

King County Agriculture Commission

DRAFT Minutes from

Thursday, November 13, 2014

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	Jim Simmonds
Lilly Simmering	Patrice Barrentine
Rick Reinlasoder	
Guests Present	
April Sanders (KCC/ Lambert)	Steve Van Ess
Bruce Elliott	Erin Ericson (King Co. Conservation District)
Alan Paine	Meredith Molli
Dan Albert	Pat Mc Laughlin
Andrew Stout	Cynthia Krass
Jeff Jones	

Meeting Action Summary

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission is sending letter objecting to health department's proposed fee increases for farmers and farmers markets • Heard and advised Jeff Jones' public comment • Commission voiced concerns and support about the Food Economy Initiative • Learned about the Snoqualmie Watershed Improvement District (WID) • Recommended adding technical assistance for alternative energy and water catchment systems in Climate Action Plan • There was unanimous support for the Hafner project from the subcommittee; also sparked commission's need to clarify best methods for farmland preservation in 2015 workplan • Commission voted unanimously to have a joint meeting with the Rural Forestry Commission in 2015 • Updates were given on Farm, Fish Flood, Green River SWIF, Tall Chief, King Conservation District, and Commission Recruitment |
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Meeting Highlights with Action Items in Bold Text

Called to Order 4:03pm

Approval of Minutes

Minutes were approved unanimously

Introduction of Patrice Barrentine – Patrice Barrentine

- Shared previous work experience relevant to staffing KC Ag Commission

Ag Commission Letter to County Exec and Council

RE: Public Health – Seattle & King County’s Proposed 2015 Environmental Health Services Fees

Commission members object to the proposed increased rates for Farmers and Farmers Markets, citing an undue burden being placed on both farm and farmers market businesses in King County. The proposed fee increases are in direct opposition to the Food Economy proposals.

cc: Christie True; re: KC Health Dept.

- **FEES too high**
- **Especially difficult for new and beginning farmers**
- **Farmers should not have to pay temporary permit fees for each market at which they sell**
- **Raises food prices, Michaele Blakely’s products will go up \$1 or more**
- **FMs should be self-policing, limit health dept’s inspections because they are duplicative of FM staff**

Seattle & King County’s Proposed 2015 Environmental Health Services					
	Food Fee Schedule	2015 Proposed Fee	2014 Fees	Increase/ (decrease) \$	Increase/ (decrease) %
1	Temporary Food	\$400	\$281	\$119	42%
2	Temporary Food – Limited	\$200	\$55	\$145	264%
3	Temporary Food Late Fees - Submitted 3-5 days Prior to Event	\$150	\$50	\$100	200%
4	Temporary Food Late Fees - Submitted 1-2 days Prior to Event	\$200	\$100	\$100	100%
5	Farmers Market/Recurring Event - Plan Review	\$225/hr	201/ hr	\$24/hr	12%
6	Recurring Event Coordinator	\$1,023	\$100	\$923	923%
7	Farmers Market Recurring Coordinator	\$1,162	\$502	\$660	131%

Commission voted to send a comment letter

Patrice will put together a draft letter from meeting notes and send by email to commission for comments/changes.

Public Comment:

Commission members heard the concerns of Jeff Jones, Wetland Scientist and Wildlife Biologist, Native Plant Nursery in Covington, looking at property in lower Green zoned as Ag land. Jones reported that he can't grow what he wants. The Commission asked for clarification, pointed out that shrubs and nursery plants are allowed in the district and referred him to Ted Sullivan, Farmland Preservation Program (who was present at the meeting) for further guidance.

Food Economy Initiative (handout) - Andrew Stout, Full Circle Farm and Lilly Simmering

- Goal: doubling food economy *and* acreage
- What is the next phase? Lilly: Move this doc to Exec. He will determine what the highest priorities are and how King County resources will be allocated to the effort. Working with the other organizations involved in the Kitchen Cabinet to clarify what groups are ready to take on tasks and hit the go button in 2015.

Soliciting feedback directly from the commission by Nov 30th

- Do you like it?
- Are the right organizations leads?
- Is it ambitious enough?
- Too ambitious?
- **Commission voiced concerns and support:**
 - FFF and Food Economy plans may collide; how will they be integrated?
 - Incredibly ambitious to put so much acreage into production when large swaths are coming out
 - Looks very comprehensive

Watershed Improvement District (WID) (handout) -Andrew Stout, Full Circle Farm and Cynthia Krass, Snoqualmie Valley Preservation Alliance

Born from the challenges Andrew Stout faced seeking water rights at Full Circle Farm, and realizing a group working together would be more efficient and sustainable, he partnered with Snoqualmie Valley Preservation Alliance to begin the research, education and outreach phase of developing a WID. Andrew and Cynthia spoke to the following points:

- Presented work on the early stages of developing a WID:
 - Have an advisory committee
 - Would include both Irrigation and Drainage
 - Shifts burden of individual landowners confronting water rights or drainage issues alone to an elected commission with professional staff meeting

landowners needs as holistic projects; more efficient, ex. the whole drainage ditch would be cleaned spanning multiple properties at the same time & water access and rights can be better utilized

- Based on Whatcom County models
- Would go to a vote of the people to create the district
- Doing lots of research and education right now

Climate Action Plan (handout) – Rick Reinlasoder and Jim Simmonds

- Plan was presented and Commission was asked for feedback.
 - Recommendations from Commission included:
 - Please add Technical Assistance for
 - **Solar power (ex. electric tractors)**
 - **Wind power**
 - **Water catchment systems (upland storage)**
 - Has consideration been given to the impact of forests catching 30-40% of rain/snowfall and that as it gets drier and what that may impact in KC?

