

# North Carolina Industrial Hemp Commission

## MINUTES

February 14, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.  
Telephone / Internet Conference Call

Commissioners in attendance:	Other official attendees:
Dr. Tom Melton, Chair	Paul Adams, Plant Industry Division, NCDA&CS
Dr. Sandy Stewart, Vice-Chair	Tien Cheng, Department of Justice
Mr. Guy Carpenter	Scott McCollum, EIT, NCSU
Mr. Billy McLawhorn	Beth Farrell, General Administration, NCDA&CS
Sheriff Tim Manning	Phil Wilson, Plant Industry Division, NCDA&CS
Mr. Pat Short	
Dr. Guochen Yang	

Call to Order – *Dr. Tom Melton, Chairman*

Roll Call of Attendees – *Dr. Tom Melton, Chairman*

Chairman **Melton** initiated a roll call to determine if a quorum of Commissioners were present. Seven Commissioners as listed above were in attendance, meeting the requirement of a quorum.

Statement Concerning Conflicts of Interest – *Dr. Tom Melton, Chairman*

Chairman **Melton** read the statement concerning conflicts of interest and asked members to identify any potential conflicts of interest. No conflicts of interest were identified.

Recognition of Conference Call – *Dr. Tom Melton, Chairman*

Chairman **Melton** noted that the purpose of this meeting is to approve applications to cultivate industrial hemp in North Carolina and to finalize the Commission's comments to USDA regarding the interim final rules for the domestic hemp production program. Under state and federal laws, individuals must be issued a license to participate in the North Carolina Industrial Hemp Pilot Program. Growers in the state who wish to cultivate industrial hemp must submit an application for a license to the Industrial Hemp Commission. Applications that have been vetted seriously by N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services staff will be reviewed at this meeting. There is no public comment period for this meeting.

Recognition of Special Guests – *Dr. Tom Melton, Chairman*

Chairman **Melton** noted there were no special guests at this meeting.

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Industrial Hemp Program Update – Mr. Paul Adams, NC Industrial Hemp Program Manager,  
Plant Industry Division, NCDA&CS

Chairman **Melton** called on Paul Adams, NC Industrial Hemp Program Manager, to provide a program update.

- Mr. **Adams** reported that as of February 14, 2020, North Carolina has 1,413 licensed industrial hemp growers, representing 17,427 licensed acres and 6,819,661.59 square feet of licensed greenhouse production. There are currently 1,005 registered processors in the state.

Old Business

- Commission comments to the Federal Register regarding USDA’s interim final rule for the establishment of a domestic hemp production program – Dr. Tom Melton, Chairman
  - Chairman **Melton** noted the N.C. Industrial Hemp Commission’s comments were submitted; recommendations are in line with comments from others. To date, 15 states have opted to stay with their current industrial hemp pilot program authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill until October 2020.

New Business

- Approval of Minutes from the December 19, 2019 meeting – Dr. Tom Melton, Chairman
  - Chairman **Melton** called for a motion to approve the minutes from the December 19, 2019, meeting. Motion to approve these minutes was made by Commissioner **Short** and seconded by Commissioner **Manning**. Motion passed on a voice vote.
- Review and Approval of Research Pilot Program Applications – Dr. Tom Melton, Chairman
  - Chairman **Melton** read the names of the applications under consideration at this time: Paula Parham Boles; Lauren Elizabeth McClain; Evan Michael Jacavone; David H. Suchoff; Deborah Epps; Joseph Neely; Joseph Randolph Mitchell; Jeff Arnold Autry; Jimmy Arnold Autry; Jason Allen Betts; Ronnie Jackson Bice; Ryan Kenneth Pace; Christopher Todd Roper; Stephen Wayne Irish; Paul Andrew Barbot; Harold Leon Ramseur; Ken William Luterbach; Anthony Baxter Morales; Shane Parry Garrison; Nicholas Edward Sagnella; Tommy Cope; Shannon Ashley Lyndon; Justin Darrell Mixon; Katherine Alcorn Lynch; James Glenn Driver; Robert William Van Horn; Jimmy Streater; Steven Eugene Pitts; Thomas Reece Johnson, III; Roger Bruce Batts; John Foster Gillespie; Julie A. R. Henderson; Erica Buchanan Hovis; Gregory David Farmer; Renee Baker; Joey H. Aguilar; Billy Dean Hunt; Edwin Dee Fortner; Derek Loftin Cameron; John Gregory Fox; Ricky Walter Greene; Tyler M. De Francisco; Richard Cutchin Anderson, Jr.; Richard Baker Todd; Deborah Elizabeth Branson; Cutberton Alexander; and Jay Martin Hill.
    - Chairman **Melton** asked if there was a motion to approve the applications presented. Commissioner **McLawhorn** made a motion to approve the applications. Commissioner **Carpenter** seconded the motion to approve.
    - After roll call vote, all applications were approved.

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- Warning about the grey areas of existing law - Dr. Sandy Stewart, Vice-Chairman
    - Vice-Chairman **Stewart** began by thanking Paul Adams and Laura Goodwin, NCDA&CS Plant Industry Division, for their efforts to support the N.C. hemp program.
      - Vice-Chairman **Stewart** noted that researcher involvement at both NC State and NC A&T State universities show that the scientific body of evidence for industrial hemp continues to expand.
      - Vice-Chairman **Stewart** shared several changes from a policy perspective.
        - USDA-RMA has released guidelines for hemp crop insurance and that information is available online. Growers will need to have a legitimate contract for coverage and encouraged license holders to do homework. There is still 2019 product that has not found a marketable home. There is still uncertainty with industrial hemp and supply may exceed demand.
        - Comment period has ended for USDA's interim final rule for the establishment of a domestic hemp production program. There were common concerns expressed regarding states ability to carry out the program under the guidelines proposed by USDA. States can elect to operate under current pilot programs through October 2020; NC may take this route. What happens after October 2020 is very uncertain.
        - 2019 Farm Act has not become NC law and continues to be under consideration by the NC General Assembly.
        - FDA has not provided a legal pathway for CBD derived and containing products to marketplace.
        - A large degree of market uncertainty remains, and license holders need to take this into consideration before cultivating hemp. He encouraged growers to do their homework; a lot of grey areas of the law remain and will continue to evolve.
    - Chairman **Melton** encouraged growers to be sure they are not overextending financially. Crop is expensive to cultivate, and uncertainty remains on marketing opportunities.
    - Chairman **Melton** noted that Commissioner **Carpenter** has been invited to speak on behalf of the commission at an upcoming textile industry meeting in Atlanta, GA. Speaking engagements are authorized as long as there is no financial benefit to the Commissioner. There was no objection to Commissioner **Carpenter** speaking at this event.
- Adjourn: Being no further business, Commissioner **Short** made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Commissioner **Manning**.

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