

# THURSTON COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

McLane Conference Room

5033 Harrison Ave. NW, Olympia WA 98502

## Minutes for February 26, 2015

Members Present: Bill Wyman, Chery Sullivan, Doug Wiseman, Chris Groen, Kevin Jensen, Pat Labine, EJ Zita (Chair), Eric Johnson, Robert McIntosh (Vice-Chair), Dave Nygard

Staff Present: Charissa Waters, and Patt O'Neil

Guests Present: None

Members Absent: None

\*\*\*

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by EJ Zita followed by round-table introductions.

Minutes from the January 29, 2015 meeting were read. There was discussion about the proper way to have names reflected in a public document. It was decided that full names would be utilized throughout the document in the future except when repeated in the same subject. It was moved and seconded that the minutes be approved as written.

The Agenda was amended to add a discussion of the "Institutional Memory, Purpose, History and Future" of the Agricultural Advisory Committee by Dave Nygard under Other Business.

Review of Permit Requests from the County: Patt O'Neil reported that it only takes a few minutes to scan and e-mail copies of the Permit Requests to the members of the committee. It was agreed that this process would be continued as it was helpful for the committee members to be able to review in advance of the meeting itself, allowing for a chance for a thorough review and not having to utilize actual meeting time doing this. If a Permit Request does need discussion by the committee, it can now be done comfortably with the pressure of a time restraint.

Draft Ordinances for Urban Farming in Thurston County: Chery Sullivan said that she had review Urban Farming Ordinances from other counties and communities within the state and discovered that they were all rather similar when it came to types of animals and amount allowed on private property. Chery said that she would e-mail links to the UFO of these other communities to the other members of the committee (EJ Zita and Robert McIntosh) for their purview. Zita then reminded all that the Thurston County Resource Stewardship staff members they were working with on this were Scott McCormick and Katie Pruitt.

"Green Sheet" Response Forms\*: Eric Johnson deferred to Doug Wiseman to speak on this matter. There was intense discussion about what type of information the committee was being asked to review and it was decided that the impact to protect existing and improving agricultural ventures was foremost. The balance of the 'quality of rural life' with 'right to farm' was questioned as it applied to the rural residential zoning and the discussion of marijuana production in these areas.

The areas of concern, and who has jurisdiction over these areas, was also discussed. It was determined that the Department of Ecology reviews the proper water usage and waste management, and the Washington State Department of Agriculture oversees bulk fertilizer sites. Knowing this, the committee agreed that these items would not be addressed in any response to Resource Stewardship.

EJ Zita then stressed that agriculture has impacts and benefits, and it was up to this committee to protect agriculture. Patt O'Neil then volunteered to draft a form to be reviewed at the next meeting that allowed for the professional appearance to any response the committee might have to a Permit Request.

*\*Note: The cover sheet of a Permit Requests forwarded by the Thurston County office of Resource Stewardship has a green cover sheet listing the project name, number, date of submission, and the return contact name for the planner who asked for the review by the Agricultural Advisory Committee.*

Memory, History, and Future: Dave Nygard questioned the accessibility of the public record of the Agricultural Advisory Committees past meeting minutes and any publications/reports they had produced over the years. Patt O'Neil and Charissa Waters explained that they had recently taken action on this with Patt sending every electronic copy of the minutes from several years to be published on the Thurston County web-site Agricultural Advisory

Committee page. These records had been published on the WSU Thurston County web-site but a mutual decision by Zena Edwards, extension director, Charissa, and Patt was that it was more appropriate to have them available from the county. Patt also explained that she had hard copies for the past three years in her office and all of the electronic copies were stored on the county server. Charissa also offered that the web-page also listed documents and reports that the committee had published in the past. It was then suggested that the committee review their Draft Working Lands Strategic Plan and Executive Summary that they drafted in 2009 to see if it needed to be updated.

Other Business: Pat Labine mentioned that the co-operative owned Mobile Slaughter Unit is in need of financial support from the county before it becomes too cost prohibitive for the smaller producers to use. She said that she would be in contact with their representative to see if they wanted to attend a future meeting of the committee.

Announcements:

Charissa Waters reminded everyone that the next Volunteer Stewardship Program meeting was scheduled for Monday, March 2, 2015 at the Farm Bureau office in Lacey. She said that she would be giving one of the presentations and invited everyone to attend.

Robert McIntosh announced that he would be attending a seminar on Marijuana law on March 20, 2015 in Seattle.

Kevin Jensen confirmed that there had been no further update regarding the Thurston County Conservation Futures Program review of the candidates other than a plan for mid-April.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm by EJ Zita.

*Amended and Approved on 26 March 2015.*