

THURSTON COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes for August 20, 2020

Members Present: Richard Mankamyer (Chair), Joe Hanna (Vice-Chair), Kevin Jensen, Patricia Labine, Robert McIntosh (Scribe), Tom Watson.

Ex Officio Present: Nicole Ross.

Guest Present: Gaby Hyre.

Preliminary Actions: Zoom meeting called to order at 7:05 p.m., followed by introduction of attendees. The July minutes were approved with the following changes: (1) Add that the July meeting started at 7:05 p.m. and ended at 9:10 p.m.; (2) in the list of "Members Excused", change Joe's last name from "Hannah" to "Hanna". The meeting Agenda was approved with the following change: Agenda Item 5 changed to "discussion of Bryan Fisher's membership status".

Issues Discussed and Actions Taken

Letter to BoCC about the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). Richard reported that this previously approved letter was sent to the BoCC on July 19, 2020.

Committee Review of Easement Staircase Materials. The Committee reviewed the attachments to the Easement Staircase presentation from our July meeting. Richard reported that tree farming would now be considered as agriculture for Easement Staircase purposes. In response to a question from Pat, he also said that a land trust could become a Easement Staircase partner by showing up at a meeting and making the request. Richard also said that Capitol Land Trust had withdrawn as a partner because of the workload, which includes serving as Chair for six months. Kevin requested that Committee members be sent an overlay that shows more precisely where the endangered species protected areas are located. Pat agreed to send a copy of the Nationally Significant Agricultural Land map to members.

Review of Committee Comments on the Revision of the Agriculture Section of the County Comprehensive Plan. Robert presented his draft of a Committee comment letter on this subject, which he emailed to Committee members on July 12. He reviewed the six major comments in the draft letter and asked for Committee input on his basic approach. Pat suggested adding a recommendation that Conservation Futures taxes should be raised by the County to the statutory maximum level and that some of the available funds should be earmarked for purchase of development rights (PDR) for agricultural land. Richard suggested that the County should extend the current use taxation option to smaller parcels of agricultural land whose crop production is above a specified level, provided that

state law allows such an action. Robert agreed to incorporate these suggestions in a new draft, and to send the revised draft to Committee members for further comment before our September meeting. He will further revise his draft following input from our September guest speakers, with the goal of sending our comment letter to the County in October.

Bryan Fisher's and Gigi McClure's Membership Status. After discussion about Bryan's expired membership status (since April) and missed meetings, the Committee asked Richard to send an email to Bryan requesting him to submit a letter of resignation before our September meeting or else the Committee will vote at that meeting on recommending to the BoCC that it confirm the termination of his membership. The Committee also discussed Gigi McClure's attendance record and asked Richard to send her an email asking her to increase her participation in our meetings to avoid removal for unexcused absences.

Scribe for September. Given Bryan's membership status and request to avoid scribe duties, the Committee tentatively selected Jed as the scribe for our September meeting.

Conservation Futures Report. Joe reported that the Conservation Futures Committee recommended three properties for full funding this year, at a total cost of \$507,000. He also reported that \$500,000 may be returned to the Conservation Futures account next year from the Nelson Ranch application. He noted that it is difficult to determine how much money is actually in the Conservation Futures account.

Adjournment

The Zoom meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.