

## Anne Arundel County Agriculture, Farming and Agritourism Commission

### Annual Report 2020

The mission of the Anne Arundel County Agriculture, Farming and Agritourism Commission is the promotion, coordination, development, furtherance and establishment of agriculture, farming and agritourism in Anne Arundel County. The Commission consists of 12 voting members and 12 non-voting/ex officio members. The Agriculture, Farming and Agritourism Commission met quarterly in 2020 on the following dates: April 30, June 18, August 20, and November 19. The Commission, as a practice, develops Committees to focus on various agricultural topics deemed relevant to the full Commission to allow for a focused group to research, discuss, and present information and recommendations to the full Commission. The current and active Committees of 2020 included: Administrative, Ag Education, Alcohol, Farm Stays, On-Farm Weddings, and Upper Limits.

#### OVERVIEW

In 2020, The Commission worked on the topics of agriculture education, farm weddings, farm stays and on-farm alcohol production. The respective committees, including the Upper Limits Committee collaborated with county agencies and studied these activities extensively May 21<sup>st</sup>, a letter was sent to County Executive Stuart Pittman with the attached recommendations for legislation.

The Committees remained in contact with county agencies and the county submitted legislation to the Anne Arundel County Council in September, 2020. This legislation included bills 68-20 and 69-20. Both bills passed with amendments.

Please find outlined herein each Committee Chairperson's summary of committee activities and actions taken in 2020.

1. **Administrative:**

The administrative committee met once prior to the April 30<sup>th</sup> meeting to prepare for the meeting. The Administrative Committee reported at the August 20<sup>th</sup> meeting that various committees continued to work with the County's administration on pending draft legislation regarding on farm weddings, farm stays, and on-farm alcohol production.

2. **African American Agricultural Heritage Committee:** This new committee was formed in 2020 and expects to host meetings in 2021 to identify key opportunities to further African American Agricultural Heritage awareness and opportunities within the county.

3. **Ag Education:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic we have not set up another meeting with the Board of Education for the pathway to FFA at Southern High School. We have continued to talk with county leadership and look forward to moving forward on this project in 2021 when we can meet in person.

In December 2019, the committee presented a recommendation for the County Executive to move forward on the Ag education center at the Naval Academy Dairy Farm, and the unanimous Commission vote prompted the 2019 December letter to the CE. The committee concluded its formal exploratory work. The Education Committee has continued to diligently work with the

county, including Recreation and Parks, to determine the feasibility of the partial use of the Dairy Farm as an Agricultural Education Center for Anne Arundel County.

4. **Alcohol:** The alcohol committee did not meet in person in 2020, but communicated through email to provide a final review of recommendations for alcohol producer legislation that had been researched in committee for two years. These recommendations passed the Commission and were introduced to the county council on 9/8/2020 as bill 68-20 "Farm Alcohol Production Facility." Bill 68-20 was passed by the county council.
5. **Farm Stays:** The Farm Stays Committee met throughout the year and participated in regular commission meetings. We presented to the commission in conjunction with Planning and Zoning, the recommendations for Farm Stays in Anne Arundel County. Planning & Zoning prepared draft legislation our review and feedback. The recommendations were presented and added to Bill 69-20 which was passed on December 7, 2020 with amendments.
6. **Upper Limits:** The Upper Limits Committee met throughout the year and worked with the county agencies to support the conditions and limits as proposed and passed in bills 68-20 and 69-20. The Upper Limits Committee also discussed accommodations for farmers with respect to on-farm markets and with the Site Development Plan process. The County Administration did submit legislation including the SDP accommodation for farmers, however, the legislation, did not pass due to unrelated opposition to the bill.
7. **Weddings:** The Farm Weddings Committee met throughout the year and participated in regular commission meetings. We presented to the commission in conjunction with Planning and Zoning, the recommendations for Farm Weddings in Anne Arundel County. Planning and Zoning prepared draft legislation for our review and feedback. The recommendations were presented and included in Bill 69-20 which was passed on December 7, 2020 with amendments.