

## **Agricultural Resources Committee**

Minutes

October 17, 2012

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

San Juan Island Library, Orcas Library, and Lopez Library via videoconference

**ARC Members Present:** Tim Clark, Danna Kinsey, Candace Jagel, Tom Schulz, Mike Pickett, Bruce Gregory

**ARC Members Absent:** Ian Harlow, Christina Orchid, Jim Sesby, Hawk Pingree, Jane Burton Bell

**Guests:** Michele Heller

**ARC Staff Present:** Jamie Grifo

### **Welcome & Changes to Agenda**

**Agenda:** No changes.

**Minutes:** Approval of the minutes of the September 19, 2012 ARC meeting were tabled to the November meeting because there was no quorum present.

**Public Comment:** Michele Heller introduced herself, expressed her gratitude for the ARC and the issues that it handles, and emphasized the need for our agricultural community to increase soil fertility.

### **Chair's Report**

**Executive Committee:** The discussion of a meeting between Candace, Tom, Tim, Peggy, and Jamie to establish the parameters of an Executive Committee were tabled until the November meeting. Candace and Tom will report on the Executive Committee's purpose, functions, and role at the November meeting.

**Discussion with Jamie Stephens:** Candace remarked on a discussion that she had with Jamie Stephens. Jamie Grifo asked whether or not Jamie Stephens should be invited to our next ARC meeting. The ARC decided to wait and see because of the pending elections.

### **ARC Coordinator's Report**

**Current Use Taxation Update:** Jamie spoke about dissemination of the ARC's memo to the Department of Revenue (DOR). Tim had an opportunity to attend the Office of Farmland Preservation Summit at Snoqualmie Pass where the Current Use Program was the majority of the programming.

There was a discussion about next steps including directing Jamie to draft a memo to the County Council again re-iterating the statutory obligation for the Council to appoint a Tax Advisory Committee to assist the Assessor.

**Island Grown Network/ Island Grown Festival:** Jamie discussed the NABC's

commitment to assist with funding for implementation of the IG program. David B. at NABC has committed to providing funding of 6 – 8 hours per week for one year for the ARC Coordinator (or another person) to work on implementation of IG, maintain the website and create a promotional video with select member producers and restaurants.

Jamie will be meeting with the Executive Committee to determine the next steps for the IG program and decide how it should relate to the ARC Coordinator position.

**Small Farm Internship Program (SFIP):** Jamie discussed his trip to Viva Farms to meet with Ethan and Serita of Viva Farms and GrowFood.org to discuss the SFIP. Jamie was concerned that the SFIP is a short-term fix that causes more problems than it resolves.

The ARC Executive Committee will be deciding whether or not Jamie should spend time on advancing the SFIP in the House and Senate.

### **2012-13 Work Priorities:**

There was a lively discussion about priorities including what the ARC should focus its energies on and what the best organizational structure to do so might be. The top 3 priorities identified by the ARC at the September meeting were:

Farmland Preservation  
Regulations  
New Farmers

The present membership decided to re-instate the sub-committees but alter the names slightly:

1. Farmland Preservation and Stewardship: Chaired by Tim, with the support of Michele, Bruce, and Danna would confront issues of soil fertility and the sustainability and preservation of farmland.
2. Agricultural Economic Development: Chaired by Hawk, with the support of Tom, Candace, Mike, Deb and Sandy will handle the Island Grown Program and figure out ways to increase new farmers or establish a local FarmLink to assist with intergenerational farm transfers.
3. Regulations: Chair required, supporting members required. This sub-committee will handle the Current Use Farm and Agriculture program, the Small Farm Internship Program, and any other regulatory issues facing small farmers in the county.

The Executive Committee will meet with the Coordinator in the next week to discuss how to focus efforts and increase participation among ARC members, going forward.

**Meeting Adjourned at 12:00 pm.**