

Agricultural Resources Committee

Minutes of January 27, 2010

2:00 – 4:00 PM

Whidbey Island Bank, Friday Harbor

ARC Members Present: Jane Burton Bell, Tim Clark, Roger Ellison, Bruce Gregory, Sara Jones, Hawk Pingree, Jim Sesby, Madden Surbaugh, Ken Wood

ARC Members Absent: Eliza Habegger, Charly Robinson, Ron Zee, Peter Corning, Dana Kinsey, Tom Schultz, Mark Tompkins

Friends Present: Rich Anderson, Candace Jagel

ARC Staff Present: Peggy Bill

MINUTES

Tim Clark moved to approve Minutes of December 16, 2009. Bruce Gregory seconded. Motion unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

Report from AG Guild

Candace Jagel reported that the Town of FH, Land Bank and AG Guild are moving forward to address issues identified in MOU. Jane Burton Bell noted that AG Guild is currently raising \$100k, consistent with MOU, for the purpose of covering project costs, as well as future maintenance of the building.

Farmland Preservation Subcommittee

Tim Clark reported that the Land Bank is currently preparing a lease program for the Frazier Homestead on the south end of SJI. The Land Bank is seeking a long-term lease with a farmer who will work to improve the resources on the land, including soil fertility and pasture management. The property is not suited for row crops due to limited water. Tim noted that the Land Bank has 8 other fee owned parcels of farmland that are subject to short-term lease agreements. Tim is working with SJPT to prepare a map showing all conserved farmland in SJC, including lands protected by Conservation Easements as well as fee owned lands. Peggy commented that the Port of Lopez owns ~ 20 acres of farmland adjoining Lopez Airport, and that the Port is interested in leasing it to a farmer. Peg, Sara and Tim will meet with Port Commissioner Bruce Dunlop to discuss options for ARC involvement.

Farmer Enrichment Subcommittee

The Farmer Enrichment Subcommittee meeting was held on January 20th. Issues discussed included:

ICL Program: There is a need for dedicated staff to promote and market the ICL Program. ICL members have not received benefits such as promotion, marketing, etc due to lack of staffing. Programs such as Farm Culinary School would be housed in ICL. *It was recommended that the committee prepare a draft proposal and budget for potential funding by EDC or another organization.*

Culinary School: Christina Orchid, of Christina's Restaurant on Orcas, has offered to be a chef for an event. Ideas of potential chefs on SJI were discussed, including Gretchen of Duck Soup Inn, Laurie Paul of Market Chef, and Roche Harbor Resort. Madden Surbaugh noted that he is interested in continuing to be involved, and that Culinary Schools are a big deal in agritourism.

Farm Guides: Candace is putting together the Farm Guides for San Juan and Orcas Islands. Lopez Community Land Trust has already prepared the 2009-10 Farm Guide for Lopez

Island. ~ 2500 copies were printed. *It was recommended that 1) an interactive online map be developed as an ARC/EDC collaborative project; and 2) the Farm Guides include information on ICL restaurants and businesses, as well as note ICL farms.*

EDC

Peg introduced Victoria Compton, the new ED of EDC. Victoria briefly highlighted the mutual goals of EDC and ARC. EDC will be funding projects. Potential ARC projects that might be suitable include ICL, Culinary School, and Cascade Loop Agritourism. Proposals should initially be presented as a letter briefly describing the proposal. IF EDC indicates interest, then a full proposal with budget should be submitted for consideration.

Regulatory Issues

Labor - SB 6349, establishing an intern program on small farms

Peg noted that the hearing for SB 6349 was scheduled for January 28th in Olympia. Jim Sesby will be going to offer testimony in support of the bill, as well as several interns from Synergy Farms.

Farm Stand/Farm Store Permits

Sara Jones provided an update on the status of their farm stand on AR land on Lopez. They had received a letter from the county noting that they are out of compliance since current regulations only allow farm stands and stores on RR and RFF lands. ARC had submitted a recommendation to SJCC in March 2007, proposing that farm stands and stores be allowed on ARL. The issue is still pending a decision by SJC PC, currently slated for review in late 2010 or early 2011. Peg will discuss with SJC Administrator Pete Rose.

NEW BUSINESS

Resilience Institute

Several ARC members will be attending the Resilient Institute's focus group discussion on February 2nd. They agreed to report back at the next ARC meeting.

SJC Agricultural Action Plan

There was a brief discussion about organization of the Action Plan. Candace recommended that notes from previous discussions of CNTF be incorporated into the plan.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the full ARC will be 2-4 pm on Wednesday, February 24, 2010, at the Whidbey Island Bank.

Meeting was adjourned at 4 pm.