



King County

Water and Land Resources Division

Department of Natural Resources and Parks

King Street Center

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TTY Relay: 711

King County Agriculture Commission DRAFT Minutes Thursday, April 14, 2016 Watershed Science Center, Issaquah

Commissioners	P	A	Commissioners	P	A
George Irwin, Chair	X		Bob Vos	X	
LeAnn Krainick, Vice Chair	X		Siri Erickson-Brown	X	
Eldon Murray	X		Larry Pickering		X
Roger Calhoon	X		Shelby Jors	X	
Leigh Newman-Bell	X		Amy Holmes	X	
Meredith Molli	X		Anne Becker		X
Bruce Elliott (not confirmed)		X			

P=Present; A=Absent

County Staff Present	
Patrice Barrentine, DNRP	Megan Moore, DNRP
Steve Evans, DNRP	April Sanders, KCC
Lisa LaBrache, KCC	Ted Sullivan, DNRP
Richard Martin, DNRP	John Taylor, DNRP
Jeff McMorris, KCC	Christie True, DNRP
Guests Present	
Michaele Blakely	Cynthia Krass, KCD
Liz Clark, KCD	Dave Nadel
Claire Dyckman	Marilyn Roney
Nancy Hutto	Ward Roney
Karen Kinney	Bob Tidball
Ben Kodaia (?)	Luke Woodward, NABC
Lucille Kodaia (?)	

Meeting Action Summary

- **March 2016 Minutes Approved**
- **Commissioner Service Recognition**
- **Sammamish Valley Winery Study Task Force Update**
- **FFF Agriculture Caucus Update**
- **Next Meeting: May 12th, 2016 at 4:20 pm (Vashon Island)**

Meeting Called to Order at 4:11 pm

Approval of Agenda

LeAnn Krainick motioned to approve tonight's meeting agenda. Leigh Newman-Bell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Eldon Murray motioned to approve the March 10, 2016 meeting minutes. Shelby Jors seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

Commissioner Recognition – John Taylor, Christie True, Jeff McMorris, LeAnn Krainick

Patrice Barrentine introduced a slideshow overviewing highlights and history of the Commission as well as King County agriculture. Christie True and John Taylor thanked past and current Commissioners for their hard work and volunteer efforts, and expressed a wish to keep the Commission actively engaged and working with DNRP. Jeff McMorris and King County Council (KCC) staff presented proclamations from the KC Executive honoring several long-serving past and current Commissioners, and a few words were spoken in memory of former Commissioners who have passed away. LeAnn Krainick thanked all Commissioners as well as the KCC and Executive Constantine, stating that the County has made great efforts to conserve green spaces and combat a perceived stigma against farming in KC. Additional thanks were given to past and present Commission coordinators at DNRP, and the citizens of Seattle, for their support.

Sammamish Valley Winery Study Task Force – Roger Calhoon, John Taylor

Roger Calhoon reported on the recent stakeholder meeting regarding non-compliant Sammamish Valley wineries and tasting rooms. He said the goal of the meeting was to determine the task force's objectives, and get everyone on the same page. He said the study, which described the growth and economic impact of wineries as an industry in King County, was itself briefly discussed. However, in his view, the key impetus of the study – health code and land use violations by SV wineries and tasting rooms – went unaddressed.

Wineries are a growing industry in King County, he continued, with about 35 currently in unincorporated KC, over 100 in Woodinville, and more added each year. He stated that he received feedback at the meeting that many winery owners wish to be compliant with regulations, but that there is a vocal minority pushing a view that the County is simply seeking to shut down all wineries. This view is in part, he opined, due to a letter sent by the County to non-compliant wineries and tasting rooms, requesting acknowledgement that they were in violation and that any County enforcement may be postponed until the completion of this study. Overall he sees an increasing "us vs. them" mentality on this issue between the wineries/tasting rooms, valley landowners/businesses, and the County, which needs to be erased if there is any hope of coming to a solution.

He voiced a concern that the actual outcome of the study will be to completely redefine land uses so that many previously impermissible uses will then become permissible. He believes it would lead to significant repercussions should wineries or tasting rooms be redefined as "agricultural" activities. He also expressed a wish for more farmer representation at the discussion table, stating he had been the only farmer present, while there had been four winery representatives. He conceded there appears to be, on the whole, much common interest shared by those present – such as area traffic concerns – which he hopes will lead to productive outcomes.

Siri Erickson-Brown asked if building code violations were a problem. John Taylor stressed that the larger concern is health code violations, in particular the operation of large-scale facilities without adequate commercial septic service for the number of customers served. Hundreds of tasting and distillery rooms in the SV are out of compliance with County health codes, and Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (DPER) does not have adequate staffing to proactively enforce this many violations. He further explained this was the impetus for creating the task force, to come up with a blanket solution to bring people into compliance as well as strongly enforce those in violation.

Mr. Taylor stated that the Commission could be very pivotal on this entire overarching issue. He said that what the County wants is a consensus about the right path forward, which may indeed involve defining some land uses as impermissible, and to arrive at a code that makes sense in practicality. Ms. Erickson-Brown said she believed it would be a mistake to strongly restrict wineries if they are indeed a burgeoning agricultural industry, and prefers a flexible, more strongly enforced approach. Meredith Molli (?) commented that the wine is indeed an agricultural product, but it is not originating in King County; the grapes for wine are largely grown in eastern Washington.

