

# Thurston County Agriculture Advisory Committee

April 21, 2022

## Meeting Minutes

[https://youtu.be/qzulM\\_gULpw](https://youtu.be/qzulM_gULpw)

### ATTENDEES:

**Members Present:** Joe Hanna (Chair); Robert McIntosh; Pat Labine; Gigi McClure (scribe); Kevin Jensen

**Members Absent:** Jake Yancey (Vice Chair)

**Ex Officio Present:** Stephen Bramwell (WSU); Sarah Moorehead (Executive Director, TCD Staff)

**Guest Speaker:** Ashley Arai, Thurston County

**Guests Present:** Loretta Seppanen; Glenn Schorno; Peggy Smith

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### Called to Order:

Zoom meeting was called to order at 7:03pm

Approval of Current Agenda – Motion to approve (Robert/Pat) -passed

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes for March – Motion to approve (Robert/Pat) – Passed

### Committee Items Discussed:

1. **Thurston County Long-Term Agriculture (LTA) Stakeholder Workgroup** (Ashley Arai): Request the Ag Committee provide a representative to assist with Request for Qualifications (RFQ) provided by consultants. Stakeholder briefing covered role requirement for the Stakeholder workgroup which includes reviewing policy updates. Expected to start the summer of 2022.
2. **Update on Farmland Loss Crisis Letter:** Letter provided to BoCC, currently has not been addressed. Letter outlined Thurston County as leading in the loss of farmland for Western Washington. The Ag Committee is hoping the BoCC will address the rate of loss and consider possible options or consider disclosing future plans for Thurston County. Proposed the Ag Committee continue to push for staff involvement in the development policies and push for updates. Also, propose to retain viable lands with soil property conducive to farming as well as considering the loss of local farmers.
3. **Discussion on New Members:** Propose the consideration to add an FFA student as ex-officio member or making the WSU Extension as a permanent member rather than ex-officio with the knowledge the BoCC is not appointing anyone to the Ag Committee at this time. Also considering how to maintain diversity within the Ag Committee, however there is no diversity without new members. Without additional members it makes it

difficult to have a sub-committee without participation from the committee members or the ex-officio. Motion to draft a letter of concern to the BoCC was withdrawn. Motion to authorized members (Pat and Robert) to go to the BoCC as constituents to ask the question about new membership was also withdrawn. Members will approach the BoCC as non-representatives of the Ag Committee to discuss with the BoCC issues/solutions to take back to the Ag Committee for consideration of the member shortages and define possible diversity concerns.

4. **Committee Review of Agriculture:** Consider the status of suggestions of the Ag Committee would like to see in the Comprehensive Plan on Agriculture, and those topics are not currently included. While working with Jennifer Davis, the Ag Committee worked through several individual issues. Additional research is required on the following suggestions not formally communicated to the county:
  - a. Need to increase the acreage of County farmland of long-term commercial significance
  - b. The concern of constant loss of farmland to low density rural residential development
  - c. The Comprehensive Plan should include a detailed plan on finding, training, and financially assisting new farmers to replace those that are retiring
  - d. Expand the TDR program
5. **Discussion on BoCC Comments and Requests:** Descriptions received on how each member is a farmer or non-farmer member.
6. **Public Comment:** None
7. **Project Notifications:** None
8. **USDA Facility Update:** Proposed budget change request of approximately \$35,000 to match Pierce County to conduct an analysis of meat processing problems in the region. The study will look at areas like labor shortage for meat cutter and whatever problems that may exist with meat processing in the region. Could open the Ag Committee to the public to discuss issues similar to that at Pierce County. The committee could also have additional impact on getting grants at the state level by sharing emphasis on the needs in the area.
9. **WSU Extension Update (Stephen Bramwell):** additional information in chat log
  - a. Shared workshop (April 28<sup>th</sup>): Pasture Plant Identification, focused on native and non-native grass identification. Attendees include Eco Study Institute, Thurston Conservation District, grazing and livestock managers.
  - b. Grazing Association (May) workshop focusing on fencing, livestock, and structures
  - c. SW Washington Food Hub is advertising the “Farm Box” program.
  - d. Ag Grants are still available, assistance is available to apply. Information in the chat.



options (easements, rezoning, PDR, TDR, etc), and in the context of land appreciation. Will need to dig at that a little.

01:23:18 Jake Yancey: thank you Joe for allowing responsible conversations

01:27:04 Schorno: I appreciate other points of view. Thanks all!

01:37:14 Stephen Bramwell, WSU Extension: I like that idea too Joe. Seems direct communication would be very efficient and like Pat said, a face to face can be better than drafting a correspondence. A conversation.

01:58:47 Stephen Bramwell, WSU Extension: Here is the link to the awards information for these meat processing capacity grants: <https://agr.wa.gov/services/grant-opportunities/meat-processor-grant-en>

02:05:37 Stephen Bramwell, WSU Extension: Local Farm Box: <https://swwafoodhub.com/local-farm-box/>

02:06:37 Stephen Bramwell, WSU Extension: Provide an informational link; provide Annie's WSU email address; committee members please make a phone call to someone who may be eligible and didn't get an email <https://www.thurstonstrong.org/guidelines-thurston-strong-small-business-grant/>.  
[anna.salafsky@wsu.edu](mailto:anna.salafsky@wsu.edu)

02:09:11 Sarah Moorehead, Thurston CD: <https://us9.campaign-archive.com/?u=682557a3281aee2a980df8e09&id=45139775b5>

02:11:42 Sarah Moorehead, Thurston CD: <https://www.thurstoncd.com/working-lands/soilhealth/spreaders/>

02:17:44 Stephen Bramwell, WSU Extension: That's great Sarah, WSU Puyallup just was funded to establish a Long-Term Agriculture Research and Education trial. A significant component will be reduced tillage cropping systems trials, and it is expected that additional on-farm research will extend these practices to farmers in the region. A district drill would help with spreading these practices