

## **Agricultural Resources Committee**

Minutes of May 18, 2009

12:00 – 2:00PM

Skagit Valley College, Friday Harbor

**ARC Members Present:** Peggy Bill, Jane Burton Bell, Peter Corning, Todd Goldsmith, Bruce Gregory, Eliza Habegger, Sara Jones, Dana Kinsey, Kji McIntyre, Hawk Pingree, Tom Schultz, Jim Sesby, Mark Tompkins

**ARC Members Absent:** Jim Lawrence, Madden Surbaugh

**Friends Present:** Richard Anderson, Candy Bowers, Ann Monin, Noel Monin, Ron Zee

**ARC Staff Present:** Eliza Buck, Tim Clark

### **MINUTES**

*Jim Sesby moved to approve the April 27, 2009 minutes. Peggy Bill seconded. Motion unanimously approved.*

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Tom Schultz announced that Candace Jagel, WSU Extension Ag Program Coordinator was in Pullman, WA picking up samples of grain seed for trials in the islands. Candace has organized a grain workshop on Lopez Island on May 28, 2009.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **Farm Wheel ICL Promotion**

Kji McIntyre reported on progress with the Farm Wheel ICL promotion. The event will be limited to Orcas Island this year.

#### **Permanent Farmer's Market**

Jane Burton Bell reported that the Ag Guild has submitted an offer on the Nichols Street property, and are waiting to hear the owner's response. The Guild has also chosen to name the site Friday Harbor Brickworks: Home of the San Juan Island Farmers' Market.

#### **NASS Survey**

The ARC reviewed a draft of the survey, made some suggestions and corrections.

*Hawk Pingree moved to send the amended survey via the National Agricultural Statistics Service. Dana seconded. Motion unanimously approved.*

#### **Update on ARC Coordinator position**

Tom Schultz reported that the Economic Development Council is in the process of amending their .09 budget to include the ARC Coordinator position. A decision should be made in June.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Election of Officers**

Ron Zee has applied to become a member. The Council will review his application today. The ARC voted to approve Ron Zee as Committee Chair, if the Council appoints him. Hawk Pingree was elected Vice-Chair.

### **ARC presentation to San Juan County Council, 6/16/09**

The ARC reviewed an outline for the June 16<sup>th</sup> presentation to the SJ County Council and made changes. A draft resolution recommendation on a no net loss of ARL policy was also reviewed and changes were made. *Todd Goldsmith moved to accept the draft as amended. Peggy Bill seconded. Motion unanimously approved.*

### **Discussion: Farm Internships rules and regulations**

Eliza Buck reported that a case in Oregon left a farm with penalties and back wages for not documenting intern wages appropriately. This case alarmed farmers in the NW region because so many of them use “interns” for farm labor. The legal definition of an intern is someone in an accredited educational program, which has a structured curriculum. Without this formalized arrangement, people who come to farms to learn and work are considered either volunteers and do not receive monetary compensation or they are considered employees and must be paid minimum wage with the appropriate taxes taken out.

The ARC discussed opportunities to establish formal internship programs in the islands to enable farmers to work with people interested in learning farming practices. Lopez Island Community Trust has an existing program, which has been quite successful though it does take staff time to organize. The ARC will continue to explore the topic.

**The meeting was adjourned at 2:20PM.**

**The next ARC full committee meeting will be on September 28, 2009 (time and location to be announced in August).**