

King County Agriculture Commission

DRAFT Minutes from

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Watershed Science Center, Issaquah

Commissioners	P	A	Commissioners	P	A
Nancy Hutto, Chair	X		Bob Tidball	X	
Michael Blakely	X		George Irwin	X	
Matt Tregoning		X	Siri Erickson-Brown	X	
Bob Vos	X		Pat Traub (Commission Applicant)		X
Larry Pickering		X	Ward Roney		X
Eldon Murray	X				

P=Present; A=Absent

Staff Present	
Kathy Creahan	Steve Evans
Ted Sullivan	Patrice Barrentine
John Taylor	
Guests Present	
Meredith Molli	Ann Goos
Pat Mc Glothlin	Dr. Deb Inglis
LeeAnn Krainick	Lauren Marquardt
Joe Wade	Roger Calhoon
April Sanders, Councilmember Kathy Lambert's Office	

Meeting Action Summary

- November and December Meeting Minutes were approved
- The commission took an advisory vote to support the Hafner project because of its protection of additional farmland from flooding. However, the commissioners also unanimously recommend that their support of the project hinges on: *a process for offsetting the loss of farm acreage (about 12 acres) as a test case for finding new farmable land that can be added to farming outside of the APD.*
- Commission will write letter to County Executive to encourage support of WSU's North Puget Sound Campus and 4 year agricultural degree programs in the 2015 state legislative session
- Commission completed their Strategic Planning Brainstorm
- An in-depth discussion of integrating new ag commissioners included:
 - Food Economy's impact inspiring many qualified applicants
 - Need of coming into compliance with KC statutes for commissioner terms
 - Importance of orientation and training for new commissioners
 - Preserve organizational knowledge while increasing diversity of people, skills and geography on commission

Meeting Highlights with Action Items in Text Boxes

Called to Order 4:05 pm

Approval of Minutes

George Irwin made a motion to approve the minutes. Bob Vos seconded.

November and December meeting minutes approved unanimously

Public Comment

None

Hafner Project Advisory Vote – Nancy Hutto, Chair

Nancy introduced the topic highlighting the subcommittee made up of herself, Michael Blakely and Eric Tregoning who met and were presented an in-depth proposal on several options for a riparian project to enhance salmon, reduce flooding, and protect ag lands heavily eroded by previous floods. The project will require losing 12-16 acres of pastureland, but will protect 40+ acres from flood damage and prevent flooding of a road.

Michael Blakely expressed that the subcommittee unanimously supported the project because it will benefit farmland and that it was a “no-brainer”. But was unaware, they were to make a formal vote on the issue.

Siri Erickson-Brown agreed with Michael’s assessment that this project makes sense and benefits farms. She would also like to see this project used as a test case for mitigation of the lost ag acreage. Wants any advisory vote to include that this acreage should be mitigated.

Nancy: We will vote on whatever someone makes a motion on. The subcommittee did not make a motion, we just agreed it is a project that makes sense.

Michael: We wanted to have more commissioners thinking about and seeing this.

Siri: Can we say we would support this project provided it provides a process for mitigation?

George: Is that a motion?

Bob Vos: In bringing 400 acres/year into production each year, I’m not sure that 12 acres is going to be helpful.

Siri: I think it will help try out a concept which hasn’t been tested. And I think it would do a lot of good if this body decided what 400 acres should include whether it’s in the APD or not. In FFF, we have talked about how taking APD land and then adding land to the APD isn’t adding, it’s losing.

George: In the Kitchen Cabinet, we looked at any land lying fallow within or outside the APD that could be farmed. We didn't really look at zoning. Whatever motion you want to make about Hafner, you can include any land you want.

Siri: In our ag caucus in FFF, the recommendation that seems to be making its way forward is a 'no net loss of ag land' as a policy. What that means exactly, this body is best skilled to define. Is it simply a zoning definition or does it mean something more concrete about the fundamental characteristics of the land?

Nancy: John, what does this project need from us? Maybe we need to do something different for Hafner and then outline some additional things we need before getting additional projects.

John: Going back to the meeting we had in Carnation, the meeting intent was to get feedback from you on the number of alternatives we are considering. For example, there's a range of taking 9-18 acres of pastureland in this project. What we heard from the committee was, there's not a substantial benefit to keeping 9 acres of pastureland until the river courses that way. It makes more sense to take all 18 because it increases flood protection to so much more farmland.

What I heard from the group was that this project was a 'no-brainer' because it benefits farms, fish, and flood goals. And I think what I also heard was that you liked how this information was presented to you about the alternatives. Our intention going forward, is that what we'd like to use this format to present future project alternatives to a smaller subset or committee of the ag commission for your feedback and then bring it to the larger commission from your committee. In this instance, because the ag commission expressed so much concern about the four capitol projects in the Snoqualmie, we contacted our funders and let them know we were going to push this project back and incorporate feedback from you and they allowed us to do that.

What we need from you, you could take a vote in favor of it or against it or be silent on it, but we have scaled the project back based on your comments. We would like a vote in favor of the project, but the mitigation piece can be included. With FFF mitigation, as Siri mentioned, the devil's in the details.

