

Thurston County Agriculture Advisory Committee

7:00-9:00 PM

3054 Carpenter Rd SE, Olympia, WA 98503

Meeting Minutes for March 28, 2019

Members Present: Richard Mankamyer (Chair); Joe Hanna (Vice Chair); Bryan Fisher; Eric Johnson; Robert McIntosh (Scribe).

Members Excused: Mike Moore.

Members Absent: Kevin Jensen; Pat Labine; Gigi McClure; Scott Von.

Ex Officio Present: Deborah Bordelon (Administrative Assistant).

Guests Present: Allison Osterberg; Kaitlynn Nelson; Ian Lefcourte; Maya Teeple, all from Thurston County Department of Community Planning and Economic Development.

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM by Richard Mankamyer.

Pledge of allegiance, optional for all attendees of the meeting.

A round table of introductions followed including members, staff, and guests.

Approval of previous meeting minutes: Minutes were approved unanimous.

Approval of current agenda: Agenda was approved unanimous.

Comprehensive Plan Update: Allison, Maya, Ian, and Kaitlynn updated the Committee on (1) progress in completing the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan, (2) issues relating to the Chapter 3 of the Comp Plan (Natural Resource Lands), and (3) the designation of Mineral Resource Lands.

The Comp. Plan will consist of 12 chapters, of which Chapter 3, Natural Resource Lands, is of primary interest to our Committee. The Planning Commission was briefed on the draft of Chapter 3 in January of this year and intends to hold a hearing on this Chapter by mid-year.

Chapter 3 has four sections: agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, and mineral resource lands. The Agriculture section of Chapter 3 of the new Comp. Plan will not change the criteria for, or the mapping of, Agricultural Lands of Long Term Significance, but

it will (1) revise action items, (2) add discussion of threats to agriculture (age of farmers, rates of farmland conversion, decrease in farm size, population pressure, etc.) and (3) add language on land conservation and incentive programs (PDR, TDR, etc.). The Aquaculture section will contain only minor language changes. The forestry section will both (1) review the designation of forest lands of long term significance, and (2) revise language and action items.

The section on mineral resource lands will contain the most extensive revisions because of a GMA Hearings Board Case that Thurston County lost in 2010. The County had excluded all agricultural and forest lands of long term significance from mineral land designation. Weyerhaeuser challenged this practice, and the Board ruled (and WAC 365-190-040 provides) that if long term forestry and mineral lands overlap, the County must either co-designate or pick the category (forestry or minerals) that has the greatest long-term significance. The decision did not mention agriculture lands, but its reasoning appears to apply to such lands also. WAC also provides that mining “may [not “shall”] be a temporary use at any given mine ... and that other uses can occur on the mine site after mining is completed.”

As a result of this case and these WAC provisions, the draft of Chapter 3 of the Comprehensive Plan proposes a large increase in the acreage of designated mineral land. Much of this mineral land is co-designated with long-term forestry land. As for co-designation with long term agricultural land, the current draft of Chapter 3 contains two options. Map A-1 does not co-designate long term agriculture lands. Map A-2 (the option recommended by the Planning Commission) does co-designate about 2000 acres of long-term agriculture land as mineral lands. It is important to remember that in all cases of mineral land co-designation, no mining can proceed without (1) compliance with all County mitigation and notice requirements, and (2) the obtaining of a mining permit and compliance with all the conditions thereof.

Our Committee’s Comments on Chapter 3 of the Comp. Plan: Robert volunteered to revise his draft of our Committee’s comments in response to the above new information and send his proposed revisions to the Committee before its April meeting so the Committee’s changes can be made at that meeting and our comments can be sent to the County shortly thereafter.

Attendance Records of Committee Members: Deb has sent to Richard a list of Committee members’ attendance and excused and unexcused absences during the past year.

Vacation of Scott Von’s Appointment for Non-Attendance: The Committee directed Deb to write a letter to the BOCC recommending that Scott Von’s appointment be vacated because (1) he has more than four unexcused absences during the past year and (2) efforts to contact him about this issue have been unsuccessful.

Conservation Futures Ranking Committee. The Committee selected Joe as its primary member on this Committee for this year and chose Richard as its alternate member.

Other Business: Motion made, seconded, and passed to direct Richard to send a letter to the Thurston Conservation District requesting the District to have a representative of the District attend future Agriculture Committee Meetings.

WSU Update:

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m.