



## **January 15, 2014 Meeting Minutes**

2:00-4:00 pm

Via videoconferencing at Lopez, Orcas and San Juan libraries

**ARC Members Present:** Christina Orchid, Candace Jagel, Jim Sesby, Tim Clark, Bruce Gregory, Danna Kinsey, Tom Schultz, Learner Limbach, Jim Sesby, Mark Tompkins

**ARC Members Absent:** Sara Jones, Mike Pickett, Hawk Pingree, James Most, Ian Harlow

**ARC Staff Present:** Peggy Bill

**Guests:** Eric Lum

### **WELCOME, AGENDA, AND MINUTES**

#### **CHAIR'S REPORT**

**Minutes:** The minutes for the December 18, 2013 meeting were approved (moved by Candace Jagel, seconded by Jim Sesby, approved unanimously).

#### **COORDINATOR'S REPORT**

- **HB 2306:** State Representative Lytton submitted HB 2306 in response to requests from SJC Council and farmers, specifically addressing use of non-contiguous parcels as part of a larger commercial farm operation.
- **LTAC:** The 2014 LTAC contract is being reviewed by EDC so that it can be signed and returned to the county. Peggy will be providing EDC with amended deliverables consistent with the reduced amount that was awarded by the county.
- **Agri-tourism:** Peggy was contacted by Chris Laws, Code Enforcement staff in CD&P, to discuss parameters for agri-tourism on lands designated for farm and agriculture. Peggy will meet with him and provide information for discussion at our February ARC meeting.
- **ARC budget:** Peggy commented that ARC needs to identify a way to bring in more funding to cover overhead such as inter-island travel, office supplies, conference attendance, etc. Peg will provide a budget for next meeting.

#### **Farm regulations**

Peggy provided members with proposed language for “new and expanding agriculture” in Table 3.8. SJC Council has requested that ARC provide a recommendation prior to the public hearing on February 4<sup>th</sup>.

Following a discussion of merits of different options and potential amendments, the ARC recommended the following:

New and expanding agricultural activities of low intensity are permitted in areas cleared prior to the effective date of this ordinance subject to a farm management plan prepared or approved by a qualified natural resource or farm planner which incorporates best management practices to minimize and avoid impacts to the greatest extent practicable. Clearing of trees, grading and

filling in wetlands and their respective buffers after the effective date of this ordinance for the purpose of new and expanding agricultural activities shall only be permitted when the applicant has demonstrated that impacts have been avoided and minimized to the greatest extent practicable and that unavoidable impacts are mitigated

The ARC also recommended amendments to Table 3.3A2, Landuse Activities by Intensity to shift agricultural uses from High to Moderate and from Moderate to Low. These changes more accurately reflect current agricultural practices in SJC.

Moved by Candace Jagel, seconded by Jim Sesby. All approved.

### **San Juan Islands Agriculture Guild**

Candace reported on the status of long-range planning discussions for the San Juan Islands Agriculture Guild (AG). The AG is evaluating whether the organization should focus county-wide or only on San Juan Island, and what their priorities should be. ARC members voiced support for the AG as 1) patron of the agricultural markets at Brickworks; 2) county-wide emphasis; 3) implement projects that ARC has established; 4) act as fundraising arm and/or fiscal agent for agricultural related projects; 5) provide education about agriculture in SJC.

Candace agreed to provide ARC recommendations at AG retreat.

### **SJ Agricultural Tax Advisory Committee**

Tom Schultz provided an update of the meetings of the Agricultural Tax Advisory Committee. Members appointed by Council include Tom, Kathryn Thomas, MR Buffum, Sarah Ross, and Thor Black. The Committee has met several times to provide feedback to the Assessor including specific information on hay yields and prices. Tom commented that the committee has provided a platform for educating the Assessor about farm management and practices.

### **Economic Survey**

Peg provided members with a draft of the proposed SJC Agriculture Economic Survey. The goal is to compile annual data on agriculture to be used as a baseline for growth or decline in the agriculture sector. The survey will be distributed at the Agriculture Summit on March 8<sup>th</sup> on Orcas Island. Members agreed that the survey should be anonymous.

### **2014 Agricultural Summit**

Candace provided a quick update of the Summit, to be held on March 7-8<sup>th</sup> on Orcas Island.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 pm. The next full meeting of the ARC will be held on February 19th via video-conference from island libraries.