

THURSTON COUNTY AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes for March 21, 2024

<https://youtu.be/47MBzY6jG-E>

Members Present: Celeste Winther (Chair); Jacob Yancey (Vice-Chair; Jennifer Colvin; Chris Doelman; Gary Kline; Patricia Labine; Robert McIntosh (Scribe); Greg Schoenbachler; Glenn Schorno; Stella Waxwing; Donnie Wilcox; Sierra Smith (filling in for ex officio member Stephen Bramwel); Marguerite Ablanalp (TCD ex-officio).

Members Absent: Nathan Heay (student ex-officio).

Guests present: Marcie Cleaver; Andrew Deffobis; Warren Neff; Loretta Seppanen.

Preliminary Actions: Meeting called to order at 7:01 p.m. February minutes approved. March agenda approved.

Items Discussed and Actions Taken

Public Comment: None

Meeting Minutes (Greg): Greg, last month's scribe, asked that makers and seconders of motions identify themselves so the Scribe can record their names. Greg also suggested that Ashley Downs be appointed to be our regular scribe. Sierra explained that Ashley's current job classification does not allow her to perform this function. Kevin offered to find out if the County can arrange for Ashley to prepare our minutes.

Thurston Conservation District Update (Marguerite): Marguerite described TCD hedgerow workshops, native plants giveaway, and April 18 to 21 Grazing School. She sought input from the Committee on the buying of a lime spreader by TCD. Members suggested a spreader bigger than four tons for farms larger than 5 to 10 acres, and also suggested that a self-driven buggy spreader might be desirable

CEPD Updates (Kevin): Kevin reported that expanded uses have been permitted in long term agriculture zoning. He also reported on the HSIL Grant, which is being used to select and fund a contractor to study Conservation Futures and our County's PDR and TDR programs and determine whether and how these programs should be revised.

WSU Extension Update (Sierra): Sierra reported on WSU initiatives relating to (1) summer boxes for the SW WA food hub, (2) Spanish language farm programs, and (3) the a booth to sell County produce at the Dupont Farmer's Market.

Violet Prairie West Grassland Habitat Site (Sierra): The County bought 90+ acres of land at the old Alpaca Farm for habitat conservation under the HCP. The County is leasing 40 acres of this land to demonstrate agricultural techniques that work well with prairie species' habitat conservation.

Subcommittee on Strategies to Reduce Loss of Farmland and Farmers (Robert): The Committee determined that the current membership of this subcommittee is Robert, Gary, Glenn, Jennifer, Kevin, and Marcie. Robert will schedule an initial Zoom meeting to select a Chair, choose broad goals to work on, and possibly appoint individual members to develop drafts of specific strategies for accomplishing each chosen broad goal.

Farm Tours (Jennifer): Jennifer reported that Marguerite and Sarah from TCD have offered help in putting together a farm tour for the BoCC. Jennifer asked for volunteers for a subcommittee to choose (1) a theme, (2) farms (ideally small, medium. and large, with different soil types) and (3) date(s). Jennifer, Chris, Kevin, and Marcie volunteered for this subcommittee.

By-Law Changes: Our proposed addition of ex-officio members has been submitted to the BoCC and is awaiting calendaring and approval.

Agriculture Overlay District (Kevin): Kevin reported that changes to this program were adopted by the BoCC last month. He gave members copies of the changes and discussed them.

2024 Conservation Futures Ranking Committee (Andrew Defobbis): Andrew asked for a Committee member and alternate to serve on this Committee. Stella volunteered to serve as our primary representative, but said she could not commit until she knows the date of the Conservation Futures meeting. Andrew said he will try to schedule the meeting on a day that Stella can attend.

Adjournment: At 8:35 p.m.