

THURSTON COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

McLane Conference Room

5033 Harrison Ave. NW, Olympia WA 98502

Minutes for March 26, 2015

Members Present: Chery Sullivan, Chris Groen, Kevin Jensen, EJ Zita (Chair), Eric Johnson, Robert McIntosh (Vice-Chair), Dave Nygard

Staff Present: Charissa Waters, and Patt O'Neil

Guests Present: Victoria Leistman

Members Absent: Doug Wiseman, Pat Labine

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by EJ Zita followed by round-table introductions.

Minutes from the February 26, 2015 meeting were read and amended to include the statement "except when repeated in the same subject" with regards to the use of full names in the minutes of a meeting. It was moved and seconded that the minutes be approved as amended.

Under Public Comment, the Agenda was amended to add a discussion of the "Food & Water Watch: Save Antibiotics" effort which was presented by Victoria Leistman. "Food & Water Watch" is the name of a resolution before both houses of Congress to restrict the usage of antibiotics to sick and injured livestock and not as preventative or additive in the production of our food source. The committee was being asked to propose to the Board of County Commissioners that they sign-off on this resolution as the cities of Olympia and Seattle already have. There was a voiced from many committee members concerning the resolution restriction of application of antibiotics by licensed veterinarians only and it was felt that this would put an undue hardship on the farmer/rancher. EJ Zita asked that copies of the bill and copies of the actual resolutions from the other cities be made available before the Agriculture Committee could proceed. Victoria said that she would send Zita, for dissemination before the April meeting, what was asked.

Draft Ordinances for Urban Farming in Thurston County: Chery Sullivan has reviewed the Urban Growth Area policies regarding the keeping of livestock from the following jurisdictions: City of Lacey, City of Seattle, City of Olympia, County of Snohomish, City of Omak; and developed a draft of a plan for Thurston County. Though it was only initial effort it did spark discussion about what types of animals should be included, lots size restrictions, and the realistic expectations about noises and smells originating from keeping an animal for a pet or for production. It was affirmed through discussion that any ordinance be more inclusive of large animals and that the term 'domestic fowl' be used instead of 'chickens' as it was more inclusive of other types of poultry. Robert McIntosh did stress the ordinance needs to address the various lot sizes and Charissa Waters said that she would seek out copy of the current Urban Growth Area ordinance for the sub-committee to review. Chris Groen reminded the committee that city ordinances that overlap with the counties may be more restrictive than the counties but not less. Chery said she would, after receipt of the UGA, would take the draft UGA back to the sub-committee (Chery, Robert, and EJ Zita) for more work.

"Green Sheet" Response Forms*: Patt O'Neil presented the draft of the Green Sheet Response (GSR) form before the committee. She explained that after a scan of each document had been sent to the individual committee members, a blank response sheet would be clipped to the originals which are reviewed by the committee as a group and, if a response or comment was deemed necessary, the form would be filled out and returned with the cover sheet to the planner who had sent it to the committee in the first place. All other GSR forms would be recycled for next month while the Green Sheet packets not commented on are shredded. This presentation was met with approval and the sheets were used with the Green Sheet Packets presented that evening.

**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.*

Discussion of the Green Sheets Presented: A Notice of Public Comment regarding as Geoduck Farm was circulated and it was agreed upon by the committee that operations like this are a good use of the agricultural resources of Thurston County. Dave Nygard wrote a comment and EJ Zita signed the GSR form on behalf of the Agriculture Advisory Committee.

Marijuana Farming and King County: Robert McIntosh reported that he had been communicating with Ty Peterson, from King County government, and he said that King County has not deemed the production of marijuana for distribution to be farming. Land used for marijuana production by law does not receive a farmland tax credit so therefore marijuana grown for production cannot be considered a crop. Today, King County has not issued any conditional use permits for land zoned 1:5. Robert said that he would go more into depth on this topic at the next meeting.

Institutional Memory, Purpose, History & Future: David Nygard asked how accessible the *Working Lands Strategic Plan* was to the general public. Charissa Waters explained that a copy can be easily downloaded from the Thurston County website under Long Range Planning (<http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/planning/>). Copies of this will be printed out and the topic was postponed until the next meeting.

Location of May and June meetings: Patt O'Neil announced that the McLane Conference Room was going to be used as a classroom both nights of the scheduled meetings, so the Agriculture Committee meetings will be moved to the McLane Kitchen for those months.

Committee Membership Vacancies: It was formally announced that Bill Wyman had resigned from the Agriculture Advisory Committee which led to a Non-Farmer, as well as the current two Farmer, vacancy positions. Methods of recruitment were discussed with Charissa Waters being tasked with seeing if an announcement of the vacancies could be placed on the Thurston County Facebook page. Patt O'Neil announced these vacancies had already been published on the Thurston County website under Board of County Commissioners Committees and Commissions page. Discussion followed with the agreement that Poultry, Vegetable, and Shellfish farmers should be encouraged to apply.

Announcements:

Charissa Waters reminded everyone that they are more than welcome to attend the Volunteer Stewardship Program meeting on Tuesday, March 31st from 3:00-5:00 pm at the Lacey office of the Washington State Farm Bureau.

Patt O'Neil asked about the possibility of her being excused from the July meeting because of perceived conflicts with the Thurston County Fair preparation. By consensus, it was decided that the July meeting would actually be cancelled as many of the committee members would probably be involved with personal and business events during that time as well.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm by EJ Zita.

Amended 4/29/15