

THURSTON COUNTY AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

McLane Building Conference Room

5033 Harrison Ave. NW, Olympia, WA 98502

**Minutes for March 30, 2017**

Members Present: E.J. Zita (Chair), Robert McIntosh (Vice-Chair), Kevin Jensen, Eric Johnson, Mary DiMatteo, Chris Groen, Richard Mankamy, Robin Buckingham

Staff Present: Stephen Bramwell and Deborah Bordelon (WSU Ext.), Charissa Waters (Thurston County)

Members Excused: Scott Von, Pat Labine

Guest: Aslan Meade

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The meeting was called to order at 7:08 by E.J. Zita followed by round-table introductions of the members and staff attending the evening's meeting.

News Sharing – Zita has confirmed Pat Labine is interested in staying on the committee.

Chris presented an update on local FFA (North Thurston, Timberline) and their activities. Both groups are currently active in the community at the state and local level through education, representation, and community service.

Stephen announced that the South Sound Food Systems Network is working on an intensive campaign this year to promote local food. This campaign will culminate with a food summit October 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. Anyone interested in getting involved is welcome to join the food systems council. The council meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 9:30 in the morning at Thurston Regional Planning.

Aslan Meade reported on the Think Network, a local investment network that was created to provide opportunities for potential investors to invest directly in small businesses within the community. The network will debut on April 17 and has a focus on food and farming businesses. Small businesses can apply and the network will then provide the opportunity for those businesses to meet with potential investors.

Stephen noted that the Department of Ecology and a group of local enthusiasts of Biochar have been organizing a Biochar Workshop. There will be a speaker from the Sustainable Obtainable Solutions Organization in Spokane. The workshop will take place on April 29<sup>th</sup> at the Evergreen State College, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm.

Stephen announced that the Barley Trial Grant was approved and received from the state. Planting will take place in Montesano once the ground is dry enough.

Robin announced that the Conservation District has added some additional soil testing to their existing soil testing services. This will include extractable carbon 24-hour respiration rate.

Dave Nygard is retiring and Friday March 31<sup>st</sup> will be his last day.

Approval of previous meeting minutes- The minutes from the February 23rd meeting were reviewed and approved by consensus.

Approval of agenda-Agenda was approved with the addition of discussion regarding the Pledge of Allegiance and openings on the Ag Committee.

Agriculture Needs Assessment: Needs assessment results were presented and the process for categorizing, sorting, and dissemination of the information was explained. An in-depth explanation of the categories, results, and concerns was also given. Members were then asked to rate categories/topics in a way that represented what they thought were most important followed by discussion about the differing priorities. For more information or a copy of the report please contact Stephen Bramwell at: [bramwell@wsu.edu](mailto:bramwell@wsu.edu).

Tenino Agriculture Business Park: Aslan Meade, from the Thurston Economic Development Committee, gave an update on where the proposal for the business park stands. The proposal that was submitted was selected for review by the board at Trans Alta. Trans Alta wanted to know if there was funding from any other source for this project other than them. A request was sent to the Senate for the state to approve funding of additional monies for infrastructure. The result of this request will be known when the house budget process for the state is complete.

Charissa announced that the Ag Committee is scheduled to present to the Board of County Commissioners on May 10<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 pm. This is an opportunity to help the Board gain a much clearer understanding of what the Ag Committee is and how it can support the commissioners.

Remaining items on agenda to be addressed at April meeting.

Public Comment - No public comment

Green Sheet – No comments to be recorded

WSU Extension Update – Will be addressed at April meeting.

Motion to Adjourn: Passed at 9:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted by: Deborah Bordelon