

THURSTON COUNTY AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

McLane Building Conference Room

5033 Harrison Ave. NW, Olympia, WA 98502

**Minutes for April 27, 2017**

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

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

Members Excused: Robin Buckingham, Bryan Fisher

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The meeting was called to order at 7:05 by E.J. Zita followed by round-table introductions of the members and staff attending the evening's meeting.

News Sharing – Charissa notified the committee that the Voluntary Stewardship Program was approved by the Executive Director of the Washington State Conservation Commission on April 26, 2017. We congratulated Charissa and the committee on work well done. ([Approval Letter](#)) Eric added that the Dairy Federation is asking for \$1 million dollars of their money to be redirected to the VSP in support of the technical side for the state.

Zita shared information about the Partners for Rural Washington she attended, sponsored by the Department of Commerce. The focus of this meeting was to discuss the needs of rural communities. Many state and regional agencies and businesses got together strategize how to meet these needs, by gathering and targeting major resources for rural jobs, infrastructure, land and water, and other projects. Resources come from county, state, federal, and private entities.

Richard attended a working group at the NRCS yesterday with members from King, Pierce, Kitsap, Thurston, and Mason counties as well as personnel from the Conservation District, State and County Fish and Wildlife, on planning for the year ahead. The purpose was to try and work out how and where to direct the monies that they have available to them. Topics included water quality and availability, fish habitat, infrastructure and Ag viability.

Zita described the Thurston Regional Planning Council's public session on climate change. They did an educational presentation and then asked for feedback. They are actively seeking ideas and thoughts on problems and solutions. The top five issues are drought and water use, plants and animals; how do the extreme weather patterns affect the plants and animals, transportation and energy, wildfires and extreme heat, and flooding and erosion. For more information and to complete a survey you can go to [trpc.org/climate](http://trpc.org/climate). Zita also suggested the possibility of a sub-committee of the Ag committee to focus on water, including water rights, water quality, access to water, etc.

Stephen went to the working group meeting for Climate Adaptation; this working group is open to anyone who wants to be involved. They have 100 plus topics they will be addressing. Stephen encouraged the committee members to take the online survey. Their next meeting will be May 11,

2017. There will be a woman from Earth Economics coming to do benefit cost and analysis of three actions out of the 100 plus topics. For more information on Earth Economics go to: <http://www.eartheconomics.org/benefit-cost-analysis/>. For more information on the Thurston Climate Adaptation Plan go to: <http://trpc.org/580/Thurston-Climate-Adaptation-Plan>.

Kevin announced that senate bill 5808 is on Gov. Inslee's desk, hopefully he will sign it! (Update: it looks like the bill was signed on May 5<sup>th</sup> and becomes effective July 23, 2017 <http://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2017-18/Pdf/Bill%20Reports/Senate/5808-S.E%20SBR%20FBR%2017.pdf>)

Approval of previous meeting minutes- The minutes from the March 30 meeting were reviewed and approved as corrected by consensus.

Approval of agenda - Agenda was approved after considerable discussion. The discussion about the Pledge of Allegiance was moved ahead of all other agenda items, including the first two major presentations (which have been on the Agenda for 2 months).

Pledge of Allegiance: A motion was made to begin the Committee's meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. More than 20 additional minutes of discussion followed. Supporters of the motion expressed their personal value of the Pledge and listed some of the local meetings which begin with the Pledge. It was noted that most Advisory Committees to the BOCC do not begin their meetings with the Pledge. Many members of the Committee were concerned that given the present political climate, requiring the Pledge could be felt as coercive and a kind of "taking names". We discussed that since the Committee is a voluntary, not elected body, the Pledge should be personally optional. A vote was taken and motion carried 5 to 4 in favor of the motion.

Ag Committee and BoCC support - land, water, other issues: Draft presentation for May meeting: A draft of the presentation to the BoCC on May 10<sup>th</sup> was reviewed and approved with edits and suggestions. Our staff, Charissa, will present a powerpoint.

Working Lands Strategic Plan (WLSP)– next steps? ([Executive Summary-Draft 6/02/09](#)) Committee reviewed the executive summary of 6/2/09. Robert will give a presentation on PDR (Purchase of Development Rights) and TDR (Transfer of Development Rights) portions of the plan at our June meeting. The committee agreed to take a look at the needs assessment summary in conjunction with the strategic plan and use the information to help prioritize which strategies to focus on. Our Chair, Zita, will present our WLSP Executive Summary, and connections to Stephen's Needs Assessment Summary to the BoCC on May 10<sup>th</sup>.

Agenda change for next time – It was suggested that we move News and Sharing to the end of the Agenda, since it is taking a lot of time. That way we can get to our primary agenda items firsts.

Public Comment - No public comment

Green Sheet – No comments to be recorded

Motion to Adjourn: Passed at 9:08 pm.

Submitted by: Deborah Bordelon