Mr. Calhoon said the majority of wineries and tasting rooms are not growing crops in the SV, but instead “moving” product. He believes the tasting rooms are actually extracting financial value from the SV, not contributing to it. Ms. Erickson-Brown suggested defining the nature of “agricultural-related” business more specifically and that time should be placed on a future meeting agenda for this. Liz Clark with King Conservation District (KCD) offered a warning that other parts of King County are watching how the Woodinville area addresses this issue, and that unaddressed this could spread in the County.

BREAK

Farm Fish Flood Agriculture Caucus – Siri Erickson-Brown, Meredith Molli, Cynthia Krass

Cynthia Krass with KCD briefly recapped the feedback received from their outreach efforts last spring to landowners in the Snoqualmie Valley, which had been relayed to the Farm Fish Flood (FFF) caucuses. Siri Erickson-Brown said the loudest concern expressed by landowners is flooding, and the related safety and property damages and uncertainty. She continued that, despite prior reassurances otherwise, it is the observation of some landowners that the large levee removal projects along the river do appear to impact flood behavior. She stated one priority of the Agriculture caucus in FFF is to ensure accountability for any actions undertaken by public agencies that affect river flow.

She said another priority of the Ag caucus is to see regulations relaxed to account for the large degree of uncertainty of living and farming near a dynamic river system. Ms. Erickson-Brown acknowledged flooding could not be completely prevented, but might still be reduced in severity. She said the caucus is asking King County to explore an engineered system to accomplish this. She listed the other caucus priorities: cost and regulatory burden of drainage maintenance to landowners; flexibility in the “zero-rise” standard restricting new farm pad construction; permanent protection of designated APD lands from fish habitat recovery; mitigation of planting projects.

The primary FFF controversy surrounds the Fish caucus’s desire for more voluntary buffers, planted to cool the temperature of more fish-heavy waterways so as to be more habitable for those fish. John Taylor explained that buffer planting, depending on the buffer size and number planted, could ultimately remove thousands of land acres from production in the APD. He did express a belief that most primary FFF issues would be addressed by next week, that the list of contentious issues between caucuses will be significantly

narrowed down by then. Three FFF task forces targeting the primary identified issues – regulatory, buffers, and the Strategic Plan for the SV – will lay a foundation, he said, for future work.

Ms. Erickson-Brown and Meredith Molli suggested that if an overall cap were placed on the total number of land acres allowed to be taken from the APD for fish habitat recovery, this could lead to improved screening processes to prioritize which fish restoration projects are most crucial to address. Ms. Erickson-Brown and Patrice Barrentine stressed this was not about “rating” the value of various pieces of farmland, but more to determine what individual farmers need to be productive. Ms. Erickson-Brown added it was the view of the Agriculture caucus that, should APD land be given up to fish recovery, some of the Ag caucus’s other priorities should be met in return.

Leigh Newman-Bell asked if non-landowning farmers could input on these issues. Ms. Krass agreed and asked those interested to contact her. Ms. Erickson-Brown then asked for new members for the task forces. Mr. Taylor said the goal is for the three task forces to roll out over the next two years, at the end of which there will be an agreed-upon construct, updated annually, which should preclude the need for any future FFF processes. Patrice Barrentine agreed to distribute several selected FFF documents to brief any additional individuals interested in participating in the task forces.

Comp Plan Update – Patrice Barrentine, John Taylor

This item was tabled to address at the next meeting.

Updates – Patrice Barrentine, KCD Staff

Amy Holmes offered a reminder about KCD Food Initiative grant applications, due tonight. She welcomed any interested parties as application reviewers. She added that KCD still has yet to select a new Executive Director. Liz Clark reported on the availability of several pieces of KCD agricultural equipment: a poultry processing unit for rental at the Issaquah Grange; a manure spreader out on loan for the entire season; a no-till seeder in Enumclaw, which staff are orientating themselves with and should be circulating by fall.

Patrice Barrentine reported that the King County Farm Bureau will meet with the WSDA and their policy director, regarding the new juice processing regulations, on May 20th. The meeting will not be open to the public. The desired outcome of the meeting is to make WSDA aware of flaws in this new ruling and come up with an improved solution. George Irwin added that the Farm Bureau wishes for a one-year moratorium on implementing the ruling so that “stop-gap” legislation on this issue can be put in place.

Ms. Barrentine requested any feedback be sent to her on the provided draft agenda/timetable of the upcoming May 12th Commission meeting on Vashon Island. She said the hope is for the meeting and tour to start earlier than usual so everything will still conclude at the usual time, and added that those who did not wish to leave cars at Lincoln Park could park at King Street Center and vanpool to the ferry from there.

Richard Martin gave a reminder that a meeting for the Farmland Leasing Program will be held next week in Enumclaw.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:02 pm

Next Meeting

Thursday, May 12, 2016 at 4:20 pm (vanpool meets at Lincoln Park, West Seattle at 2:15 pm)

Vashon Public Library, Vashon Island