

**King County Agriculture Commission**  
**Minutes from January 13, 2005**  
**Issaquah Salmon Hatchery**  
**Issaquah, WA**

Commissioners Present: Roger Calhoon, Dick Gradwohl, Nancy Hutto, Grant Davidson, Ben Kodama, Bob Tidball, and Judy Duff  
Commissioners Absent: George Irwin, Michael Blakely, Ewing Stringfellow, Gaylia Bullock and Jason Roetcisoender  
Staff: Daryl Grigsby, Manager, King County (KC) Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD); Judy Herring, Steve Evans, Laurie Clinton, KC DNRP WLRD Agriculture Programs; Sylvia Kantor, Washington State University Extension (WSU) King County  
Guest Agency Staff: KC Council member David Irons; Jeanette McKague, Aide to KC Council member David Irons; Russ Carlsen, Aide to KC Council member Kathy Lambert; Don Stuart, American Farmlands Trust; Josh Monaghan, King Conservation District (KCD)  
Guests: Judy Taylor and Anne Mack

The meeting began without a quorum.

**Commission Business**

**Staff Report:** Claire reported on staff training for the Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO). She explained how the Rural Stewardship Plan, Forest Plan and Farm Management plans will be done and how they interface depending on a landowner's practices or choices. Josh from the KCD explained in more detail how Farm Management Plans will be done in regard to requirements of the CAO. He said work is still being done on a memorandum of agreement between King County and the King Conservation District which includes which agency will have final approval of CAO farm plans.

Chair Judy Duff called the meeting to order at 4:28pm.

**Approval of Minutes**

**Motion 01-0105** Motion by Dick to approve September and October meeting minutes. It was noted that the agenda incorrectly said March minutes. Judy requested that a Thank You to Ag Program staff for the enjoyable and informative field trip in the Sammamish APD be added to the October minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

**Discussion on Water & Land Resources Division (WLRD) Business Plan**

Daryl Grigsby returned to continue discussion on the WLRD Business Plan. Daryl explained that the process is a challenge as the County continues to face revenue losses. He explained that every program has to make a case in how it benefits the landscape and environment. Daryl said the Commission made a case at the last meeting how a properly managed farm provides a quantity of benefits in relation to water quality. The funding source for Agriculture Programs is the Surface Water Management fee, and to fund a program there must be a direct correlation to surface water protection. Daryl reminded the Commission that while the Farm Specialist was added back for one year, the funding source needs to be looked at again next year and following years. He said the cutting of that position didn't have anything to do with the position's value, but rather because there was no nexus identified between it and surface water management.

Commissioners asked many questions about how the plan was done including: was there any review of how this plan would be implemented; who watches or manages the plan; why is support for manure management and other best management practices being cut when they have been proven to benefit surface and ground water quality; and will there be any public comment allowed on the plan?

Council member David Irons was in attendance and he explained that the Business Plan was tied to the 2005 Budget so Council passed it with the intent to review the business plan after the first of the year. He said this process will provide for public hearings.

There was more discussion with Daryl on the fact that while creating a business plan to provide the framework for securing funding and managing funds is good, it doesn't make sense that the contributions of agriculture to the environment and economic vitality of the county are not shown, since agriculture best management practices and agriculture production do much more than protect surface water.

The Commission expressed their disappointment in not being included in the creation of the Business Plan. Daryl encouraged them to put their efforts into the future funding solution and substantiating the benefit of agriculture to water quality rather than the Business Plan itself. He invited an Ag Commissioner to represent the Commission by serving on a committee that is being created to figure out a strategy for funding for WLRD. It is expected to form in February.

Judy thanked Daryl for coming again to talk with them.

**King County Farmlands Preservation (FPP) "Revised Development Rights Deed" Presentation**

Judy Herring distributed her draft of revisions to the Deed of and Agreement Relating To Development Rights for Commission edits and approval. Judy described the process of purchasing property and the needs for changes to the deed based on past experience managing properties and changes in requirements from the federal funding source for farmland property acquisition. She reviewed her draft and the Commission provided their recommendations.

**Motion 02-0105** Dick made the motion to approve Judy's changes to the deed. Nancy seconded. A friendly amendment was made to accept the changes agreed upon in continued discussion by remaining Commissioners after Commissioner Gradwohl leaves the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

After continued discussion, the recommended changes were:

Page 3 - change minimum required lot size to 35 acres on properties within certain APDs.

Page 3 - address the compost exporting issue so that farmers are allowed to bring agriculture wasted onto their property for compost use

Page 4 - under water rights issue, make sure that divided parcels have water supply

Page 4 - regarding trees, ensure this does not exclude agriculture trees

Page 6 - clarify "acts of God" clause

Judy will submit the revised version to the County Council and will have a copy for the Commission next month.

### New Business

**Don Stuart**, from **American Farmland Trust** came to explain the Trust's initiative for US Farm Policy reform of the federal Farm Bill. They believe the goal of the next farm bill should be to tie future public financial support to sound land management. It is apparent that there will be substantial cuts to the agriculture subsidy program, and the Trust wants to ensure those funds are not put into the general fund, but stay in the Farm Bill to continue supporting American agriculture through other programs. He will be soliciting suggestions as to what the funding could be used for rather than subsidies and said some suggestions so far have been: increasing funding and improving the Conservation Restoration Easement Program (CREP); increasing funding to the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP); helping beginning farmers get started; and developing markets for farm products. Don said this will be a political call to action, and he would like all the ideas he can get, and the support to ensure the successful passing of this initiative. When thinking of ideas, he asked everyone to consider such things as: what could be in the Farm Bill; what should be added; what could be improved to make a better Farm Bill; what's wrong with it as it currently stands; and what's good about it. Don requested that all those present to please email him with their ideas. Don said the two most important actions are to provide input and to form a network so that as proposals get made he can solicit further feedback. He stressed that the urgency of this request is due to the timeline. This set of proposals for Farm Bill changes must be produced soon enough, and constructed well enough so that they can get passed this year. Don said he will keep the Commission apprised by sending information to Laurie. The Commission thanked him for his tremendous efforts and for taking the time to share the plan with them.

### Agency Reports

**King Conservation District (KCD):** Josh reported that the EQIP program was still receiving pre-applications through the end of the week. He announced that they have hired two new farm planners. Josh also reminded everyone that KCD Board of Director elections will be in March and there is one position up for election.

**Washington State University (WSU) Extension KC:** Sylvia announced that Extension Agent Brad Gaolach has been named the new Extension Director. She told the Commission that Brad is soliciting restructuring input as he works to ensure that WSU is meeting the needs of all the people and sectors it serves, including agriculture and farmers. He would like to hear from the Ag Commission. Sylvia also reported on the "Cultivating Success, Tilling the Soil – Ag Entrepreneurship" class given by WSU Small Farms program that is underway at the Renton office.

### New Business

The Commission decided they wanted to add the Business Plan and funding issue for KC agriculture programs to the agenda of the upcoming Commission Ag Program committee meeting.

Laurie talked about the upcoming field trip in the Lower Green/Enumclaw APDs and said she would be sending directions. Commissioners requested that Laurie inquire about the possibility of a field trip with DRNP Director Pam Bissonnette this summer.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:05pm.