

**King County Agriculture Commission
Minutes from October 12, 2006
Issaquah Fish Hatchery
Issaquah**

Commissioners Present: George Irwin, Ben Kodama, Bob Vos, Larry Pickering, Ewing Stringefellow, Julie Haakenson, Lu Eng, Rob Holland

Commissioners Absent: Roger Calhoun, Michael Blakely, Grant Davidson, Judy Taylor, Nancy Hutto, Bob Tidball

Staff: Steve Evans, Judy Herring, Claire Dyckman, King County (KC) Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD) Agriculture Programs.

Guest Agency Staff: Josh Monahan, King Conservation District (KCD); Brad Gaolach, Washington University Extension (Extension); Dave Monthie, Doug Howell, King County Department of Natural Resources

George Irwin called the meeting to order.

Commission Roundabout:

Ewing Stringefellow's cow/calf operation is in the evaluation of operations that comes at kill time as entire herd is sent to butcher. Julia is finishing up the Pike Place Market CSA. Lu's family is entering the hard part of the year when winter comes: trying to grow something different, return with dry flowers, Christmas wreaths – always a struggle to keep things going at this time. George Irwin: managing a sale in Chehalis and one in Moses Lake. It is animal selection time for 4-H. Ben Kodama: attending meetings on retail nursery markets. Local industry being pushed aside by outside providers. Crucial to address regulations regarding what retail nurseries can sell.

Motion: Larry Pickering moved that a letter of support be written to the Council to help fund the Enumclaw Manure Management Bio-Gas project and stating the Ag Commission would like to stay in the loop on that research project. Motion passed.

Motion: Bob Vos moved that staff develop a letter of support for adequately funding Extension for their core services, including Cultivating Success, Small Farm Expo, and the Harvest Celebration. Motion passed.

Recommendations:

Enumclaw Manure Management Research on Bio-gas Digester: The County should be cautious in scaling the research project any larger than needed to determine outcomes. A Commissioner observed that too many times government wastes funds when it attempts to subsidize a full scale enterprise before knocking out the bugs. The Commission requested a copy of the letters of support that come from farmers.

Regional Water Supply: The Ag Commission would like DNRP to figure out how agriculture can best be included in that process. The Small Systems Committee was suggested.

Harvest Celebration Health Permit Issues: We need to develop a protocol for permitting on-site chef demonstrations at events such as Harvest Celebration. These are permitted by site, not by event and the cost is prohibitive.

“Cultivating Success” Partnerships with Banks: Staff should contact the Farm Services Agency.

Reclaimed Water/Brightwater: In any market assessment for reclaimed water related to agriculture, the County should be sure to factor in the landowners who can get the water free from their existing water rights.

Staff Report:

Judy Herring reported that the Regulatory Committee Meeting was continuing its work on FPP Deeds and Covenants and would meet again on October 26th. They are asking the American Farmland Trust for information from other states.

She reviewed the status of the Nelson-Bauer property in case Commissioners were asked about the many issues related to that site. She will be asking for a letter approving sale of the farm in the near future.

Agency Reports:

King Conservation District (KCD) Josh Monaghan reported on the classes conducted by the Conservation District and noted the KCD was continuing to negotiate the ‘07 assessment with the County and the suburban cities.

WSU Coop Extension:

Harvest Celebration: Brad Gaolach reported that at least 5500 people attended the Harvest Celebration Tour and that the Chef demos were a huge success. However, at a few farms the food could not be tasted by the public because the cost of obtaining the required permits was prohibitive.

Extension Budget: Brad noted that the status quo budget of Extension was in the Executive proposed budget transmitted to Council. However, the three programs highly valued by the Agriculture Commission have been grant-funded and are no longer in the WSU or County-proposed budget: Small Farm Expo, Harvest Celebration, and the “Cultivating Success” classes.

DNRP Director’s Office:

Enumclaw Bio-Digester Research Project: Doug Howell reported on the status of the project, the constraints they have had to address, the research they have conducted, and the research that is now needed. The project cannot go any further unless a site is obtained around which to design the implementation phase. While others have assessed the value of the energy and nutrient products, it appears that the fiber may actually provide the largest revenue stream. Doug asked the Commission for a letter of support to the Council to acquire a site on which to conduct the next feasibility studies. Discussion ensued. A motion was passed.

Regional Water Supply Process: Dave Monthie reported on the status of the Regional Water Supply process noting that agriculture was not officially represented at the table and wanting to talk with the Commission on how to address agricultural issues. There are no recording mechanisms for how much water is used by “self-supplied water users”, including local

agriculture, and what will be needed in the future. He noted that Steve Evans had prepared and presented a slide show on the issues. The logical connection for agriculture is at the Small Systems Committee. Steve Evans will work with Dave Monthie on this issue.

Public Comment: None.

Old Business: Postponed. Commissioners were reminded that they should call in if they had any issues that they wanted addressed by the Forest Commission at the next meeting.

New Business: Postponed.

George Irwin adjourned the meeting.