

Farmland Preservation Committee
Public Meeting Minutes
July 27, 2021 – 6:30pm
J Phil Campbell UGA Research and Education Center

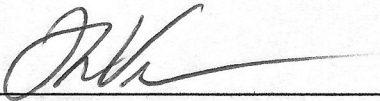
Persons Present: Thomas Verner – Chairman, Adam Hammond - Member, Mallory O'Steen – Athens Land Trust, Ke'Marcis Howard – Oconee County Extension Service and the following landowners: Ellen Thurmond, Darryl Matthews, Sarah Reams, Michael Lowder and Steven Nedza.

Minutes approval: Regular Session Minutes of the June 16, 2021 meeting were emailed to the Committee, the Committee was polled and the minutes were approved by the Committee.

Welcome and Introduction: On behalf of the Oconee County Extension Service, Ke'Marcis Howard welcomed everyone to the Farmland Preservation meeting. Thomas Verner thanked the Farmland Preservation Committee members, Athens Land Trust and the Oconee County Board of Commissioners for their continued support of permanently preserving farmland in Oconee County for future generations. After providing some background on the almost 900 acres that have been or are in the process of being preserved with local matching funds in Oconee County, those in attendance were informed that September 30, 2021 is the final date to submit ACEP-ALE applications to the local USDA-NRCS office for the Committee to visit and rank. The Committee will then present the highest ranked farm to the Oconee Board of Commissioners at their November 30th meeting, for local SPLOST funding consideration.

Overview of 2022 ACEP-ALE Program: Mallory O'Steen presented a Power Point to those in attendance to better inform them about the requirements to qualify for and participate in the USDA-NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program for Agricultural Land Easements. Mallory explained how Athens Land Trust works as the entity to submit the ACEP-ALE application for landowners, then hold and monitor the approved / recorded easements in perpetuity. The landowners in attendance asked several questions about the program and Mallory did an excellent job of making sure that everyone in attendance was better informed about how the ACEP-ALE program worked by the end of the meeting.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.



Thomas Verner, Chairman