



March 19, 2014

Meeting Minutes

2:00-4:00 pm

Via videoconferencing at Lopez, Orcas and San Juan libraries

ARC Members Present: Christina Orchid, Mike Pickett, Hawk Pingree, Ian Harlow, James Most, Bruce Gregory, Tom Schultz, Learner Limbach, Mark Tompkins, Danna Kinsey

ARC Members Absent: Candace Jagel, Tim Clark, Jim Sesby, Sara Jones

ARC Staff Present: Peggy Bill

SJC Council liaison: Councilmember Hughes

Welcome, Agenda, and Minutes

Chair's report

The minutes for the February 19, 2014 meeting were approved.

Coordinator's Report

State legislation update:

- Passed: SSB 5123, establishing a farm internship program, was extended to include additional counties. SJC initiated this legislation in 2010.
- Failed to pass: HB 2306, initially concerning current use taxation on agricultural lands was amended to recommend a study of the current use agriculture program (RCW 84.34) as it affects the viability of small farms.
- SJC CAO: On March 5th, Peg and Candace testified at a Council hearing on the CAO, specifically addressing the new definition for "agricultural activities".

2014 SJI Agricultural Summit

Learner and Peg provided a summary of the Ag Summit. Approximately 175 attended the Summit. Initial feedback from attendees was very positive. Specific comments opportunities for improvement included: a) too expensive; b) more facilitation needed for sessions; and c) more time needed for sessions. A survey will be sent to all attendees to get more detailed feedback. The Summit coordinating team (Candace, Peggy, Sara, and Learner) commented on the need for additional support in organizing.

Councilmember Hughes requested a report to SJCC on demographics of attendees (if possible), number of sessions, and results of survey.

Revenue for the Summit was through a) registration fees at the door and through Brown Paper Tickets; b) sponsorships from organizations, businesses, foundations and individuals; and c) a Lodging Tax Advisory grant awarded to the Ag Guild for educational programs. Summit revenue exceeded expenses. The Ag Guild, a 501(c)(3), accepted and processed all donations, whereas registration fees went from Brown Paper

Tickets to ARC. ARC members discussed options for allocation of Summit surplus funds. Mike Pickett proposed that after all expenses have been paid 1) the Ag Guild receive the full amount of the LTAC grant (\$2350) to go towards other agricultural education programs, including a contribution towards the 2015 Summit; and 2) ARC retain the remainder of the funds, of which no more than \$1000 could be used for ARC operational costs including a computer, with the remainder allocated for start-up costs for 2015 Summit. the purchase It was recommended that the Ag Guild would be refunded \$2350, the amount of the LTAC grant, and ARC would retain the remainder, of which \$1000 would go towards purchase of a computer for the ARC Coordinator, and the remainder would be retained for start-up funds for the 2015 Summit. Mike Pickett made a motion for approval. Seconded by Candace Jagel. Approved.

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

The ARC discussed the merits of a proposal to transfer management of the Island Grown Program to the Ag Guild. Mike Pickett, also a member of the Ag Guild Board, questioned whether the ARC was still committed to implementing agritourism, funded through LTAC. ARC members discussed other ideas for agricultural economic development, beyond Island Grown and agritourism. The ARC agreed that there are other economic development projects, including getting new farmers on farmland, but that agritourism was an important focus at this point in time.

Bruce Gregory made a motion, seconded by Hawk Pingree, that the ARC 1) transfer the Island Grown Program to the Ag Guild; 2) retain 2014 LTAC funding for agritourism; and 3) that the Ag Guild should include at least 2 members of the ARC on their Marketing Committee that will oversee the Island Grown Program.

Sara Jones proposed an alternative recommendation: that the ARC transfer to the Ag Guild the Island Grown Program together with the 2014 LTAC funds awarded to ARC for implementing agritourism events. Seconded by Danna. Motion opposed with 5 against, 2 in favor.

Bruce Gregory's motion approved with 5 in favor, 2 opposed. Sara Jones stated that her opposition was based on her opinion that the ARC should be more focused on improving agricultural regulations instead of branding and agritourism.

Mike Pickett suggested that the ARC meet with the Ag Guild to move forward with transfer of the Island Grown Program. All members of the ARC were invited to join the meeting, especially members of the Agricultural Economic Development Committee. Hawk, Christina, and Candace agreed to attend. It was also recommended that Deborah Hopkins be invited. Peg offered to set up the meeting for the following week.

Critical Areas Ordinance

Peggy provided an update on adoption of the Critical Areas Ordinance. It appears that the new definition for "agricultural activities" will mean that any ag activities not specifically addressed in the new definition will be required to obtain a conditional use permit. This includes "agritourism". "sales" and "composting". Councilmember Hughes agreed that

clarification is needed from the Planning Department.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm. The next full meeting of the ARC will be held on April 16th via video-conference from island libraries.