

**Farmland Preservation Committee
Regular Session Meeting Minutes
June 15, 2023 – 2:00pm
Oconee County Government Annex Building Conference Room**

Persons Present: Thomas Verner – Chairman, Thad Padgett – Member, Adam Hammond – Member, Michael Ransom - Member, Lisa Dawson - 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 July 21, 2022 meeting and Thad Padgett seconded the motion. All Committee members voted in favor of approving the Minutes as written.

Justin Merrifield and Dyan Holt updated the Committee on the status of Oconee's two ACEP-ALE applications that were submitted for approval in past signups. The Nedza application approved by Oconee County in 2021 has been approved by the Georgia USDA-NRCS Office for ACEP-ALE funding and should close within 12 months. The Powers / Milton application, approved by Oconee County in November 2020, has been approved by the Georgia USDA-NRCS Office for ACEP-ALE funding and Athens Land Trust will close the Powers Easement very soon by mid 2023.

The Committee determined that a **Public Meeting** will be held at **6:30pm on Thursday, July 20, 2023** at the UGA J. Phil Campbell Sr. Research and Education Center at 1420 Experiment Station Road, Watkinsville, Ga. 30677. Athens Land Trust agreed to present an overview of USDA's ACEP-ALE program and 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 2024 ACEP-ALE Funding:

Friday, September 8, 2023 - ACEP-ALE application deadline to be considered for Oconee County Local Match Funding.

Wednesday, September 13, 2023 – Farm visits by Committee to ACEP-ALE applicant farms.

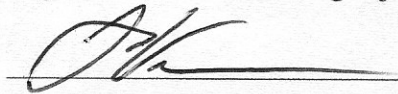
Wednesday, September 20, 2023 - Farmland Preservation Committee to meet and rank farms.

Tuesday, September 26, 2023 - Highest ranked farm presented to the Oconee County Board of Commissioners at their Agenda Setting Meeting.

Tuesday, October 3, 2023 – Oconee Board of Commissioners vote on highest ranked farm.

Publicity: Adam Hammond offered to contact the local paper to help get publicity on farmland preservation. Thad Padgett offered to update the flyer that was created in 2022 for promotion.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:15 pm.



Thomas Verner, Chairman