

**THURSTON COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

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

FEBRUARY 27, 2014

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Pat Labine, Chair
E.J. Zita
Doug Wiseman
Robert McIntosh
Eric Johnson

MEMBERS EXCUSED: John Lentz, Chery Sullivan, Erik Hagan

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

GUESTS: Sierra Smith, member of the public interested in joining the committee
John Bourdon, Sandstone Distillery

CALL TO ORDER – 7:10pm, Pat Labine, Chair

ADOPTION OF MINUTES – The minutes from January were approved with changes to the Agenda 21 paragraph mentioning shared values in preserving farmland.

REVIEW AGENDA – add Building Permits to approve and Conservation Futures rumors for 2014.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & OTHER BUSINESS –

DIRECTOR REPORT: n/a

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

WATER/SEPTIC-RELATED ISSUES WITH AGRITOURISM REGULATIONS

John Bourdon of Sandstone Distillery has been an active participant in County agritourism meetings, and he wanted to make the Committee aware of water/septic-related issues that he has encountered in developing his agritourism enterprise. He imagines others in his position have had similar challenges, and he hopes that County can improve/streamline the permitting process to motivate the development of other agritourism operations. He was denied a permit to use his existing Class A water system for his new distillery business due to the proximity of the tank to an existing building (within 100 ft of his current residence/garage). He is required to develop a Class B water system if he is to allow public visitors onto his future craft distillery business (tasting room). This would be too cost prohibitive for him, and he now will not be opening his business to on-site customers due to

this regulation. The issue may be a state or federal environmental health regulation that County has no control over, and Lucas will reach out to County Environmental Health department to clarify these water/septic regulations.

Three other agritourism operations - Rainbow Farm, Yelm Farmer's Market, and Medicine Creek Winery - have made the Committee aware of the fact that they too faced and continue to face water-related issues in developing and operating their agritourism ventures. Geana Henkes of Rainbow Farm/Yelm Farmer's Market sent a letter to the Committee outlining her issues as she was not able to attend the meeting in-person (attached).

2014 CONSERVATION FUTURES

The primary delegate for the 2014 C.F. process will be Doug Wiseman, with Chery Sullivan as alternate.

There is also a request by the Committee to have Scott Clark, Director of the Resource Stewardship Department, come to the next meeting and explain the future of the Conservation Futures program. Rumors abound about this program being used by County in the future to develop receiving sites for Endangered Species Act critical habitat. The Committee hopes to receive some clarification about this and other issues.

BUILDING PERMITS TO REVIEW

In reviewing this month's Transmittal Memoranda for a number of marijuana-related grow operations a concern was noted regarding potential impacts to water quality. The concern is particularly aimed at the following project, but applies to all of the marijuana-related projects under review which utilize hydroponic production systems: Project No.: [2013105796](#), Project Name: Watts-Evans Project.

The availability of water is a concern with the hydroponic systems. Although hydroponic systems use less water than field crops, they still use a substantial amount of water. The project listed above states in its Operational Plan (on page 7) that 10,500 gallons of water per year will be utilized by two "Flower Rooms" in each building. Lucas will email the Planning Department to find out what is the source of water for this, and what are the limitations/restrictions for water use by these types of grow operations or farms? Also, what mechanisms are in place to be sure that nutrient-rich water is not discarded down the drain. The Plan states that a re-circulation system is utilized to eliminate this sort of nutrient waste, but how is this inspected?

ADJOURN – 9:00pm, Pat Labine, Chair