

Thurston County Agriculture Advisory Committee

February 16, 2023

Meeting Minutes

<https://youtu.be/RFYwzhd3vY>

ATTENDEES:

Members Present: Joe Hanna (Chair); Jake Yancey (Vice Chair); Chris Doelman; Gigi McClure (scribe); Glenn Schorno; Pat Labine; Gary Kline; Celeste Winther; Greg Schoenbachler; Robert McIntosh

Members Excused Absence: Stephen Bramwell (WSU Extension Director, Ex Officio)

Ex Officio Present: Sarah Moorehead (Executive Director, TCD Staff); Stella Waxwing (pending Non-Farmer Member)

Guest Speakers: Ashley Arai (Thurston County Agriculture Community Program Manager)

Guests Present: Loretta Seppanen

Called to Order:

Zoom meeting was called to order at 7:00pm

Introductions of members and guests

Approval of Current Agenda – Motion to approve the agenda (Glen/Chris) - passed

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes January 2023 (Jake/Gigi) – passed

Committee Items Discussed:

1. **Public Comment:** None

2. **Thurston Conservation District Update** (Sarah Moorehead):
 - a. Joint TCD & WSU conducting an Eco studies workshop see February newsletter
 - b. Pasture Management short course in March by WSU Extension
 - c. Plant sell March 4th
 - d. Election season for Conservation District, ballots returned by March 14th
 - e. Hiring for Senior Habitat specialist for restoration projects
 - f. Conservation Starters Podcasts continues
 - g. Puget Sound Local Working Group is looking for farmers to participate in direct funding to local priorities to be determined by upcoming meeting.
 - h. Riparian Buffer Bill still under review (House Bill 1720).

3. **New Items to Consider** (Gary Kline): Set up a separate forum (non-decision-making body) for members to work and talk about areas of interest that can't be covered during regular meetings. Chair recommend the proposal is drafted for review. Robert proposed

to consider possible workshop or seminar to avoid restrictions of the open public meetings act.

4. **Research the Formation of the Agriculture Committee:** Ashley found the 1977 minutes for the original proposal for the Ag. Committee along with the budget, and original work plan.
5. **Thurston County Ag Updates (Ashley Arai):**
 - a. Reduce permit barriers within the County to take advantage of upcoming funding.
 - b. Long-Term Ag Stakeholder workgroup is coming to an end and working on the next step which will visit various area of the community to review potential effects and start conversations.
 - c. Community Agriculture Program was reviewed by the BoCC and it was well received.
 - d. VSP monitoring report is due next year. The VSP work group just started. Hoping to get a lot of information regarding working agriculture in Thurston County. Will keep the Ag. Committee posted on the analysis.
6. **By Law Review and Make Up of the Ag Committee (Celeste Winther):** Document sent to committee members for review regarding definition of a farmer, make up of other Ag Committees. Discussion held to lock in a definition for farming that will include tree farmers as well as crops and livestock. Additional discussion surrounded the definition of Washington State Law RCW 82.04.0213 provides the definition of a farmer and product. [RCW 82.04.213: "Agricultural product," "farmer," "cannabis." \(wa.gov\)](#) Should the Committee consider, reviewing current State Law, recommend creating an additional category that includes forestry or timber. The Ag Committee will send document to the BoCC for advice on the consideration of farmers, as the originally question that needed to be addressed is the number of actual farmers on the Committee. Consider filling the Advisory Board with experts in agriculture producers and that are directly affected by policies to best advise the county.

Two proposed changes for by-law (Robert McIntosh:

a) Changes in the meeting schedule, meeting not held in August and December, but there was a meeting held in December. Consider allowing the Chair the ability to call a meeting in August or December as needed. i.e., “August, December, or special meetings may be called at the discretion of the Chair”.

b) Open Public Meetings Act notation within the by-laws were proposed for change due to BoCC has stated they wish all committees to follow the Open Public Meetings Act. i.e., “In accord with the Thurston County’s Handbook for Advisor Boards and Commissions, the committee shall comply with the Open Public Meetings Act, RCW Chapter 42.30

Motion: At the next meeting we have a full committee discussion on the possible by law changes recommended by Celeste in her Ag Advisory Committee document.

(Robert/Gigi) - passed

(c) "Honey bee products" means queen honey bees, packaged honey bees, honey, pollen, bees wax, propolis, or other substances obtained from honey bees. "Honey bee products" does not include manufactured substances or articles.

(4) The terms "agriculture," "farming," "horticulture," "horticultural," and "horticultural product" may not be construed to include or relate to cannabis, useable cannabis, or cannabis-infused products unless the applicable term is explicitly defined to include cannabis, useable cannabis, or cannabis-infused products.