

**King County Agriculture Commission
Minutes from March 13, 2008
Issaquah Police Station/City Hall
Issaquah**

Commissioners Present: Nancy Hutto, George Irwin, Bob Vos, Grant Davidson, Ward Roney, Larry Pickering, Ben Kodama, Bob Tidball, Judy Taylor, Michael Blakely,

Absent: Roger Calhoon, Grant Davidson, Ewing Stringfellow

Staff: Judy Herring, Steve Evans, Claire Dyckman, Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD) Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)

Guest Agency Staff: Paul Borne, King Conservation District (KCD)

Guests: Jeff McMorris, Legislative Aide to Councilmember Lambert

Nancy Hutto called the meeting to order.

Roundtable: Micheale, Bob T. and Bob V. waiting for land to dry out, hoping to get on it soon! Judy is doing lavender and sheep and participated at the Spring Fair; George is involved in the Junior Livestock Show – sold 9 steers, 17 hogs, 11 sheep; all lambs sold; a few hogs left. This is the culminating part of the year for the kids – one April 17th. Wheat prices are way up and more may plant wheat; his son thinks the corn bubble will burst. Ward Roney is very concerned that a huge critter pad is being built just the opposite side of the County line: either Snohomish County has to change its thinking or King County has to change its thinking about 1/100 of an inch. Drainage problems abound between the Duvall Road and the County line: Tuck Creek is out of its normal course and the tree farm is under water; trees can't be harvested; a culvert has caved in on a drainage ditch and Sam Rupard can't get a permit to fix it; and the ADAP projects are time consuming and expensive. A new owner and leaser from Skagit cannot put a bean crop on the lands north of the poplar farm as intended.

Decisions Made:

Minutes Motion: George Irwin moved and Larry Pickering seconded that the minutes of the April meeting be accepted.

Motion: Bob Vos moved and Bob Tidball seconded that a letter be sent to the Executive and Council that outlines Ward's concerns. The letter should stay general and include photographs. Make it clear that water is going onto neighbor's properties; that it relates to at least three large parcels, that someone is being damaged, and that we would like to discuss the issues with you. It dovetails with a County hearing on woody debris. Copy the KCD and Elizabeth Weldin.

Decisions from Commission Work Session:

Commissioner Selection: Bob Vos, Bob Tidball, and Judy Taylor volunteered to be on the selection committee for commissioner recruitment. In addition to contacting those who were thought of last time, wine producers, an infrastructure person, and Mara Heiman should be considered. People need to understand the importance of attendance.

Commission Officers: Claire should call around to compose the nominating slate for the next meeting.

Priorities Letter. The Vice Chair noted the Chair should ask for the letter proposed the last two years to be written to Executive and Council: thank you for help, noting priorities, asking to talk with them.

Commission Work Session FPP Covenant Revisions:

Judy reviewed the draft revisions to the FPP covenants and pointed out the changes to the existing covenants that the Regulatory Committee is recommending. The proposed revisions include allowing temporary farm worker housing and Bob Voss suggested “temporary housing” be defined so that it is distinguished from permanent housing. The question was also raised as to whether a water right could be subdivided if the property it attached to was subdivided. The proposed revisions also include some changes recommended by Staff; one such revision is a prohibition on using FPP property as a site for feedlots. George Irwin suggested that this covenant may be unnecessary as the Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) regulations administered by the federal government require large feedlots to use Best Management Practices that ensure the resource features of the site are adequately protected. Staff will check into the CAFO regulations, as well as the other suggestions and recommendations noted above, and present their findings to the Regulatory Committee at their next meeting.

Judy reported that the Regulatory Committee is still addressing home occupations and home industries and will present their recommendations on these uses at the May Commission meeting. The Committee’s work on the draft revisions is almost complete and that the Committee is hoping to present their final recommendations and ask for the Commission’s support of the proposed revisions at the May Commission meeting.

10 Year Vision:

Format

- Staff should bring a draft of the 4 column SWAT analysis for the future of agriculture to the next meeting:

| | | | |
|------------------------|------------|---------------|---------|
| Strengths of County Ag | Weaknesses | Opportunities | Threats |
|------------------------|------------|---------------|---------|

- There should be 10 year goals: each could be backed by its own vision, strategy, outcomes, issue paper, etc.
- Simplicity is needed.

Audience

- Commissioners: Cannot make recommendations on policies and regulations and program if they don’t know direction in which we are going or want to go.
- Elected Officials: this is who we advise.
- The Public: the public elects the Officials.
- The audience is educational as well as political.

Contents

- Increase the number of farmers.
- Keep the land productive.
- Improve/regain the infrastructure for processing and distribution.
- Aggressively streamline the regulations: local, state and federal.

- Connect better with the decision makers.
- Be very proactive with education.
- Identify/research the new commodities: grapes, turf, etc.

Strategy

- Farm Link is the priority: connect it with the FPP to improve the preservation of agriculture. Help the kids get on the land; the point of sale is crucial; estate planning.
- Keep the land unflooded.
- Identify who in the area needs to work with us on which goal. For example: use the plethora of new organizations to do education.
- Address/fix the disconnect between WSU's info and technology and the "rest of the world."
- Distinguish between advantages and disadvantages of many smaller farms or fewer large farms?
- Distinguish between what will happen and what should happen.
- Note the difference between the needs of property owners and the needs of regional agriculture.
- Pay attention to the contradictions regarding biofuels.
- Pay attention to County's role in context of region.

Strengths/Opportunities

- A wonderful place to grow food; a lot to buy.
- Cheese has a great customer base.

Threats

- We have lost so much already in this region: used to be the largest producer. Where is Whidbey wheat? Bellevue fruit orchards?
- Flooding

Challenge

- Getting people on the land/keeping people on the land.

Agency Reports:

King Conservation District (KCD) Paul Borne noted the following KCD activities:

- Geoff Reed is working with the Sheriff and Police to distribute confiscated grow lights to farmers;
- A new fact sheet focuses on environmental activities that youth/kids can use for fund raising;
- A consultant is making recommendations on potential candidates for Executive Director to the Board of Supervisors;
- Fifty four people participated in the Livestock; and
- there will be a farm tour to Allayne Blickle's farm on May 3rd.

King County Agriculture Program (KC Ag Program): Judy Herring reported:

- she attended a meeting of the State Farmland Preservation Program in Mt. Vernon;

- Karen Kinney wants the CSA and Farm Brochures distributed by all; and
- the SEPA process is underway for the proposed changes in flood regulations.

Public Comment:

- Michaele Blakely wanted to know if she is going to be able to finish her farm pad this season as she thought she could. Her understanding was that she should not raise the entire pad as she wanted last year because she would be able to get compensatory storage at Chinook Bend this year. This would preserve some of the available compensatory storage for those who have no ability to find any, or any at elevation. As a member of the Task Force, she did not understand that the extension of the demonstration ordinance would not allow that. (Claire noted there would be a meeting on this topic the next day and that she would report back to Michaele after that meeting.)

Nancy Hutto adjourned the meeting.