



# CALVERT COUNTY AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

150 Main Street  
Prince Frederick, Maryland 20678  
410-535-1600  
www.calvertcountymd.gov

*Board of Commissioners*  
Mark C. Cox Sr.  
Catherine M. Grasso  
Earl F. Hance  
Mike Hart  
Todd Ireland

## Minutes

Monday, January 5, 2026, at 7:30 p.m.

**This meeting was held in person as well as by video teleconference.**

1. Meeting Called to Order
  - a. **The meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m. by Chairman Wilson Freeland**
2. Recognition of Persons Attending the Meeting
  - a. **APAB Members Present: Chair Wilson Freeland, Vice Chair Stephen Oberg, Secretary James Dowell, Thomas Briscoe, and Nathan Novotny**
  - b. **Staff: Jennifer David**
3. Approval of the Agenda
  - a. **A motion to approve the agenda was made by Thomas Briscoe. The motion was seconded by James Dowell and passed unanimously.**
4. Approval of the Minutes
  - a. December 1, 2025
    - i. **A motion to approve the minutes was made by James Dowell. The motion was seconded by Thomas Briscoe and passed unanimously.**
5. Old Business
  - a. **None**
6. New Business
  - a. MALPF Recertification Report
    - i. **Staff presented the County's Agricultural Land Preservation Program annual financial reporting form and recertification application to the Board for review and approval prior to submission to the Maryland Department of Agriculture and the Maryland Department of Planning. Certified counties retain 75% of the Agricultural Transfer Tax that is collected instead of the 35% allowed for uncertified counties. Staff explained that while the financial reporting form is submitted each year recertification of a county program occurs every five years, and that the goal is to evaluate the county program's effectiveness in preserving agricultural and forested land. Approval of the application by both the local Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board and the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) is required for submission. The County's previous application for recertification received approval from the BOCC on November 9, 2021, and was subsequently submitted to the State certifying the Calvert County Land Preservation Program for the next five years.**
    - ii. **Staff reviewed the report with the Board, highlighting important aspects of the application and significant improvements to the County program that have been implemented over the reporting period. Members expressed their satisfaction with the report and commended the thoroughness of the application.**
    - iii. **A motion to approve the County's application for recertification and to authorize the Chair to sign the required letter of support was made by James Dowell. The motion was seconded by Stephen Oberg and passed unanimously.**
7. Program Updates
  - a. PAR Program Update

- i. Board members were updated on the status of the FY 2026 PAR Cycle. At the December meeting, four eligible applications were approved, covering up to 55 TDRs at a total cost of \$342,650. Staff reported that offer letters have gone out to the eligible applicants and acceptance forms are due to be returned no later than Friday, January 16, 2026.

b. Rules & Regulations Update

- i. Staff reported that a work session was held with the BOCC on December 2, 2025, to further discuss the Rules and Regulations and to request additional feedback and direction addressing any remaining outstanding concerns. Wilson Freeland noted that he was in attendance and offered his perspectives. Application criteria including options for addressing the boundary survey requirement and the treatment of accessory dwelling units were discussed in the session. Staff reported that the BOCC directed staff to include an option for applicants to opt out of the survey requirement with a reduction in the maximum allowable number of TDRs that can be certified, while also including the option initially proposed allowing applicants to recoup the initial survey costs by offering a bonus payment per TDR as part of the PAR program. The BOCC was in support of raising the amount of the bonus from the amount initially proposed. Staff reported that the BOCC was in support of a text amendment to address the treatment of tenant houses.
- ii. Staff will be working on incorporating the changes into the document and is expecting a final work session prior to moving to the public hearing.

c. Rural Legacy Expansion Update

- i. Staff reported that a Public Information Session was held on December 11, 2025, to begin the public outreach process for a future expansion of the County's Rural Legacy Areas (RLAs). Staff explained that demonstrating public outreach and participation is a significant component of a Rural Legacy Area application, and that this was the public's first introduction to the expansion since initially proposed by Mr. Bowen and ACLT. Ten members of the community attended, mostly volunteers and staff from local land trusts.
- ii. Staff also reported that the county has produced a public-facing interactive Land Preservation Map in conjunction with this effort, which can be accessed from both the County's main Land Preservation website and the Interactive Maps page managed by GIS. Staff also demonstrated its use to the Board. Layers on the map include areas currently designated as RLA, the maximum extent of the RLA expansion being proposed, county growth tiers and protected lands. Land encumbered by MALPF, Rural Legacy, MET and the TDR Program each have their own layers. Members were pleased with the development of the interactive map, but did request that a disclaimer noting that these easements are private property and there is no right of public access to them be included on the map.

d. Forest Conservation Program Update

- i. Staff informed the Board of changes anticipated in the Forest Conservation Program that could impact preserved property. Staff explained that Forest Conservation is different from Forest Management or Forest Harvest Plans prepared by DNR or private foresters which advise landowners on managing their forests for timber production. Forest Conservation is a requirement by which clearing or disturbance of forested areas during the development process is permitted, and once certain thresholds are reached reforestation or mitigation for the loss of forested area is required. As a result of these changes the county is looking to create opportunities for forest establishment and forestry banking, which could provide financial opportunities for preserved and unpreserved farms and rural properties. Banking credits are envisioned to be managed much like FC TDRs were in the past. There may also be opportunities for the qualified conservation of existing forested areas as part of the changes. Environmental Planner Colleen Brummitt is spearheading the effort. Staff would like to invite her to a future meeting as the proposals move forward to further discuss the opportunities and impacts with the Board.

8. Public Comment

- a. **None**

*There is a time limit of 2 minutes for individuals, or 5 minutes if speaking as the designated representative of an organization.*

9. Announcements

a. **None**

10. Next Meeting – February 2, 2026, at 7:30 p.m.

11. Adjourn

a. **A motion to adjourn was made by Tomas Briscoe at 8:56 p.m. The motion was seconded by James Dowell and passed unanimously.**

\*\*\* If you would like to be notified of upcoming hearings, meetings, or other events, please subscribe via the Calendar page of our website at <http://www.co.cal.md.us/list.aspx>. \*\*\*