

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH AGRICULTURE ADVISORY BOARD

Chairman – LaMarr Anderson (01)	Tony West (03)	Dylan Blankenship (06)	Kenneth Hoffman (10)
Vice Chair – Misty O'Connor (09)	Alexandria Hoffman (04)	Adam Jenski (07)	Thomas Bergey (11)
Sharmin Oathout (02)	Jozef Slowik (05)	VACANT (08)	Abby Raisanen(12)

AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING

DSJ Building / Lower Level Conference Room

March 19, 2025

4:30 P.M.

Call In #: 1-907-290-7880

Participant Code: 363 223 996#

- I. CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL
- II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- III. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (Limit 3 minutes)
- IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: February 19, 2025
- V. ITEMS OF BUSINESS
 - A. Staff Report – Suzanne Reilly
 1. 2025 Ag Program Changes – Assessed Value
 2. Mat-Su Farms – updated list
 - B. Resolution 25-01: A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH AGRICULTURE ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDING THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY ADOPT ORDINANCE SERIAL NO. 25-018, CONVEYING THE BOROUGH'S DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS INTEREST TO MARK AND SANDRA STAHL FOR FEE SIMPLE TITLE WITH AGRICULTURAL COVENANTS (MSB001274).
 - C. Work Session – Review Draft Legislation
Investigate the feasibility of smaller parcels and more subdivisions and develop a recommendation to the Assembly while ensuring de minimis loss of agricultural land.
- VI. MEMBER COMMENTS (Limit to 3 minutes)
- VII. NEXT MEETING: April 16, 2025
- VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH AGRICULTURE ADVISORY BOARD

Chairman – LaMarr Anderson (01)	Tony West (03)	VACANT (06)	Kenneth Hoffman (10)
Vice Chair – Misty O’Connor (09)	Alexandria Hoffman (04)	Adam Janski (07)	Thomas Bergey (11)
VACANT (02)	Jozef Slowik (05)	Stephen Brown (08)	Abby Raisanen(12)

MINUTES ** DRAFT **

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

**February 19, 2025
4:30 P.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL; WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBER

Staff member Ms. Reilly called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.
 Members present and establishing a quorum were: LaMarr Anderson, Tony West,
 Alexandria Hoffman, Jozef Slowik, Adam Janski, Misty O’Connor, Kenneth Hoffman
 Members absent and excused: Thomas Bergey, Abby Raisanen
 Members absent: Stephen Brown
 Staff present: Suzanne Reilly, Asset Manager
 Joseph Metzger, Land Management Division Manager
 Margie Cobb, Department Administrative Specialist

Ms. Reilly welcomed Mr. West to the Board.

II. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

Mr. Hoffman nominated Mr. Anderson for Chairman; Ms. O’Connor seconded. No other members were nominated. All in favor.

Mr. Hoffman nominated Ms. O’Connor for Vice Chairman; Mr. Janski seconded. Mr. Hoffman was also nominated but declined. All in favor.

Ms. Reilly turned the meeting over to Mr. Anderson.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Agenda approved as presented.

IV. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (Limit 3 minutes)

Beverly Cutler: Looking forward to listening to the Board tonight. She is also looking forward to staff contact regarding their farm, per the notes from the prior meeting’s work session.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The following correction to the December 18, 2024 Minutes was noted: VI. Member Comments, Mr. Anderson: Very productive (not production). No other corrections were noted. Minutes were approved as amended.

VI. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. Staff Report – Ms. Reilly

- Upcoming Ag Conversion for Stahl & Oleck will be coming to them in upcoming meetings for their recommendation to the Assembly.
- A draft list of Mat-Su Farms was handed to the Board. Ms. Reilly explained that this list will help with drafting the Title this Board is working on. She requested the Board members send her changes/updates needed to this; information should include farm name, year established, what they do, how many acres.

B. Work Session Follow up – New Title

Ms. Hoffman motioned to go into Committee As A Whole at 5:00 pm.; Mr. Slowik seconded.

Discussion on New Title from previous meeting was available for all members. Additional discussion points from this meeting added and attached.

Mr. Jensi motioned to come out of Committee as a Whole at 5:53 pm; Mr. Slowik seconded.

VI. MEMBER COMMENTS (Limit to 3 minutes)

Mr. West: There is a demand/need for locally grown. While what can be grown is limited, there are options. Ideas are great; enforcement will be necessary later on.

Mr. Slowik: Appreciated Mr. Wells' comments; there are delays on some of their projects due to current government layoffs; hoping this gets sorted out.

Ms. Hoffman: It is complicated to try to make a plan for the future as well as the present and try to anticipate how things could go wrong; it was a really good start today on this conversation.

Mr. Hoffman: Looking forward to new title with more freedoms, understanding it will mean more responsibility.

Mr. Jensi: Was told by Assessments that the Borough is recognizing the State deferment for buildings used for agricultural purposes. ARRC Funding for farmers will be out of money in about a month; this will affect local farmers.

Ms. O'Connor: SBDC AI Summit is next Friday; would like MSB to have a booth there; she will send everyone on the Board an email with further information. She is working with clients on Ag Loans; she has been notified some of their grant/loan programs have been frozen at this time; she is willing to forward that email to anyone interested.

Ms. Reilly: Will work on draft of new Title for review and continued work next month.

Ms. Cobb: If any Board members would like to claim mileage for participation at meetings; please see her for the form to complete. You can do this monthly or at the end of the year.

