

King County Agriculture Commission
Minutes from August 11, 2005
Woodinville Grange
Woodinville, WA

Commissioners Present: Judy Duff, Nancy Hutto, Ben Kodama, Bob Tidball, George Irwin, Roger Calhoon and Michael Blakely, Grant Davidson

Commissioners Absent: Dick Gradwohl, Gaylia Bullock, Ewing Stringfellow

Staff: Judy Herring, Steve Evans, Kathy Creahan, Clair Dyckman, Rick Reinlasoder King County (KC) Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD) Agriculture Programs; Rick Bautista KC Council

Guest Agency Staff: Matt Dunnahoe King Conservation District (KCD); Silvia Kantor, Washington State University Extension (WSU) KC; Paul Reitenbach, KC Department of Development and Environmental Services (DDES); Jeff McMorris, Aid to Councilmember Kathy Lambert; Mark Issacson, Division Manager for WLRD

Guests: Peter Dahl, Charlotte Ochoa, Maxine Keesling, Sunny Kaynor, Kirk Kaynor, Ron Baum, Ann Mack, Tom Quigley, Alan and Mariln Marsh

Judy Duff called the meeting to order at 4:10pm.

Commission Roundabout

George Irwin reported that the King County Council held a Town Hall meeting in Enumclaw during the Fair. He represented the Commission at this meeting and gave a brief report on Ag in the County. Judy Duff thanked George for representing the Commission and stated the importance of keeping the Commission visible Bob Tidball expressed his pleasure at the large turn out of Council members. He also indicated that the panel was very informative.

Commission Business

Chair Report:

Judy Duff asked the Commissioners to sign a card for Laurie Clinton who took a new position with the County and will no longer be staffing the Ag Commission

Commission Staff Report:

Steven Evans reported that Mark Solitto sent a letter to the Commission thanking them for their letter supporting the continuation of the Denny Triangle inter-local agreement between the City of Seattle and County in regards to the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program. Don Stuart is planning to be at next month's meeting to discuss the Pioneers in Conservation Program. Brochures were passed out regarding the USDA's Conservation Security Program (CSP). Interested landowners in the Snoqualmie watershed will be able to apply for this program in the fall through the Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS) for funding certain conservation practices. Steve announced Get Fresh in the City, a special promotion from August 13 - 20 to encourage people to buy local farm products.

Staff Report:

Judy Herring reported that the Construction season is beginning for the Agricultural Drainage Assistance Program (ADAP). Two projects are related to the removal of vegetation from drainage ditches on various properties in the Lower Green APD. Two other projects are related to maintenance of right of way and road side ditches on various properties on the Enumclaw Plateau ditches. Seven Request for Proposals have been received for the digester project and they are currently being reviewed. Judy stated that she was at the Town Hall meeting and gave a report on the Farmlands Program. Rick Reinlasoder announced that a Climate Change Conference will be held on October 27 at Qwest Field. More information on the conference will be available soon

Approval of Minutes:

Bob Tidball moved to approve the minutes of June 9, 2005. Roger Calhoon seconded. Michael Blakely noted the name of the new Extension Agent on page 2 of the minutes was incorrect. Todd Murray is the person's correct name. With that noted the minutes were approved unanimously.

Agency Reports

Washington State University (WSU) Extension KC:

Sylvia Kantor reported that over 20 people attended a Using Composted Manure workshop at Kelsey Creek Farm in Bellevue on June 28. The Harvest Celebration is scheduled for Oct 1 and over 30 stops are scheduled for that day. The event will be published in the Seattle Weekly on Sept. 14. The Small Farm Expo is being planned for Saturday March 18, 2006. The event will be organized into subject racks to allow for more technically oriented information.

King Conservation District (KCD):

Matt Dunnahoe introduced himself. He is a newly hired planner and looks forward to working with the Ag Commission.

WLRD Business Plan

Mark Isaacson reported on the future of Ag program. A portion of the funding for the Ag program comes from Surface Water Drainage fees. The amount of money received from those fees is scheduled to be reduced in part due annexations. Currently the WLRD receives about \$18 Million a year from these funds. In about 5 years it is projected that the division will receive only \$9 Million. The division is not recommending any staff reductions in the Ag programs for the 2006 budget. Beyond that it is unclear what the direction is going to be. Mark indicated that there three items that he would like to work with (and get help from) the Ag Commission in the future.

1. How can WLRD continue to support the Ag program with dwindling resources? What are some alternative funding sources
2. What other resources can the division access Partner with the Commission to develop an evaluation of all the agencies that do Ag work in the County. Are there redundancies? What are the "holes"?
3. How do we balance ecological restoration and Ag uses.

Public Comment

Maxine Keesling read a letter related to the rezoning of certain properties in the Sammamish APD into the record. The letter is available on request. Her letter supports the implementation of policy alternative one (see the discussion below on the next agenda item) with some alterations of the wording in the proposed policy.

Peter Dahl is owner of the Gold Creek Tennis Club. He recommended that the Gold Creek property be rezoned to a rural designation. He indicated that the top soil was not good and hadn't been farmed for many years

Rezoning of certain properties in the Sammamish APD

Paul Reitenbach stated that the Central Puget Sound Growth Management Hearings Board ordered King County to take Legislative action to bring the Sammamish Valley Agricultural Production District (APD) into compliance with the requirements of the Growth Management Act. The Hearings Board ruled that land in the APDs could not be designated both an "agricultural resource area" and "rural residential". In order to comply with this ruling staff have proposed two policy alternatives. The first is to zone all the land in question as Ag and keep the properties in the APD. The second alternative is to remove certain properties from the APD and zone them as rural residential. Other affected properties would remain in the APD and be rezoned Ag. Paul requested that the Commission make recommendation on this issue as the Executive will make a proposal soon. Bob Tidball indicated that the Ag Regulation Committee met earlier and discussed the two alternatives. He indicated the Committee recommended that the first alternative - keep all the land in the APD - was preferable. Existing uses for the properties would remain the same. After some additional discussion George Irwin moved that the parcels currently zoned as rural residential not be rezoned and be removed from the APD. No one seconded the motion. Bob Tidball moved to support the Ag Regulation Committee's recommendation to include all the properties in the APD and zone them Ag. Ben Kodama seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 4 yea 1 nay and 2 abstaining. A letter will be written to the Executive stating the Commission's recommendation.

New Business

Clair Dyckman asked the Commission to send a letter in support of the WIRA 9 Ag Component. This was discussed in earlier Ag Commission meetings. Nancy Hutto moved to send the letter. Grant Davidson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Bob Tidball indicated that he had asked for a final copy of the CAO rule but has not received it. He requested it again. He also requested the administrative rule for developing farm plans.

Nancy Hutto moved to award the final \$3,000 of the Ag Commission grant fund to Puget Poultry to help develop a poultry processing facility. Bob Tidball seconded. The motion passed with 5 voting yea and one abstaining.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:15pm.