

**THURSTON COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**McLane Building Conference Room
5033 Harrison Avenue
Olympia, WA 98502**

July 26, 2012

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

John O'Brien
Chery Sullivan
Erik Hagen
E.J. Zita
Robert McIntosh
Dave Nygard
Doug Wiseman

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Pat Labine, John Lentz

STAFF

Lucas Patzek, County Director WSU Extension
Polly Stoker, Community Services, Resource Stewardship

GUESTS

Mary McGreevy, Dragontree Farm, 3marymac@gmail.com
Hollie Smith, TC Emergency Mgmt, f14has@yahoo.com

CALL TO ORDER – Lucas Patzek at 7:05 pm

REVIEW AGENDA – n/a

ANNOUNCEMENTS & OTHER BUSINESS

- Open farm position still available on the committee. Need to check with Danielle Westbrook on the procedure for filling the position.
- Lucas will email out the request from Jim Goche to modify the language describing his public comments from the May meeting. Jim thinks that the committee was not accurate in their description of his comments.

TDRs (Transferred Development Rights)

Robert McIntosh presented on this agenda item a few meetings back and today we reviewed the action items that were brought up at that time. The possible questions that the county should be able to answer are below:

- a. How were the only two transfers of development rights in this county accomplished?

- b. The Montgomery County, Maryland is touted as having one of the most successful TDR programs in the nation. Since its inception in 1980, the county has protected over 50,000 acres of farmland and open space. Can we find out why they have been so successful compared with Thurston?
- c. Have any counties in Washington had recent success?
- d. Were commitments made to farmers at the time that the Thurston County TDR program was established, and have they been kept?
- e. Are there incentives to participate in a TDR program beyond just increased density?

The action item is to invite Jeremy Davis and Scott Clark of the Thurston Planning Department to speak on some or all of these points. Dave Nygard's neighbor was one of the two Thurston County land-owners who participated in the county TDR program. Dave will speak to his neighbor about his experience with the program and relay the answer to the committee.

AG SUMMIT OVERVIEW

Robert McIntosh shared some of his notes from the Agriculture Commission & Advisory Board Summit presented by King County in May 2012. [Minutes and presentations from the Summit are available online](#), however, the following points were particularly interesting to Robert, as they might provide some ideas for Thurston County:

- The agriculture advisory committee of a certain county in western WA reviews all planning/development proposals where a farm is slated to disappear.
- Any ordinance that will affect agriculture is brought before the agriculture advisory committee for review.
- The fair market value of each acre of farmland in Pierce County is \$20,000, which is a serious hurdle to the viability of agriculture in that county. Together with Pierce, Thurston County has experienced the greatest net loss of farmland of all western WA counties since the 1950s.
- The idea was brought up of making a county's food-system like a Port District with certain authority (e.g. they can condemn land).
- Official farm signage for farms along the highway.

HONEYBEE FOLLOW UP

The committee agreed to wait for Pat Labine to be present to continue discussing the honeybee issue.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES – There was sentence in the honeybee section that needs to be reviewed before the minutes will be adopted. Lucas will ask Tim Lawrence to revise the sentence so it is accurate.

DIRECTOR REPORT: There was no additional report.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- Storm Water Issue (Eric Johnson topic)
- Honey Bee Follow up letter

ADJOURN - Meeting adjourned at 8:37 pm by Lucas Patzek.

Polly Stoker, Recording Secretary