

## THURSTON COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes for October 25, 2018

7:00PM – 9:00PM

3054 Carpenter Road SE, Olympia, WA, 98503

**Members Present:** Richard Mankamyer (Chair); Robert McIntosh; Chris Groen; Brian Fisher; Eric Johnson; Mike Moore; Mary DiMatteo (Scribe)

**Ex Officio Present :** Stephen Bramwell, WSU Extension Director

**Absent:** Joe Hanna; Pat Labine, Bryan Fisher; Chris Groen; Mike Moore; Scott Von; Deborah Bordelon (Administrative Assistant)); Nicole Warren (Thurston Conservation District).

**Call to Order:** Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, followed by Pledge of Allegiance and Introductions.

**Approval of previous meeting minutes:** DiMatteo motions approval. McIntosh seconds. Unanimous.

**Approval of Agenda:** Groen motions approval. McIntosh seconds. Unanimous with the following additions:

**November/ December Meeting:** Meeting scheduled for December 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:00PM. This will be an important meeting. Mike Moore has volunteered to Scribe. The Committee discussed taking time at this combined monthly meeting to hold a retreat style meeting. We will focus on goal setting and strategic planning. The Committee agreed to start by a closer look at the 7 priorities raised in the September Meeting, listed below. The Committee discussed developing a schedule to address one topic per month. Robert expressed an interest in working on/researching the cost of farmland issue. The Committee identified that the retreat style meeting in December may need to be moved to January if Comp Plan (Chapters 3 & 9) are released for comments.

- **7 priorities:** Rising land taxes; cost of farm labor; availability of farm labor; cost of farmland (PDR/TDR); loss of farmland; lack of infrastructure; low (crop, milk and livestock) prices.

**County HR Training:** Discussion of a training that the county has introduced to Committee appointments which is offered though the county's human resource department. Mankamyer offered to find out more information to bring back to the Committee in December. Currently, information available to the Committee indicates that the trainings occur during the business day, making it challenging for working Committee members to attend the 3 classes, which are 4 hours each.

### **Committee Items:**

**Increase in Property Taxes:** Stephen reported on an inquiry he made with Thurston Co regarding increases in Current Use property tax values. The issue was reported to the Committee by former Committee member, Fred Colvin. In a response Thurston Co explained that a current transaction on the property signaled an updating of property records. The County uses data from Department of Natural Resources, which updated the soil type/profile of the property, which is what lead to the increase in property values. Property is designated Open Space Ag. Suggestion was raised to draft a letter and/or invite county Assessor to Committee Meeting (January) to explain valuation increases in zoned agricultural lands in Thurston County based on soil type. It was thought to preemptively provide information to the Assessor's office with parcel numbers and percentages in increases to be able to explain to the Committee the increases.

- **Comp Plan:** Currently, there is no draft released. Stephen will contact Allison for updates.
- **Public Comment:** There was no Public Comment.
- **Green Sheet:** There were no Green Sheets.

### **Other Business:**

- **WSU Update:** Stephen shared news of an upcoming Grazing Event
- **Thurston Conservation District Update:**
- **News Sharing:**
- **January Meeting:** Reminder to schedule 2019 scribes.

**Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned at 8:51 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by Mary DiMatteo, Vice Chair.