also host a farmers' market. The grant request is a total of \$65,000. Mr. Yoakum explained this investment will bring food options in walking distance to many in the community who don't have transportation options to the nearest grocery store. Commissioners congratulated Mr. Yoakum on bringing this opportunity to his community.

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED TO APPROVE A FOOD AND AGRICULTURE INVESTMENT FUND PERFORMANCE BASED GRANT OF \$65,000 FOR MICAH 6. COMMISSIONER WU SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

Jamie Zmitko-Somers, Agriculture Development Division Bureau Director, introduced the second grant request, for \$60,000 for Hartford Farm Supply. The company is now focused on providing controlled atmosphere (CA) storage to apple growers in the region and currently has CA storage capacity to support approximately 200,000 bushels of apples. The \$1,085,392 CA expansion project will create two new jobs and will retain 35 jobs. The project involves construction of a new 80 feet by 100 feet, three room, CA storage facility. The new CA facility will store approximately 66,000 bushels of apples resulting in a 33 percent increase in storage capacity; increasing service to over 30 apple growers in the region. Adding this CA capacity for the growers and packers of fresh Michigan apples, particularly in Southwest Michigan, will help keep the Michigan apple industry viable and competitive in offering fresh apples year-around to the market. Trevor Meachum joined the to answer questions about why this controlled atmosphere storage is important in long-term sales for the apple industry.

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER GARTHE MOVED TO APPROVE A FOOD AND AGRICULTURE INVESTMENT FUND PERFORMANCE BASED GRANT OF \$60,000 FOR HARTFORD FARM SUPPLY. COMMISSIONER WU SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

### **ADJOURN**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER CHAE MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:39 A.M.

Attachments:

- A) *Agenda*
- B) *Agriculture and Rural Development Commission Meeting Minutes January 31, 2024*
- C) *Retirement Resolution for John Hill*
- D) *Appeal on Site Suitability Determination for Jonathan and Fannie Yoder poultry facility.*

- E) Jonathan and Fannie Yoder Farm Response to the Appeal.*
- F) Professional Committee Report – Appeal on Site Suitability Determination for Jonathan and Fannie Yoder poultry facility:*
- G) Food and Agriculture Investment Fund Request –Hartford Farm Supply*
- H) Food and Agriculture Investment Fund Request –Micah 6*