



February 19, 2014 Meeting Minutes

2:00-4:00 pm

Via videoconferencing at Lopez, Orcas and San Juan libraries

ARC Members Present: Christina Orchid, Candace Jagel, James Most, Tim Clark, Bruce Gregory, Tom Schultz, Learner Limbach, Jim Sesby

ARC Members Absent: Jim Sesby, Sara Jones, Danna Kinsey, Mike Pickett, Hawk Pingree, Ian Harlow, MarknTompkins

ARC Staff Present: Peggy Bill

Guests: Chris Laws, SJC Community Planning and Development

WELCOME, AGENDA, AND MINUTES

CHAIR'S REPORT

Minutes: The minutes for the January 15, 2014 meeting were approved (moved by Bruce Gregory, seconded by Candace Jagel, approved unanimously).

COORDINATOR'S REPORT

- SJC Council presentation: Peggy and Christina presented the ARC annual report to Council on February 10, 2014. The presentation allowed time for discussion of ARC priorities.
- SJI Conservation District: Peggy reported on her meeting with Linda Lyshall, Director of the SJI Conservation District, to talk about priorities for each organization and potential opportunities for collaboration. ARC members suggested ideas such as the economic survey, collaborative grant research and funding, farmer to farmland program, etc.
- NABC: Peggy reported on the mobile poultry processing unit (MPPU) that Northwest Agriculture Business Center (NABC) is developing for WSDA inspected slaughter of poultry, rabbits and ducks. The MPPU will be finished and available starting summer 2014. This offers an incredible market opportunity for small scale poultry producers in SJC who want to raise up to 1000 birds per year.
- 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. ESHB 2306 has been revised to require an analysis of RCW 84.34 as it relates to the viability of small farms in the state.

Agritourism

Chris Laws, Code Enforcement staff in CD&P, joined the meeting to get ARC's input on appropriate parameters for agri-tourism on farms. Enforcement issues tend to be complaint driven, primarily from neighbors who might object to large events on adjoining farms. Agtourism is allowed as part of the definition for "agricultural activities". After getting a complaint, the county must determine whether the activity is

accessory to the farm operation. Chris would like a list of activities that are reasonably associated with farming and consistent with agritourism. The following ARC members volunteered to discuss the issue and provide a recommendation to aRC: Christina, Sara, James, Candace, Tom and Bruce. Chris specifically noted that there was no reason for Christina to recuse herself from the discussion as there was no legal action pending regarding agritourism at Red Rabbit Farm.

Island Grown in the San Juans and San Juan Islands Agriculture Guild

Candace noted that the Board of the San Juan Islands Agriculture Guild (AG) has agreed to support a county-wide focus for the organization, seeking to foster sustainable and resilient local agriculture in SJC. The Board is interested in taking over management and implementation of the Island Grown Program (IG), which has been created and managed to date by ARC, with funding support from NABC. ARC members were asked to consider whether the IG Program should be transferred to the AG. Peggy reminded members that the ARC has a significant responsibility to provide economic development due to funding through .09 rural economic development funds. Members indicated support for transfer but asked that a subgroup meet to discuss the pros and cons in more detail. Learner, Bruce, Christina, and Candace agreed to participate in the subgroup. It was agreed to invite Hawk and Boyd as well.

SJ Agricultural Tax Advisory Committee

Tom Schultz reported that the Ag Tax Advisory Committee has now met three times with the Assessor and has provided information on leases and hay values.

2014 Agricultural Summit

Candace provided an update of the Summit, to be held on March 7-8th on Orcas Island.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm. The next full meeting of the ARC will be held on March 19th via video-conference from island libraries.