

Agricultural Resources Committee (ARC)

Minutes of April 28, 2008

12:00 – 2:00 PM

Large Legislative Room, Friday Harbor

ARC Members Present: Jane Burton Bell, Neal Foley, Todd Goldsmith, Bruce Gregory, Sara Jones, Jim Lawrence, Rebecca Moore, Ron Zee

ARC Members Absent: Peter Corning, Christina Dahl-Sesby, Eliza Habegger, Ralph Hahn, Katie Hover, Danna Kinsey, Julie Miller, Tom Schultz, Madden Surbaugh, Mark Tompkins

CD/ARC Staff Present: Eliza Buck, Tim Clark

MINUTES

No quorum to approve the March 25, 2008 minutes. To be approved in May.

Public Comment: Jeanne Louise Pyle representative of *Edible Seattle*, the newest magazine in Seattle. The magazine actually covers the Puget Sound. Invited submission of seasonal articles – editor@edibleseattle.net. She handed out media kits. The ARC committed to purchasing a subscription. Check out their website: www.ediblecommunities.com.

OLD BUSINESS

Farmland Preservation and Farmer Enrichment Programs: Project Task Force Updates

Farmland Preservation

Jim Lawrence reported that the Land Bank's King Sister's property project is waiting for well and soil test results. They are also looking into getting an easement from a neighbor in order to move the driveway.

Eliza Buck reported on the Office of Farmland Preservation task force meeting in Mt. Vernon, WA on April 2, 2008. Local farmers organized a tour of Skagit Valley farmland preservation projects for April 1, 2008. The tour included excellent examples of the Farmland Legacy Program conservation easement strategy, farm vertical integration, joint farm-conservation efforts and value-added production. The meeting on the 2nd covered an array of farmland preservation issues including a matrix of all issues identified around the state by conservation district offices. Guest speakers were Kendra Smith from the Farmland Legacy Program and Brian Underhill from the Agricultural Land Commission in British Columbia:

www.skagitcounty.net/Common/asp/default.asp?d=ConservationFutures&c=General&p=main.htm
www.alc.gov.bc.ca/

Tim Clark gave a report on the Agricultural Conservation Easement Education Campaign. One farmer has been contacted through the Assessors office. A meeting will be held on Shaw Island on April 30, 2008. Eliza B. handed out an information card that was produced through the education campaign.

Farmer Enrichment

Eliza B. reported on the ICL and agritourism task force meeting on April 1, 2008. The task force would like a two-tier system for the ICL program. The criteria was discussed but not decided upon.

Sandy Strehlou spoke to the task force about 100 Friends of Historic Barns and their goal to get some kind of language into the Scenic Byways comprehensive plans. She may speak to the full committee in May along with a representative from the San Juan Islands Visitor's Bureau.

Eliza B. reported that she sent out a letter to the school superintendents inviting them to a "summit" about farm-to-school programs. All four school district superintendents were interested, however, Michael Soltman of SJI had reservations about a meeting because of a prior meeting organized in May. The San Juan Island district will be meeting with Tom French and others on May 14th to discuss the "how-tos" of setting up a farm-to-school program. Danna Kinsey will represent the ARC at this meeting. Jim Lawrence is working with the American Red Cross and Brendan Cowan of the Department of Emergency Management on emergency food security and said that they are talking about cooler and distribution space as being key.

CAO Update

Todd Goldsmith reported that they have finished the aquifer recharge area section. Shireen Hale spoke to Pete Rose about the need for additional funding in order to finish the assignment.

Todd urged farmers to respond to the WSDA Future of Farming survey:

<http://agr.wa.gov/fof/default.htm>

Ag Guild Update

Jane Burton Bell reported that the San Juan Islands Agricultural Guild will have a fundraising event on Sunday, May 18th at Steps Wine Bar and Café. \$100 per person; 40 person maximum. Vance Corum will be a guest speaker. He'll also meet with the Ag Guild and Farmer's Market at 2 PM. The Ag Guild has submitted two grants so far.

Ron Zee announced that the ARC has \$100 in funds through the Barger dance proceeds to donate to the Ag Guild. The money is held in an account through the NABC. Ron passed around a hat to match funds. Contributions to the SJI Ag Guild are tax deductible. Send to SJI Ag Guild, PO Box 1945, Friday Harbor, WA 98250.

Coordinator's Report

Pat Arnold, Farmworker Housing Coordinator of the state's Community Trade & Economic Development office called to invite an ARC representative to attend a meeting to help develop criteria for an appropriation of \$2 million dollars for housing. She wants small farmers to be represented at the meeting. Jim Lawrence volunteered to attend on behalf of the ARC.

Neal Foley reported on a grain meeting that the ARC held on May 10th. Old equipment was identified. Donnie Burt donated a combine to whoever would be interested in restoring it. Neal created a wiki site to post information on the findings from the meeting. Contact Neal at podchef@gmail.com to join the wiki group. Neal also attended a fodder workshop in Skagit. Brassicas fodder crops were the focus. They grow in quick successions and store very well. Beets and turnips come in at 17-18% protein.

Crow Valley Waterline Proposal Issue

Mindy Kayl and Danna Kinsey brought to the ARC's attention that a waterline is being proposed for moving water from an inland parcel and transferring it 3 miles to shoreline property. Todd Goldsmith has been reviewing the documents and offered to write a letter contesting the development.

NEW BUSINESS

Merging Fair Board & ARC

Ron Zee presented an idea for exploring the possible merger of the ARC and the Fair Board. It was agreed by those present that Ron and Eliza will continue the exploration. Neal Foley volunteered to help.

WSDA Future of Farming survey

Discussed earlier in agenda.

Washington State Conservation Commission: New Conservation District Budget Category for Farmland Preservation

Ron Zee presented an option to apply for new funding for farmland preservation. He is interested in applying for the funding through the CD office for the ARC efforts. It was agreed by those present to proceed.

Electing New Officers in May

We will need to elect a new chair and vice-chair at the May meeting. Ron Zee also announced that we have two resignations: Katie Hover of San Juan Island and Julie Miller of Orcas Island. He also wrote a letter of support for Hawk Pingree to fill Katie's position on San Juan Island.

Rebecca Moore announced her intention to resign. She's on the Ag Guild and can no longer manage both groups.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting will be **May 27, 2008**, Coho Restaurant, 120 Nichol St., Friday Harbor.