

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 Jensi (07)	Thomas Bergey (11)
VACANT (02)	Jozef Slowik (05)	Craig Hanson (08)	Abby Raisanen(12)

AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING

DSJ Building / Lower-Level Conference Room

May 21, 2025

4:30 P.M.

Call In #: 1-907-290-7880

Participant Code: 625 235 317#

- I. CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL
- II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- III. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (Limit 3 minutes)
- IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: April 16, 2025 Meeting
- V. ITEMS OF BUSINESS
 - A. Staff Report – Suzanne Reilly
 - Updated List of Farms & Correlation
 - B. Survey Questions
 - C. Work Session – Develop 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: June 18, 2025
- VIII. ADJOURNMENT

1 **MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH**
2 **AGRICULTURE ADVISORY BOARD**
3

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Vice Chair – Misty O'Connor (09)	Alexandria Hoffman (04)	Adam Jensi (07)	Thomas Bergey (11)
Sharmin Oathout (02)	Jozef Slowik (05)	Craig Hanson (08)	Abby Raisanen(12)

4
5 **MINUTES**
6

7 **REGULAR MEETING**
8 **DSJ BUILDING**
9 **LOWER LEVEL CONFERENCE ROOM**
10
11

April 16, 2025
4:30 P.M.

12 I. **CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL**

13 Ms. O'Connor called the meeting to order at 4:39 p.m.

14 Members present and establishing a quorum were: Misty O'Connor, Sharmin Oathout,
15 Tony West, Jozef Slowik (left @ 6:16 p.m.), Dylan Blankenship, Craig Hanson,
16 Kenneth Hoffman and Abby Raisanen

17 Members absent and excused: LaMarr Anderson and Thomas Bergey

18 Members absent: Alexandria Hoffman and Adam Jensi

19 Staff present: Suzanne Reilly, Asset Manager

20 Joseph Metzger, Land Management Division Manager

21 Margie Cobb, Department Administrative Specialist
22

23 II. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

24 Agenda approved as presented.
25

26 III. **AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (Limit 3 minutes)**
27

28 Rob Wells – Thanked the Board for their continued work on the issues. Shared with the
29 Board the 2022 USDA Census of Agriculture Alaska State Profile listing farm statistics.
30

31 Beverly Cutler – Noted that neither her farm or Rob Wells' farm is on the farm list in the
32 packet. Encouraged Board to ensure incentives do not keep farmers from farming but
33 allow people who want to farm to be able to farm on 10-20 acres; no one knows the
34 future.
35

36 IV. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

37 The March 19, 2025 Minutes were approved as presented.
38

39 V. **ITEMS OF BUSINESS**
40

41 A. **Staff Report**
42

43 Suzanne Reilly: Mat-Su Farms: List has almost doubled; this is a "living
44 document" and there are still more farms to add; encouraged Board members to
45 contribute or notify her of changes that are needed.
46

Joseph Metzger: During the Community Development Budget Hearing the Community Development Director shared with the Assembly that this Board is working on potential changes to Ag Code for smaller parcels.

- B. Resolution 25-02: A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH AGRICULTURE ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDING THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY ADOPT ORDINANCE SERIAL NO. 25-023, CONVEYING THE BOROUGH'S DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS INTEREST TO TORY AND CYNTHIA OLECK FOR FEE SIMPLE TITLE WITH AGRICULTURAL COVENANTS (MSB001235).

Staff Report: Ms. Reilly shared a brief overview of the program and the application.

Mr. West moved to approve this Resolution; Ms. Slowik seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

- C. Assessor's Office

Ms. King spoke to the Borough's letter regarding SB179 and answered questions; she also spoke on the properties under the Borough's Ag Program and shared that these parcels do not qualify for the tax breaks due to tax breaks already applied to these properties.

Mr. Eveland spoke to the consequences of smaller ag parcels and answered questions.

