

**THURSTON COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

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

NOVEMBER 29, 2012

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Pat Labine
Chery Sullivan
Doug Wiseman
John Lentz
Eric Johnson
Erik Hagan
E.J. Zita
Robert McIntosh

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Polly Stoker, staff, WSU Thurston County Extension

STAFF:

Lucas Patzek, WSU Thurston County Extension
Dave Nygard, Thurston Conservation District

GUESTS:

Ryan Rutledge, Nisqually Springs Farm, cornmazeguy@gmail.com

CALL TO ORDER – 7:05, Pat Labine

ADOPTION OF MINUTES – minutes were approved from October

REVIEW AGENDA –

ANNOUNCEMENTS & OTHER BUSINESS –

Schorno Family Farm and Agriculture Overlay District (AOD) – Ryan Rutledge was in attendance as a representative of the Nisqually Springs Farm (formally Schorno Agribusiness) owned by the Schorno family just outside of Yelm. The concern shared with the Committee was that only a portion of the farm is currently within the AOD, and it is that portion which is furthest from the ingress/egress point and so least accessible to the public. There are several agritourism-related plans for this farm (corn maze, pumpkin patch, hard cider orchard, on-farm weddings), and inclusion in the AOD will greatly ease the financial stress of special-use permitting. The farm is unique in that it is large by county standards (~250 acres), certified organic (since 2007), has lots of agricultural infrastructure in place, and is easily accessible. The Committee agreed that a letter would be drafted to the BoCC recommending that the entirety of the Schorno farm be included in the AOD, and that it would be reasonable to recommend to the BoCC that consideration be given of a general expansion of the AOD to include all parcels

zoned for agricultural use and owned by a single owner which are contiguous to parcels already within the AOD. Robert McIntosh agreed to draft this letter and share it with the Committee before the January 2013 meeting.

A question was raised concerning two properties which were awarded Conservation Futures money, including the Mayham Farm in Rainier and the Allen McKenzie property. The Conservation Futures process allows for public funds to remain available up to two years after being awarded to a property so that the landowner may have enough time to secure matching funds to secure the transfer the development rights associated with that property. The Committee believes that the Conservation Futures funds awarded to the above-mentioned properties are expiring on December 31, 2012. The Committee would like to invite Mark Swartout, Thurston County Natural Resource Program Manager, to a future meeting to explain what is happening with the Conservation Futures money dedicated to the two properties.

Pat Labine was voted in as acting Chair of the Committee.

John O'Brien has called a meeting with the BoCC on January 9, 2013 about the issue of honeybee decline and the proposal brought forward by the Olympia Beekeepers Association to restrict retail sales of the systemic insecticides of the neonicotinoid group to all except those with a valid pesticide applicators license. Lucas was called to attend this meeting, and he requests that Pat Labine and Dave Nygard join him at this meeting to represent the Committee.

DIRECTOR REPORT: n/a

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

Revisiting updated poultry ordinances for the Urban Growth Areas.

Updating the Committee about the outcome of the January 9th honeybee meeting.

Inviting Mark Swartout, Thurston County Natural Resource Program Manager, to a future meeting to explain what is happening with the Conservation Futures money dedicated to the two properties.

ADJOURN – 8:45, Pat Labine

Lucas Patzek, Recorded these meeting minutes