

Thurston County Agriculture Advisory Committee

July 21, 2022

Meeting Minutes

<https://youtu.be/gD5jk28HMg8>

ATTENDEES:

Members Present: Joe Hanna (Chair); Jake Yancey (Vice Chair); Robert McIntosh; Kevin Jensen; Pat Labine; Glenn Schorno; Chris Doelman; Celeste Winther

Members Absent: Gigi McClure (scribe)

Ex Officio Present: Stephen Bramwell (WSU); Sarah Moorehead (Executive Director, TCD Staff)

Guest Speakers: Maya Teeple; Loretta Seppanen

Guests Present: Helen Wheatley

Called to Order:

Zoom meeting was called to order at 7:00pm

Approval of Current Agenda – Motion to approve modified agenda (Robert/Chris) -passed

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes for June 2022 with two minor changes (Robert/Kevin) – passed

Committee Items Discussed:

1. **Public Comment:** No public comment
2. **Community Driven Agriculture Review Project** (Maya Teeple): Stakeholder outreach coming in the fall of 2023. Community planning is looking for a member(s) from the Ag. Committee to participate in the stakeholder group. This is a larger group which will work with the facility director. The goal of the stakeholder work group is to come up with a set of options of how possible zone agriculture could work in Thurston County.
3. **Farms Under Threat Update** (Joe Hanna and Loretta Seppanen): Provided an overview of the conversion and projection of farmland and rangeland from 2016 to 2040 from the American Farmland Trust. Data from the USDA to determine where farmland is lost throughout the region and identify a pattern of loss. The kinds of loss demonstrated captured urban development or industry, and low density residential. With business-as-usual projected loss Thurston County will converted 9,800 acres, but on a runaway sprawl pattern, a projected loss conversion is 12,500 acres. The average within Thurston County is about 16% loss and predominately in the rural areas.
4. **Chair Update from Board of County Commissioner (BOCC):** Discussed during the review of the Community Driven Ag Review Project discussion.

5. **Comp Plan Discussion** (Robert McIntosh): Proposed to Ag. Committed topic that were to be revisited in the future. There were six (6) recommendations proposed in the draft: (1) Increasing acreage on farmland of long-term commercial significance. (2) Stopping or reducing the loss of farmland to residential development. (3) Finding ways to prevent conversion of farmland in the current use program. (4) Dealing with the challenges facing new farmers. (5) Expanding the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR). (6) If setting aside land to protect endangered species under the Habitat Conservation Plan, the County should favor working lands with conservation easement over non-productive reserves. A sub-committee was formed to develop a proposal for discussion at the September Ag. meeting.
6. **Project Notifications:** 3 projects considered. Jake drafted a letter pending review by the Ag. Committee. Chris pointed out that the committee needs to consider the property owners right to do what they want with the land, consider better options for those lands that are no longer viable for farming. We should consider protecting the farmer and the economics which make farming viable in the County. Also consider putting plans in place that will save the farmer.
7. **WSU Extension Update** (Stephen Bramwell):
 - a. County Fair kicks off 150 years July 27th-31st.
 - b. Cultivating Success class (link in chat) starts in September. Scholarships for Veterans this year is available.
 - c. Lease operations finding landowners to lease younger operators to utilize the farmland. Working with TCD on a project by the Eco Studies Institute to help link up Veteran farmers with landowners to start up grazing operations. Looking for guest speakers and a site. (Link in chat)
 - d. Ag. Grants are about to close. Get the word out there are only a few more weeks for the window to remain open.
 - e. In July 2021 the Thurston County Commissioner set aside a million dollars for the American Rescue Program. The county is in the final stages for workforce development for payroll funded placements with agricultural development to get additional labor within farm operations.
 - f. Southwest Washington Food Hub Coops for marketing. Two schools have just signed up.
 - g. Doing food trials on raw grains with **Nine farms** and food manufactures to get buckwheat product into schools.
8. **Thurston Conservation District Update** (Sarah Moorhead):
 - a. Planning to attend the Thurston County Fair, please stop by the booth.
 - b. July Newsletter is in the chat.
 - c. In the process of hiring a resource specialist.
 - d. Budget got an additional bump that might support resource projects and habitat programs. More information is on the website.
 - e. Volunteer Stewardship Program may receive additional investment for programs and projects throughout the year.

01:52:53 Stephen Bramwell, WSU Extension: [WCCRI-Landowner-Flyer.pdf \(wsu.edu\)](#)

01:54:19 Sarah Moorehead: Looks like Jake has a question or comment

01:59:36 Celeste: Sorry - just one more shameless plug for the youth market animal sale. (Feed costs are hitting the kids just as much as the rest of us.) This year we are accepting add-ons online if anyone is interested in supporting the kids and can't make it to the auction or commit to purchasing an entire animal: <https://www.bwfinaldrive.com/auctions/16546-Thurston-County-Youth-Market-Animal-Add-On-Only-Sale---Washington?page=1&search=&sort=&lotsTotal=74&pageSize=25&playSoundEnabled=true>

02:04:37 Sarah Moorehead: TCD July Newsletter: [Thurston Conservation District July Newsletter \(campaign-archive.com\)](#)

02:11:22 Sarah Moorehead: WSDA Food Systems Grant: [Infrastructure Grant | Washington State Department of Agriculture](#)