- D. Work Session – New Title

Mr. Hoffman motioned to go into Committee As A Whole at 5:22 pm.; Mr. Blankenship seconded.

Ms. Raisanen motioned to come out of Committee as a Whole at 6:17 pm; Mr. Blankenship seconded.

VI. MEMBER COMMENTS (Limit to 3 minutes)

Mr. Blankenship: Liked the thought on "what is the goal" during the work session.

Mr. Hanson: Happy to join this Board. Been in land development business and know how complicated this topic is.

Mr. Hoffman: Excited there will be meetings through the summer.

Ms. Oathout: Smaller parcels can help to make new farmers more successful.

Mr. West: Has the desire to see more ag ground be productive; producing something is better than nothing.

Ms. O'Connor: Glad Assessors came in to share and clarify information. Encouraged everyone to raise their voices to local and state policymakers. Shared how good the Borough EMS presentation of being prepared for volcano eruption and encouraged everyone to have a plan.

VII. NEXT MEETING: May 21, 2025

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. O'Connor adjourned the meeting at 6:23 p.m.

LaMarr Anderson, Chairman DATE

ATTEST:

Margie Cobb
Department Administrative Specialist

Mat-Su Borough Agricultural Programs - Parcel Survey

The Mat-Su Agricultural Advisory Board is considering an option to allow agricultural land to be divided into parcels less than 40 acres (the current minimum size). This survey is to seek feedback from parcel owners in a Borough Agricultural Program about allowing smaller farm parcels. (12 questions)

* Required

1. What Borough agricultural program applies to your property? *

- ☐ Title 15
- ☐ Title 13
- ☐ Title 23
- ☐ I don't know

2. Is your property currently used for agricultural activities? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

3. If yes, approximately how many acres are used for agricultural activities? *

- ☐ Less than 20 acres
- ☐ 20-40 acres
- ☐ 40-100 acres
- ☐ 100-200 acres
- ☐ Over 200 acres

4. What products do you grow or produce? *

- ☐ Vegetables
- ☐ Livestock
- ☐ Hay
- ☐ Floriculture/Horticulture
- ☐ Greenhouse
- ☐ Other

5. Would you support a proposal to allow agricultural land parcels of less than 40 acres? *

- ☐ Strongly Support
- ☐ Support
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Oppose
- ☐ Strongly Oppose

6. What do you think should be the minimum size for agricultural land parcels? *

- ☐ 10 acres
- ☐ 20 acres
- ☐ 40 acres (current minimum size)
- ☐ Other

7. What benefits do you see in allowing smaller agricultural land parcels? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Improved food security
- ☐ Lower financial burden for new farmers
- ☐ Easier land transfer to the next generation
- ☐ Increased land lease opportunities
- ☐ Better land utilization
- ☐ Other

8. What concerns do you have about allowing smaller agricultural land parcels? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Gradual loss of agricultural land
- ☐ Reduced agricultural productivity
- ☐ Potential for non-agricultural use
- ☐ Loss of large contiguous farming areas
- ☐ Other

9. If approved by the Assembly, owners of a Borough Ag parcel could "opt in" to dividing their ag land into smaller parcels. What do you believe are good ways to ensure the land continues to be used for agricultural production? (Select all that apply) *

- ☐ Require annually, a copy of the federal Schedule F or C (which require minimum revenues of \$2,500.)
- ☐ Require a farm plan showing commercial purpose
- ☐ If insufficient documentation is filed for a given year, raise assessed land value to market value (ie: disallow farming discount on land)
- ☐ Allow only one subdivision under this provision
- ☐ Limit homesite acreage
- ☐ Require Borough-approved farm plan
- ☐ Other

10. Mat-Su Borough Code 23.05.150 states, "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. If smaller parcels are allowed, do you think any of the above should be disallowed? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

11. If you answered "Yes" or "Maybe" in the previous question, please elaborate. *

12. Please share any additional comments or concerns you have regarding the proposal to allow smaller agricultural land parcels.

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