

**THURSTON COUNTY  
AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

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

**JANUARY 30, 2014**

**MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Pat Labine, Chair  
Chery Sullivan  
E.J. Zita  
Doug Wiseman  
Erik Hagan  
Robert McIntosh  
Dave Nygard

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** John Lentz, Erik Johnson

**STAFF:** Lucas Patzek, WSU Thurston County Extension  
Polly Stoker, WSU Thurston County Extension

**GUESTS:** Karen Parkhurst, Thurston Regional Planning Council  
Greg Griffith, Thurston County Historic Commission  
Nancy Laich, Preserving Farmland-Supporting Small Farms Bill

**CALL TO ORDER** – 7:07pm, Pat Labine, Chair

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES** – The minutes from December were approved with changes to the Agenda 21 paragraph.

**REVIEW AGENDA** –

**ANNOUNCEMENTS & OTHER BUSINESS** – Doug Wiseman presented a letter from Yakima growers Group, Ralph Broetje of Broetje Orchards requesting support (not directly from AG committee, just to fellow apple growers) for not allowing GMOs in Apple Orchards. This was just an FYI as Doug is on the mailing list. (letter attached)

**DIRECTOR REPORT:** n/a

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:**

**SUSTAINABLE THURSTON PLAN, Karen Parkhurst, of Thurston Regional Planning Council**

Karen Parkhurst presented on the goals of the Sustainable Thurston Plan (her presentation is attached). In 2010, the Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) received a Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant

from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to craft a sustainable development vision and strategies to guide the region through 2035. During the next three years, thousands of residents attended Sustainable Thurston community workshops, answered surveys and participated online to provide input into a visioning and strategy plan. In 2013, the TRPC adopted “Creating Places - Preserving Spaces: A Sustainable Development Plan for the Thurston Region,” which makes recommendations regarding transportation and land use, water quality, health and human services, public safety, and other issues. The next step is for local jurisdictions to consider the plan and to adopt some of the action items in their individual jurisdictions. Karen recommended that the Committee review those portions of the Plan that focus on agriculture and offer recommendations on pertinent action items to the Board of County Commissioners.

Karen was invited to speak to the Committee on this subject in response to a public complaint that “Agenda 21” and “ICLEI” were the true impetuses for the Sustainable Thurston Plan. Karen explained what Agenda 21 and ICLEI are and how certain members of the public have attempted to disrupt the Sustainable Thurston process, thinking a conspiracy was at play. Losing property rights is at the heart of this fear, and Karen agreed that it’s helpful to reassure farmers that TRPC, the BOCC, and AG Committee all share values of preserving farmlands, not taking these properties from their owners.

**THURSTON COUNTY HISTORIC COMMISSION, Greg Griffith, WA Dept of Archaeology & Historic Preservation**

The TC Historic Commission, a board appointed by the BoCC, has been documenting historic farm properties across the county in a historic register. The owners of historic properties are not required to be registered with the County, and their consent is required for registration. Some owners refuse registration due to fears relating to government interference with private property rights. A historic farm of particular interest to the Historic Commission is the Rutledge Farm. The owner was approached in the past by the Historic Commission, but declined registration of the property. That owner has passed away, so the Historic Commission would like to approach the new owner(s) about registering their property as a historic site, and Greg was coming before the Committee to request help with an approach to contacting the property owner(s). Lucas thought that Jeff Swotek with the USDA-NRCS might be a good resource and will get his contact information to Greg. Dave Nygard also thought Brian Thompson who retired from the Thurston Conservation District might be able to help. Greg will contact Dave directly after he touches base with Brian.

**BILL HB1437 UPDATE: Preserving Farmland-Supporting Small Farms, Nancy Laich**

This proposed amendment would allow all farms to qualify for the farm residence tax break. This means the residence is assessed at fair market value and the land under the residence is assessed at current use. Nancy came to the meeting to encourage us to thank our County Commissioners for their support of this bill at this time and to please keep track of its progress as it goes through the House Finance Committee.

**ADJOURN – 9:10pm, Pat Labine, Chair**