

Farmland Preservation Committee
Regular Session Meeting Minutes
May 27, 2022 – 2:00pm
Oconee County Government Annex Building Conference Room

Persons Present: Thomas Verner – Chairman, Thad Padgett – Member, Adam Hammond – Member, Dyan Holt – Athens Land Trust and Justin Merrifield – Athens Land Trust.

Minutes approval: Adam Hammond made a motion to approve the Regular Session Minutes of the October 12, 2021 meeting and Thad Padgett seconded the motion. All Committee members voted in favor of approving the October 12, 2021 Regular Session Minutes as written.

Update on Nedza and Powers ACEP-ALE Applications: Justin Merrifield updated the Committee on the status of our two ACEP-ALE applications that were submitted for approval in the past two signups. The Nedza application, approved by Oconee County during the 2022 ACEP-ALE signup in October 2021, is still awaiting approval at the Georgia USDA-NRCS Office; however, it is anticipated that the Nedza application will be approved for ACEP-ALE funding. The Powers application, approved by Oconee County during the 2021 ACEP-ALE signup in November 2020, has been approved by the Georgia USDA-NRCS Office for ACEP-ALE funding and is in the queue for Athens Land Trust to close the Powers Easement by early 2023.

2022 Public Meeting for Oconee County ACEP-ALE Applications: The Committee determined that a Public Meeting will be held at 6:30pm on Thursday, July 21, 2022 at the UGA J. Phil Campbell Sr. Research and Education Center at 1420 Experiment Station Road, Watkinsville, Ga. 30677. The staff at Athens Land Trust agreed to present an overview of USDA's ACEP-ALE program, along with other details about application process that Athens Land Trust requires as the Entity who will be submitting the ACEP-ALE application to USDA for the landowner.

Oconee County Timeline for Applications to be Considered for 2023 ACEP-ALE Funding:

Friday, September 9, 2022 - ACEP-ALE application deadline to be considered for Oconee County Local Match Funding.

Wednesday, September 14, 2022 – Farm visits by Committee to ACEP-ALE applicant farms.

Wednesday, September 21, 2022 - Farmland Preservation Committee to meet and rank farms.

Tuesday, September 27, 2022 - Highest ranked farm presented to the Oconee County Board of Commissioners at their Agenda Setting Meeting.

Tuesday, October 4, 2022 – Oconee Board of Commissioners vote on highest ranked farm.

Publicity: Adam Hammond offered to write a column in the local paper to help get the public informed and suggested contacting Tim Bryant to ask about conducting a segment on farmland preservation. Thad Padgett offered to assist with drafting a flyer or brochure for promotion.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.



Thomas Verner, Chairman