Patrice: I wanted to clarify my intent for this advisory vote. I was at the Carnation meeting with the subcommittee and because the subcommittee supported this project for the benefits to farmland, I thought it was important to get this advisory vote on the books and in the minutes, so that it would be clear moving into the future that this was your opinion of the project.

Siri: Draining land that was once farmed because of lack of drainage is not acceptable mitigation for lost ag land. It may count on a lesser scale. But with drainage, we used to drain our fields until regulations made it so we couldn't. But saying 'We're gonna give you back something we took away already for something we're taking away now' isn't gaining something new. Let's use this as a serious test case for mitigating 12 acres. If we can't mitigate 12 acres, we clearly can't mitigate larger projects.

Actions:

1. Formal Subcommittee recommendation on the project *Supportive because of the Ag benefits*

2. Advisory vote by commission in favor or in opposition of subcommittee recommendation:

Siri Erickson-Brown made a motion, seconded by Michaele Blakely:

There's agreement to support the Hafner project, if it includes a process for offsetting the loss of farm acreage (about 12 acres) as a test case for finding new farmable land that can be added to farming outside of the APD. Let's make this a model test case.

Passed unanimously.

Washington State University's North Puget Sound Campus Presentation – Ann Goos, Dr. Deb Inglis

The Everett campus is proposed to expand and offer 4 agriculture baccalaureate degrees:

- Food security
- Organic agriculture
- Sustainable Food Systems
- Urban Horticulture

in tandem with the Mount Vernon and Puyallup Research Stations.

- Envision lots of hands-on learning and internships.
- Need support as this proposal goes forward in the state legislative budget process this session.

Actions:

1. Q&A *Supportive because of the Ag benefits*
2. Comments

Bob Vos made a motion, seconded by Eldon Murray:

The commission will write a letter to the County Executive asking him to include support of the WSU Everett Campus Project in King County's 2015 state legislative session.

Passed unanimously.

Ag Commission Strategic Planning, Part 2: Brainstorm

See p. 19 of the meeting packet for 2 new recommendations from commissioners. Pages 16 & 17 for December's brainstorm.

Today's ideas:

- DRAINAGE and Stormwater regulations – Siri Erickson-Brown
- Stop illegal operations in the Lower Green on FPP lands and APD – Bob Tidball

- One Stop Agricultural Technical Assistance Shop - George Irwin

Bob Vos: The How of tackling the goals: we have to rely on subcommittees and county staff to continue doing what they're doing.

Integrating New Agriculture Commissioners – John Taylor, Nancy Hutto, Chair and George Irwin, Vice Chair

- Alignment with Food Economy Initiative
- Recruitment to Date
- KC Boards and Commission Rules and Housekeeping
- Volunteers for Interview Committee

John: The goal is to keep institutional knowledge, rotate some commissioners off so that we can comply with the county regulations for term limits. And while, it was difficult to recruit in the past, it has become an area of interest.

With the wrapping up of the Kitchen Cabinet and Farm Fish Flood and increasing demand, there's a lot of interest in ag in general. Some commission members have served four full terms or more and statutory limit is two terms. And not to say that we were slacking, we made that policy decision because we needed to, but we'd like to bring some folks on from the demand side, too.

Our goal is to move new people on and if existing commissioners would like to step down, or continue a while that's great. We would ultimately like to affect this change and bring new people on, and meet statutory regulations. And convey rotating off for one year allows you to be eligible to come back on for two additional terms.

Commission discussion ensued of time it takes to be an effective commission member, length of meetings, committee structure, frequency of meetings, and effectiveness as an advisory body to the county executive and county council, as well as need for strong orientation and written materials.

Patrice: Food Economy alignment has meant there is a lot of interest. I have been tasked with working on commission work full time since I started in November. 11 applications have already come in and 14 more people have expressed significant interest. The majority of applicants are very well qualified and are farmers. We have 5 seats open on the commission to fill the total of 15 seats.

Volunteers for review committee:

- Michaele Blakely
- Bob Vos
- George?

Actions:

1. Q&A

Farmland Preservation Program Highlights – Ted Sullivan

Updates with 2 handouts in the meeting packet, pages 28-29.

Shows 30 years of farmland funding coming in beginning with the '79 bond. Shows years of income and development rights purchased with those funds for an overall total of 13,859 acres, 312 acres in fee, plus additional land donated.

Currently continuing to apply for funding – particularly for dairies to enroll in the program. Food Economy Initiative is seeking 400 new acres for food production annually.

Updates

Green River System Wide Improvement Framework (SWIF) – Kathy Creahan

Submitted notes from SWIF team. Highlighted that only one area in SWIF proposal affects the APD on Mr. Carpinito's property; will bring more substantive information to next commission meeting

King Conservation District Update – Josh Monaghan

None

Tall Chief Property Update- Kathy Creahan

No update

Farm Flood Fish – Snoqualmie Farmer Sounding Board – Patrice Barrentine

The meeting was cancelled due to the flooding and will be re-scheduled

Adjourned 7:15 pm

Next Meeting

Thursday February 12th, 2015

Issaquah Fish Hatchery, Watershed Science Center, Issaquah