

THURSTON COUNTY AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

McLane Building Conference Room
5033 Harrison Ave NW, Olympia, WA 98502

Minutes for August 27, 2015

Members Present: Chery Sullivan, Kevin Jensen, Robert McIntosh (Vice-Chair), Richard Mankamyer, Mary DiMatteo, EJ Zita (Chair), Doug Wiseman, Eric Johnson, Pat Labine, and Chris Groen

Staff Present: Charissa Waters

The meeting was called together at 7:05 by Robert McIntosh followed by round table introductions of the members and staff as well as the newest member Mary DiMatteo from the Olympia Farmers Market and WSU Ext. Mason County.

The group spent time sharing news before the approval of minutes and the agenda. Eric Johnson shared that they are irrigating around the clock and Kevin Jensen had to buy a new irrigation gun and drill a new well (went from surface to groundwater). FSA is helping with forage loss, their program kicks in as soon as a county is in a D3 (drought) status (from the 2014 Farm Bill but approval has to come from the state committee first before the county can get funding). EJ Zita suggested adding news sharing to the agenda for future meetings, and the Committee agreed.

The minutes from the June 25th meeting were reviewed. Robert suggested adding “refer to” after “grandfathered” on page 1. Robert also had a correction for his name on page 3, McIntosh not McIntyre. With these minor edits the minutes were approved by consensus.

Food and Water Resolution Report – The group discussed the Food and Water Watch Resolution and inviting a veterinarian in to talk about it. The Committee will find out what the FDA rule means as well. Mary and Kevin volunteered to try to get someone to come to the next meeting.

The agenda was approved by consensus with the correction that the Food and Water Watch was already discussed.

Draft Ordinances for Urban Ag in the UGAs: The Ag UGA Code Update was discussed and additions to the memo were suggested. Example: under #2...”this is consistent with the Lacey Urban Ag regs”. Variance language that was included in the Lacey UGA Ag Code Update was discussed. The questions were asked: Do we want to build in flexibility? How

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do we want to and who decides? Mary suggested that variance language be geared towards commercial operations and operators that are trying to make a living and be economically viable. The variance would be for economic development but the Committee doesn't want it to be a special use permit process. Variance depends on who it is and where they are in relation to neighbors. The burden of no impact to neighbors is on the person who is asking for the variance. Chery reminded the group that there is often variance language built into regulations and so it makes sense for there to be variance built into these Urban Ag Codes as well. Charissa reminded the Committee that the memo and variance language needs to be finalized before September 9th for submittal to the Planning Commission for her briefing to them on the 16th. The memo was approved by consensus with the correction to be clear what parts are consistent with each of the city's Urban Ag regulations. Charissa will send the memo to Zita for her to sign.

The Committee discussed other news. Zita reminded anyone that is interested in solar that there are USDA grants for solar installation. Eric reminded everyone that there are also tax incentives for solar that end at the end of the year.

The meeting adjourned at 8:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Charissa Waters