Hafner Project (handout) - Rick Reinlasoder and Commission Subcommittee

The Hafner Project is primarily a Flood Mitigation Proposed Project (with Farmland benefits and Salmon Recovery benefits in the Snoqualmie Valley)

There was unanimous support for the Hafner project from the subcommittee.

Subcommittee minutes:

1. There was general support for a project at the Hafner site, as it could offer significant protection from erosion and deposition for the remaining farm land at Fall City Farm.
2. Nancy was interested in the fish habitat potential in the proposed side channel.
3. The three commissioners voiced that protection from erosion and deposition, and construction of farm pads with excavated material are of significant benefit.
4. There was interest in activities that reduced flood water velocities, particularly if those changes reduce the potential for soil erosion.
5. Water surface elevation reductions that led to field areas or structures being dry in small flood events was viewed as a lesser benefit than the erosion and significant deposition reduction benefits.
6. Removal of fill from the floodplain, allowing for more fill elsewhere, was considered a benefit. It was unclear where that fit in the value spectrum.
7. Elevation of fields with quality excavated soil was viewed as a possible benefit, but there were concerns about weed seed contamination and disruption of soil health in the potentially amended areas. There were also concerns about negatively impacting drainage.
8. Reductions of water surface elevation that lowered the flood water on an area, but did not make it dry, were viewed as somewhat minimal benefits.

9. Retaining several acres of farmable land within the project area, for short term use, was viewed as a marginal/small benefit.
10. We were encouraged to consider all of the farm land as similar, so as to not discriminate against future farming uses that might evolve in the valley.
11. Matt appreciated the opportunity to discuss the project, but indicated that this type of review for each project would be time consuming and challenging. Nancy and Michaele placed high value on reviewing each project, as there are many site specific impacts and benefits that aren't fully understood if addressed strictly on a watershed or APD scale.
12. Nancy, Michaele and Matt will recap our discussion at the upcoming Ag Commission meeting (Thursday, November 13).

Commission Meeting Excerpt:

Michaele: I wanted to make sure the reviews are site specific. I'm not sure that other projects will have the same ease of conversation as this. This was a "no brainer". If we fought this project, the farmland would again be subject to major erosion.

- **Tenets:**
 - **All ag land should be protected.**
 - **Start with the APD and no net loss of ag land**
 - **Keeping track of taken and added is too tedious.**

Excerpt:

Siri: If land in APD is up for grabs, then there's no protection.

Farmland vs. zoned farmland;

Let's think of a clear vocabulary to talk about this.

Matt: We are all trying to define what we are talking about. We need to beef it up legally so that APD is for farming only.

Asking county to: Put a stop to loss of farmland!

- **Organize ourselves and our constituency to define what we mean when we say farm**
- **Make this one of our goals for next year's mtgs. Set goals in Dec mtg.**
- **Think about how to frame these things for next mtg.**

Potential Meeting with Rural Forestry Commission - Kathy Creahan

- Nate, the Forest Comm chair thinks there are intersections
 - Small biz support
 - Watershed education
 - Etc.
- **Forest Commission would come to our mtg.**
- **KCD should be involved in the meeting, too.**

George Irwin: Motion to meet with Forest Commission; Matt: 2nd; Passed unanimously.

Updates

- Green River System Wide Improvement Framework (SWIF) – Kathy Creahan
 - **Siri: Ag Commission should make the argument to King Co Council? that warehouses taking up river mitigation as much as farmland. Are they going to give up acreage, too?**
 - **Kathy will make sure SWIF is on next agenda**
 - **Bob T suggested that the work of the lower green subcommittee should be brought to a future Commission meeting. He offered to contact**
 - **Bill Pelosa to come and speak about it – what’s been attempted, what happened, what we should try to do? About 15-30 minute time slot in a future meeting**
- Farm Fish Flood – Siri Erickson-Brown
 - All day retreat Friday Nov. 21st
 - Farmer Sounding board mtg this Monday in Carnation 2-4pm
 - **Finally drafted 4 problem statements – send to ag commission via email**
- King Conservation District – Erin Ericson
 - Farm Planner
 - Advisory Committee – new plan
 - County Council Mtg Vote Mon Nov 17 on bond
 - Class training on permitting with KCD and KC permitting staff
 - Launching our loan program as part of the Food Economy program
 - Want feedback on what farmers need
 - Snoqualmie Asian pear orchard for lease
- Tall Chief Property Update – Kathy Creahan
 - Got 3 proposals – all very different; the 3 entities are posted on the website, and will email that info out to the commission
 - Bob Voss is on eval team; made of county and external folks
 - Decision in a month or so
- Recruitment for new Commission Members was launched and applications distributed – Kathy Creahan

Adjourned 7:15 pm

Next Meeting

Thursday Dec 11, 2014

Issaquah Fish Hatchery, Watershed Science Center, Issaquah