Mr. Anderson: Thanked the Board members for attending; these discussions can't happen without you. When we don't, we lose continuity and take one step back. Encouraged everyone to make future meetings. Consider whether meeting during summer months is possible so that this Board can be provided to the Assembly.

VII. NEXT MEETING: March 19, 2025

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Anderson adjourned the meeting at 6:08 p.m.

LaMarr Anderson, Chairman DATE

ATTEST:

Margie Cobb, Department Administrative Specialist

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
AGRICULTURE ADVISORY BOARD
RESOLUTION NO. 25-01**

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH AGRICULTURE ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDING THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY ADOPT ORDINANCE SERIAL NO. 25-018, CONVEYING THE BOROUGH'S DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS INTEREST TO MARK AND SANDRA STAHL FOR FEE SIMPLE TITLE WITH AGRICULTURAL COVENANTS (MSB001274).

WHEREAS, the Borough Agriculture Advisory Board was enacted by Matanuska-Susitna Borough Ordinance 15-050 to review issues specifically related to and affecting Borough agriculture lands, and advise the Assembly and Manager on such matters; and

WHEREAS, the Agriculture Advisory Board asked Land and Resource Management staff to develop a program to convert and merge the Borough's development rights held in deeds for the 1977, 1981, 1982, and 1983 agricultural land sales programs; and

WHEREAS, on November 22, 2022, Informational Memorandum No. 22-224 was presented to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly and the Assembly approved Resolution Serial No. 22-105, amending Title 23 Real Property and the Land and Resource Management Policy and Procedures Manual Part 5, for the Agricultural Land Sales under former Title 13 that occurred in 1977, 1981, 1982, and 1983 and merge the Borough's development right with the agricultural rights title for fee simple title with agricultural covenants; and

WHEREAS, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Land and Resource Management Division received an application from Mark and Sandra Stahl to acquire the remaining interest in the land estate of Tax

ID's 21N05W36A002 and 21N05W36A003; and

WHEREAS, Mark and Sandra Stahl qualify to purchase the remaining interest in a land estate in accordance with MSB Title 23 and Land and Resource Management Policy and Procedures.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Agriculture Advisory Board recommends the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly hereby adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-018, conveying the Borough's development rights interest to Mark and Sandra Stahl for fee simple title with agricultural covenants.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Agricultural Advisory Board this 19th day of March 2025.

LaMarr Anderson, Chairman

ATTEST:

Margie Cobb,
Department Administrative Specialist

NEW TITLE ALLOWING FOR SMALLER PARCELS

Investigate the feasibility of smaller parcels and more subdivisions and develop a recommendation to the Assembly while ensuring de minimus loss of agricultural land.

OVERALL GOALS:

- Protect and preserve ag land
 - Ensure decisions today do not negatively affect the future.
 - Minimize creating future conflict
-

DISCUSSION NOTES (12/19/2024 meeting)

Possible lot size allowed: 10 acres

NEW TITLE:

- Voluntary Conversion.
- Strict
- Define rules for subdividing
- Incentivize: Allowed with Ifs: Owned it for xx years, farmed it XX% years.

Risk: Borough does not have enforcement rights.

LAYERS:

Ag Definition - Allowable Uses vs. not allowed
Incentives: Tax incentive only if property is used for Ag
Farm Development Plan
When does it apply?
How long with no farming activity?

Ag Definition: -- Mirror what has already been passed

IRS Schedule F (Copied from IRS Publication 225): *You are in the business of farming if you cultivate, operate, or manage a farm for profit, either as owner or tenant. A farm includes livestock, dairy, poultry, fish, fruit, and truck farms. It also includes plantations, ranches, ranges, and orchards and groves.*

MSB Title 23 (23.05.150 Definitions): *"Agriculture" means the production and harvest or care of plants, animals, birds, fish, bees, and other organisms by humans for use in providing food, fuel, fiber, shelter, clothing, energy, and aesthetics. Kennels and catteries are not considered as an agricultural use.*

Schedule F definition is stronger and stricter since it requires marketing what is growing. This will be stricter governance than Title 23 definition. Secondary business is optional – percentage?

Requirements/Incentives/Enforcement:

Tax at full rate if no Schedule F for 2 years, plus back 7 years for FMV
– NEED TO CHECK WITH LEGAL IF THIS IS POSSIBLE

Threat the possibility of taking property back if not farmed.

Lower land value lowers threat

Enforcement?

Exemption for senior farmers who "retire" who have farmed for 40/50 years? (USDA definition is \$1,000/yr).

Farm Lease option

Cannot sell resources (gravel/timber) commercially; only useable for farmer.

Farm Plan required to show use of all ten acres.

All land is farmable; where the land may not be farmable, options like greenhouse, hoop houses, other controlled environment options are considerations allowable. All land needs to be farmable. Farm Plan needs to identify how all property will be used for farming.

Sale to person with a farm plan.

Best to have NRCS-USDA experts to come out with buyer to look at soil across the property, review elevation banks, etc. and assist with farm plan (nutrient management, foraging, grazing, replanting, etc.) – downsize is whether there is staff available which might delay the purchase of the properties, especially when you consider current climate where federal staff are being laid off.

Request to Staff:

- Request from Borough Ag Land owners to provide feedback on what they are doing to identify how much is being used/how.
- Begin structuring a draft document so changes/additions can be worked on.