MINUTES
CABARRUS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2013

Supervisors Present: Robert Brown, Jeff Goforth, Ned Hudson, Vicky Porter and Louis Suther

Staff Present: Daniel McClellan and Dennis Testerman

Others Present: Chris Childers, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service District Conservationist; Kelly Sifford, Director, Cabarrus County Planning and Development Department; and Jason Walser, Executive Director, Land Trust for Central North Carolina

(1) Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Goforth at 5:18 p.m.

(2) Approval of Agenda

UPON MOTION of Ned Hudson, seconded by Vicky Porter and unanimously carried, the board approved the agenda as submitted.

(3) Approval or Correction of Minutes

UPON MOTION of Vicky Porter, seconded by Louis Suther and unanimously carried, the board approved the minutes of the August 6, 2013 regular meeting.

(4) Consent Agenda

UPON MOTION of Vicky Porter, seconded by Ned Hudson and unanimously carried, the board approved the Consent Agenda:

(4-A) Staff/Partner Report

The 50th anniversary banquet was attended by an estimated 225 guests at The Farm at Brusharbor on August 28. Generous sponsors contributed $4,500 in addition to donated goods and services. The District was awarded a $228,112.50 grant from the North Carolina Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund to use for purchase a development rights on an estimated 182.49 acres of farmland owned by Porter Farms.

(4-C) Application/Contracts/Requests for Payments - Conservation Cost-Share Programs

None

(5) Unfinished Business

None

(6) New Business

(6-A) Review Memorandum of Agreement with Land Trust for Central NC

The first-of-its-kind-in-the-nation memorandum entered into in 2010 was reviewed by Jason Walser. There was general agreement that the memorandum has provided a good framework for a productive partnership. There was general discussion about the following topics: term and permanent conservation easements on farmland and other sites with priority natural resources; elimination of the state Conservation Tax Credit during the 2013 legislative session; funding trends for purchased conservation easements; and operation of Catawba Lands Conservancy and Davidson Land Conservancy in Cabarrus County. Discussion included the possible use of local matching land protection funds for funding purchase of permanent conservation easements to be held by the District as the contingent grantee.

(6-B) Conservation Easement in Peach Orchard Estates Subdivision

Dennis Testerman reported that a new developer is seeking building permits for lots included in a subdivision plan approved in 2006. As a condition of the plan approval, a conservation easement on a water quality buffer along a Clear Creek tributary upstream of an existing conservation easement on the Eugene Divine farm. Copies of two conservation easement templates were distributed: one used by the state Ecosystem Enhancement Program for projects like the one on the Divine farm, and one provided by the county attorney to the attorney representing the developer. There was a general discussion about the history of this water quality buffer that is to be permanently protected, as well as existing and potential future operation and maintenance problems with this water quality buffer. There was also additional discussion about the absence of a contribution from the developer to the conservation easement stewardship fund. The board agreed by consensus that district staff and the county attorney should continue to work together to get the conservation easement being developed by the attorney for the developer recorded.

(7) Board Reports

(7-A) National Association of Soil and Water Conservation District's Southeast Region Meeting

Vicky and Tommy Porter reported on this annual regional meeting held last month in Savannah, Georgia. One focus that stood out was news conservation education outreach efforts to preschoolers.

(7-B) North Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Commission Meeting

Commission Chairperson Vicky Porter reported that she is serving on a Conservation Easement subcommittee that is establishing policy in light of violations of existing conservation easements. She also reported on current priorities for AgWRAP funding.

(7-C) North Carolina Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation

Foundation member Ned Hudson reported that NC State Grange President Jimmy Gentry has been nominated to succeed founding President Dr. Bill Davis and former Div. of Soil and Water Conservation Director Manley Wilder has been nominated as Vice-President. Plans include a goal of a $2 million endowment by 2015 that individuals and districts will be asked to support with financial contributions. A retreat is also planned for new members.

(8) Adjourn

UPON MOTION of Ned Hudson, seconded by Robert Brown and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Jeff Goforth, Chairman

Ned Hudson, Secretary/Treasurer