

Agricultural Resources Committee

Minutes

September 19, 2012

2:30 pm - 4:45 pm

Skagit Valley College Community Room, San Juan Island

ARC Members Present: Tim Clark, Danna Kinsey, Candace Jagel, Sara Jones, Hawk Pingree, Tom Schulz, Jane Burton Bell, Mike Pickett, Bruce Gregory, Jim Sesby

ARC Members Absent: Ian Harlow, Christina Orchid

ARC Staff Present: Peggy Bill, Jamie Grifo

Welcome & Changes to Agenda

Agenda: No changes.

Minutes: The minutes of the April 18, 2012 ARC meeting were approved as amended (moved by Hawk, seconded by Bruce, passed unanimously). The minutes of the May 16, 2012 ARC meeting were approved as amended (moved by Mike, seconded by Danna, passed unanimously). The minutes of the July 25, 2012 ARC special meeting were approved as amended (by Sara) to include discussion to defer the elections for chair and vice-chair of the ARC to the September meeting (moved by Sara, seconded by Candace, passed unanimously).

Public Comment: No public comment.

Chair's Report

Introduction: Candace introduced Jamie, who has been hired as the interim coordinator while Peggy is on extended leave through December 2012.

Elections: Candace briefly discussed the need for dedicated and committed ARC leadership. Candace nominated Tom for the position of vice-chair for 2012-2013. Tom Schulz agreed to serve. Mike nominated Candace to serve as chair for 2012-2013. Mike moved that the slate be elected. Bruce Gregory seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Candace accepted the position of chair with the understanding that all ARC members will be active. She reiterated that she represents Snowberry Farm on San Juan Island and not WSU Extension.

ARC Supplemental Budget Request: Peggy Bill explained the need for the supplemental budget request that will go before the San Juan County Council on September 25, 2012 and asked that the ARC support the request for additional .09 funds. The ARC held a spirited discussion about what caused the shortfall and considered possible means of preventing these kinds of administrative issues from occurring in the future. The ARC supported the creation of an administrative sub-committee to establish protocol and procedures. Mike moved that the ARC offer its full support of the supplemental budget request. Hawk seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

ARC Coordinator's Report

Monthly Meeting Schedule: Jamie discussed the merits of having a predetermined day and time to hold the monthly ARC meetings and added that this might also increase participation from other islands as video-conferencing capabilities are available with enough lead-time. The ARC was supportive of the idea.

Island Grown Network/ Island Grown Festival: Peggy updated the ARC about the Island Grown network and festival; she explained much of the great work that Boyd Pratt was doing for the festival and the Island Grown website. The Northwest Agriculture Business Center (NABC) has offered to continue helping to establish a strong Island Grown program.

Regulations: Peggy discussed Chapter 18 of the county code as it relates to farm stands. Although the County Council did not incorporate the ARC's recommended language, the version adopted appears favorable to farmers. Discussion by the council may be re-opened for reconsideration of land-use issues related to recycling on land zoned as Rural Farm Forest, but it is unlikely that the farmstand language will be affected. Peggy updated the ARC on the Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) and Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP). The ARC discussed the ARC's potential role in helping to determine Best Management Practices (BMPs) for these programs.

ARC Mission: Tom gave a detailed history of the ARC and led a discussion about the role of the ARC. It was agreed that the ARC needs to recruit new members and to take care to maintain its funding.

2012-2013 Work Priorities: The ARC reviewed issues relevant to local agriculture and discussed which they each felt to be the five most important. The ARC will collate each member's rankings and use that information to prioritize issues for 2012-2013. The results of the rankings were:

Goals

1. Adoption of scale appropriate state and local regulations.
2. More farmers will be farming in San Juan County
3. Preserve farmland for farming
4. Sustainable local food systems will be strengthened through research
5. Tie: Maintain and enhance soil fertility / Increased organizational capacity will support farming.

The ARC discussed ways of increasing outreach to farmers and find new ways to help them have a voice in local government.

ARC Executive Committee: The ARC felt that an Executive Committee should be created by consensus. The Chair, Vice-Chair, and Coordinator will meet to discuss

protocol, guidelines, and expectations for the committee.

Next steps: Candace, Tom, and Jamie will work on creating an ARC executive/administrative sub-committee. They will get back to the committee with the results of the discussion of ARC work priorities for the coming year.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:45 pm.