

Thurston County Agriculture Advisory Committee

November 16, 2023

<https://youtu.be/YRxAxrgPNrs?si=U1PwVwhX2GGxqjK5>

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Members Present: Robert McIntosh (Acting Chair); Glenn Schorno; Gary Kline; Celeste Winther; Greg Schoenbachler; Ashley Arai (Thurston Co. Community Program Manager)

Via Zoom: Pat Labine; Sam Payne; Marguerite Afledtt (TCD Ex/o); Kevin Jensen; Stella Waxwing; Nathen Heay (Youth Ex./o); Jake Yancy

Absent: Chris Doelman; Stephen Bramwell (WSU Ext. Ex/o)

Guests: Warren Neff; Jennifer Colvin; Jeremy Davis; Joe Hanna; Marcie Cleaver; Loretta Seppanen

Call to Order:

Meeting called to order at 7:00 by Robert McIntosh.

Discussion on Robert acting as Chair due to the committee chair vacancy and the vice chair Jake Yancy being absent of an uninterrupted Zoom connection. County Staff visitor Jeremy recommended the committee vote on this action per Robert's Rules of Order standards. Glenn made a motion to have Robert serve as Acting Chair for this meeting, Celeste seconded. Motion passed unopposed.

Introductions: Members and guests introduced themselves in accordance to Attendees list above.

Approval of Current Agenda: Per prior discussion, Greg moved to add an item between 1 and 2 for Jeremy to discuss the committee Chair situation and to put Gary's slot on standby/time permitting. Celeste seconded. Motion passed unopposed.

Approval of the previous meeting minutes from October 2023: Gary moved to approve as submitted. Celeste seconded. Committee Approved. Motion passed unopposed.

Committee Items Discussed:

1. Public Comment:

Sam – Discussed with Timberland Regional Library to put together a resource guide and data information pertaining to farming and gardening which will be available to the public shortly. Yelm branch putting that together. Get in touch with Nathaniel if you'd like to add anything to the guide.

2. Situation regarding chair:

Jeremy – Joe's term expired October 31st. Jeremy explained there was no intent to not have him on the committee. Term was October 31st 2021 to October 31st 2023. Current members terms are 2 years. New appointees and re-appointments will have 4-year terms per new bylaws rule. Members need to look ahead 2 to 3 months prior to term expiration for reappointments. If a term is expiring, ask Jeremy 2 to 3 months in advance for an application. Selection of applicant will work in its normal fashion. Robert asks each member to familiarize themselves with the expiration date of their term. Gary motioned to flag term expiration dates at 3 months prior to expiration, in a monthly roster or attach it with the agenda each month to be sent out to members. Kevin seconded. Motion passed unopposed.

Public Meetings Act – Jeremy discussed his second email regarding Public Meetings Act compliance. Any discussions on perspective members need to take place on record, cannot happen in executive session. No discussions over email either. Send to Ashley to add any discussions to meetings. Jeremy volunteered to be the committee's resource in this if anyone has questions.

3. Meet and greet candidates for vacant position:

Joe Hanna –Volunteered to answer any questions but is already known well by the committee. Beef cattle rancher. Stated he's been on the board for 6 or 8 years serving vice chair, chair and on several committees. If the committee wants him to continue as chair, he'd be happy to.

Some questions ensued among the committee about a possible, but not officially vacated non-farmer seat. Robert thought maybe 3 or 4 unexcused absences per year was the measure for removal process but will check on it. Jake will write a letter and send to Ashley Downs but recommends postponing this topic for a future meeting.

Jennifer Colvin – Colvin Ranch in Tenino. Grass fed, grass finished beef. Focused on growing operation and expanding after spending 20+ years in the tech sector in CA. Has an MBA in marketing and is now full time on the farm.

Warren – Farmer in Yelm area. From the Clark County area and held various positions and participated in many committees there for the last 20 years. Now in Thurston County farming perennials, annuals, vegetables, herbs etc.

Discussion - Pat asked if it is possible for the committee to say that all 3 candidates are acceptable and forward all 3 candidates? Jake stated that the BOCC has requested that the committee provides request or recommendation to them. Then the BOCC can make the decision... suggesting the committee sends up only one recommendation. Greg agreed with Jake. Ashley encouraged candidates to also look at open seats on VSP. Greg believes the open seat on the Ag Committee is a reappointment seat of Joe that maybe slipped through administrative procedural cracks and Joe should return. Robert agreed. Jake pointed out other confusion around the terms and up until recently thought Joe was on the new 4-year term. Jake felt Joe should be returned to his position.

Greg made a motion that the committee recommends Joe Hanna for replacing his past open seat and encourage the other 2 candidates to apply for the next available opening. Glenn seconded. Discussion - Celeste makes a recommendation and amendment to keep the other two applications on file so they don't have to reapply. Glenn encouraged other candidates to continue to come to the meetings as public participants. Motion passed with amendment unopposed, one abstention. Jake will send a notice to Ashley Downs of the committee motion for BOCC recommendation.

4. Executive Discussion: Cancelled

5. Review of Bylaws term length:

Jake – County's interpretation of new handbook was that terms were 4-year terms, but they were only for new members. Celeste – It's not on the website when it comes to the terms, dates and expiration. Look into adding that to the website.

6. Review of Bylaws Proposed Language for Youth Member & Ex-Officio Position:

New bylaws approved by the BOCC do not include the two new ex-officio members that the committee wanted to add... New member and county agricultural community program manager. New youth position has been approved but did not get printed in the new bylaws as intended. Robert will type up a red line version to show an addition and send it to Ashley D. Ashley A. will check on this with Jeremy.

7. Status of Green sheets for county projects:

Jake – Have not received any green sheets or development changes as of recently. Beaver Creek handout given by Ashley. The committee is supposed to be notified if applicant "checks the box" on existing ag activities and it should automatically go to the committee for developments or rezones of 5 acres or greater.

Ashley A. went through a power point breakdown of Beaver Creek rezoning public meeting. Project is still waiting on an updated environmental checklist and supplemental info before it goes to the planning commission. Docketing usually starts in

January (planning period early February). January meeting would be a good time to discuss a recommendation for the docketing process. Jake encourages applicants be invited to talk with the committee prior to recommendations.

8. Current Status of subcommittee for loss of farmland:

Robert – last meeting set up a subcommittee consisting of Robert, Gary, Marcy Cleever, and Ashley for the sake of policy input. Kevin sent helpful comments as did Ashley and Gary. Robert to take all comments and incorporate them into a revised rough draft, possible recommendations and talk about them in January. Discussion – Gary – Will there be face to face meetings and can we have them here? Answer: Could be if we need to do it.

9. More About Cows and Soil Fertility Discussion: Gary Kline, deferred.

10. WSU Extension Update: Cancelled in absence of presenter, Stephen Bramwell.

11. Thurston Conservation District Update: Margarite:

Newsletter. Climate change and Food production growers conference January 26th and 27th. Celebrating local farmers and food. David R Montgomery as possible speaker.

12. Discussion of December Meeting,:

According to the bylaws, unless the chair schedules a special meeting, one is not scheduled. The only thing pressing time wise is board appointments to be made. No time restraint prior to meeting. Public comment should be pushed out until January.

With 8-10 minutes left over there was time to add #9 back in. Gary shared, at the last meeting, a paper called “More Cows and Soil Fertility” and discussed in further detail. Another paper written by Gary “Mineralizing Pastures and People” will be scanned and distributed to the group by Ashley D.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Celeste, seconded by Greg. Motion passed unopposed.