

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH AGRICULTURE ADVISORY BOARD

Chairman – LaMarr Anderson (01)	Melanie Glatt (03)	VACANT (06)	Kenneth Hoffman (10)
Vice Chair – Stephen Brown (08)	Kim Bergey (04)	Adam Jenski (07)	Thomas Bergey (11)
Amanda Salmon (02)	Jozef Slowik (05)	Misty O’Connor (09)	VACANT (12)

MINUTES

**REGULAR MEETING
DSJ BUILDING
LOWER LEVEL CONFERENCE ROOM**

**April 17, 2024
4:30 P.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL

Mr. Brown called the meeting to order at 4:43 p.m.

Members present and establishing a quorum were: LaMarr Anderson (arrived at 4:46 p.m.), Stephen Brown, Amanda Salmon, Melanie Glatt, Adam Jenski, Misty O’Connor and Kenneth Hoffman

Members absent and excused: Jozef Slowik

Members absent: Kim Bergey, Thomas Bergey

Staff present: Joseph Metzger, Land Management Division Manager
Margie Cobb, Department Administrative Specialist

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Agenda approved as presented.

III. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (Limit 3 minutes)

- Gabe Kitter (Title 23 Parcel): He is struggling with finding financial institutions that will lend. He is looking to learn Ag, as a whole and wants to get involved in the process.
- Rob Wells (Title 13 Parcel): He plans to reach out to his assemblyperson to request this Board bring forth a change for smaller subdivision of parcels. He personally feels this will allow smaller farmers to become involved; suggested 10 ac farm with a home, and that Schedule F be a consideration, but not a sticking issue since some farmers do not do a Schedule F.
- Bev Cutler (Title 13 Parcel): Agrees with Mr. Wells and would like the Board to consider this request and ensure there is zero loss of ag land. She shared that when she acquired the property in 1977 it was woods and they had to clear the land, which gave the Borough a net gain of useable ag land. She further stated that the Board would be seeing a future action for a lot line adjustment which she would like to be approved.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The March 20, 2024 Minutes were approved as presented.

V. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. Staff Report (Mr. Metzger)

- He thanked the three Borough Ag parcel owners for their comments and perspectives
- He has handled calls from lenders fielding questions. Mr. Kitter was asked about his funding issues; he stated he was only able to find funding through AK Housing. Mr. Jenski noted that funding options are available through ARLF or ARRC for farmers.
- He made the Board aware that he is aware of a potential subdivision and is awaiting the application. It will go through the Platting Board, and if approved, it will still require Ag Board approval and Assembly approval.
- He made the Board aware of the complexities of the lot line adjustment, mentioned by Ms. Cutler. This will also come to this Board for approval, then to the Assembly.

B. Work Session Follow up – Title Changes

Discussion on potential Covenant changes was added to the notes from previous meetings and is attached. Highlighted items are specific to this meeting.

VI. MEMBER COMMENTS (Limit to 3 minutes)

Everyone expressed that there was good discussion and input during the work session that was very informative with the interaction requested from the three ag parcel owners present.

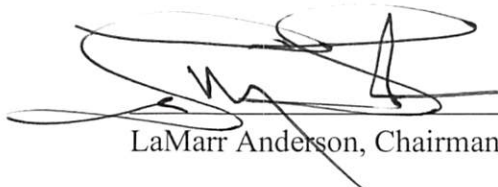
Mr. Brown: Rhodiola is in limited supply in the Lower 48, but very available in Alaska; this is a future market from Alaska.

Ms. Glatt: Feels this Board has a lot of business to address, suggested meeting twice a month. Also, suggested seeing what the State can offer for good ag land without compromising other economic factors.

VII. NEXT MEETING: May 15, 2024


VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Anderson adjourned the meeting at 6:30 p.m.


LaMarr Anderson, Chairman

9/18/24
DATE

ATTEST:



Margie Cobb
Department Administrative Specialist

TITLE CHANGES

Current Concerns:

- Preserve Ag land now and in the future
- Cannot divide property among more than four heirs.
- Court settlements that do not match covenants
- 79 acres does not allow for any division due to minimum 40 acre requirement
- **Provide incentives for those with large parcels to use for ag purposes**
- There are few 40-100 acre areas available for Borough Ag sale until West Susitna opens.

Focus Points:

- Possible lot size of 10-20 acres
 - o Balance: Preserve large lots for livestock while addressing need for small Ag
 - o Define rules for subdividing
- Add tax incentives for fam structures
 - Could affect all Title 13, 15 and 23 Ag Land Owners
 - Definitions/designations for lot sizes based on soil composition and watershed
 - Think of future – ensure the right language
 - o Ensure owners can't be sued by neighbors

PROS	CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any proposed changes should result in zero loss of ag land for properties under Title 13, 15 and 23. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not too small to make income. • Changes may not be approved by Title 23 landowners. • Enforcement difficult if language is too detailed.

CURRENT CONCERN: **Provide incentives for those with large parcels to use for ag purposes**

Agricultural Tax Incentives:

- **Only kick in if farming and proof provided by property owner (Schedule F or other).**
 - o State SB161; if passed, Borough could ratify. Maybe a resolution to Borough let the State know the Borough supports.
 - 4/18 – this draft does not address the issues of this Board Well
 - o Fairbanks legislation that was adopted.
 - **4/18 – ACTION ITEM** – Review for next meeting (5/15) to identify what can be used for recommendation to present to Assembly
- Tie tax incentives to agriculture production. Tiered approach.
- **Tax incentives not just the land, but the buildings to provide for infrastructure for storage/processing.**
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QUESTIONS:

If someone doesn't want to approve any changes to covenants, when property divided, new properties are under new covenants, not the current covenants.

OVERALL GOALS:

Protect and preserve ag land
 Ensure decisions today do not negatively affect the future.