

Thurston County Agriculture Advisory Committee

December 15, 2022

Meeting Minutes

<https://youtu.be/CwLX0CMUGGw>

ATTENDEES:

Members Present: Joe Hanna (Chair); Jake Yancey (Vice Chair); Robert McIntosh; Glenn Schorno; Pat Labine; Gary Kline

Excused Members Absent: Gigi McClure (scribe); Kevin Jensen; Chris Doelman; Celeste Winther

Ex Officio Present: Marguerite Abplanalp (Ag Programs Manager) vice Sarah Moorehead (Executive Director, TCD Staff); Stephen Bramwell (WSU, Ex Officio)

Guest Speakers: Ashley Arai (Thurston County Agriculture Community Program Manager)

Guests Present: Loretta Seppanen; Greg Schoenbachler; Billy Olesen; Stella Waxwing

Called to Order:

Zoom meeting was called to order at 7:00pm

Introductions of members and guests

Approval of Current Agenda – Motion to adjust agenda to include more time for new applicant introduction (Jake/Robert) - passed

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes as amended for November 2022 (Robert/Jake) – passed

Committee Items Discussed:

1. **Public Comment:** Consider the definition of “loss of farmland”, are the zoning changes also being considered to include farmland? When discussing long term Ag, what does that mean? Our county should consider the potential loss of local food production. Should the Ag Committee look at viable or sustainable farming for the area?
2. **Applicant Meet & Greet:**
 - a. Billy Olesen – Discussed past experiences and education. Currently priority is looking to help and give back to the community. Working on other committees regarding evasive species.
 - b. Greg Schoenbachler – Started career in farming. Helped to revitalize a local farm, transitioned into solid waste. Bring a perspective of sustainability and its importance. Maintaining sustainability and making it more appealing where there is agriculture in Thurston County in the future.

- c. Stella Waxwing – Discussed experiences, pulling tansy, and spending time on the land. Led to studying botana and travel to other states. Understands wetland effects on critical areas.
3. **Executive Session:** Members departed the meeting at 7:44pm to 8:00pm to discuss personnel matters. Additional discussion was tabled, no decisions were made. Motion to move forward to accept Stella Waxwing to the commit (Robert/Pat), 1-na, 2-abstained, motion passes. Motion to accept application of Greg Schoenbachler (Glenn/Gary), 2-na, 1-abstained, motion does not pass.
4. **Thurston County Ag Updates (Ashley Arai):**
 - a. Moved locations to 3000 Pacific Ave SE near the Oly Food COOP
 - b. National Estuary Grant submitted with seven coalition partners
 - c. Long-Term Ag Stakeholder workgroup had the final meeting this year.
 - d. January 4th bring Ag Critical Areas update to the BOCC for review.
 - e. Updates to the Open Space Program. Will accelerate presenting the recommendations to the BOCC.
5. **Position Paper (Robert/Gary):** Robert felt this paper should be an agenda item. The paper Gary wrote was fascinating as the issues he raises should be discussed by the committee. Local agriculture and local food sustainability, but changes/issues faced during COVID demonstrated the factory distribution system is unreliable. Local products are visible, and you can follow the quality of the products. Project Rebound to get back to true sustainability through the development of a new system of agriculture and encouraging/enabling new farmers to enter into farming by fostering training.
6. **Proposed Airport Letter to the BOCC:** Motion that we draft the airport letter to incorporate the reference to Executive Order 80-01, send to review, and if not changes for the January meeting, send to the BOCC. (Robert/Pat) - passed
7. **Comp Plan Letter:** Letter should have been received and reviewed. Formatting changes were made and there were comments and concerns about the issue which were within the Farmland Crisis letter sent last summer, an assessment to be paid for by the PDR by farmers who convert farmland to non-farmland uses. Motion to send the letter to the BOCC as drafted (Jake/Gary), 1-na, 1 abstain - passed
8. **WSU Update (Stephen Bramwell):**
 - a. Several programs being funded for 2023.
 - b. Labor Grants Program received to include COVID recovery grants for over 50 farmers.
 - c. Grazing Association is conducting addition farm walks and training.
 - d. Growers COOP was additional funded by USDA for 3 years. Also working with the Port of Olympia for a wellness program.
 - e. New Ag Training course coming up.
 - f. Update on the Tenino Ag Business Park – funding is in place should start seeing some building in 2023, no announcement on tenants as yet.

