

Agricultural Resources Committee

Minutes of September 28, 2009

2:00 – 4:00PM

Skagit Valley College, Friday Harbor

ARC Members Present: Peggy Bill, Jane Burton Bell, Tim Clark, Peter Corning, Roger Ellison, Bruce Gregory, Sara Jones, Hawk Pingree, Charly Robinson, Tom Schultz, Jim Sesby, Mark Tompkins, Ron Zee

ARC Members Absent: Eliza Habegger (maternity leave), Dana Kinsey, Kji McIntyre

Friends Present: Richard Anderson, Candace Jagel, Nancy Larsen

ARC Staff Present: Eliza Buck

MINUTES

Hawk Pingree moved to approve the May 18, 2009 minutes. Peter Corning seconded.
Motion unanimously approved.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS – Tim Clark, Roger Ellison and Charly Robinson.

OLD BUSINESS

ARC Presentations to San Juan County Council

Ron Zee reported that the ARC gave updates to the San Juan County Council (SJCC) on June 16th and September 15th, 2009. On June 16th the focus was on the No Net Loss of Agricultural Resource Lands resolution. Council recommended that the ARC work with the Prosecuting Attorney's office to make sure the resolution is legally sound. Ron & Eliza met with Karen Vedder, who said that the resolution needed to be reworked. Karen helped draft a new version that went to the Governance Committee of the SJCC.

The September 15th presentation to the SJCC included a revised work plan and an update on the committee findings on the labor issue. Council advised Ron & Eliza to go ahead with their meeting with the Dept of Labor & Industries in Tumwater on Sept. 24, 2009. Council will consider adding farm labor issues to their legislative agenda.

AG Guild - Permanent Farmer's Market

Jane Burton Bell reported that the Town of Friday Harbor Council has agreed to put \$400,000 of Town Hotel/Motel Tax money toward the purchase of the Nichols Street property, and are waiting to hear from the Dept of Revenue if that transaction is legal. The AG Guild Harvest Dinner raised \$20,000. The AG Guild is sponsoring farmer/visionary Michael Ableman on October 23, 2009 for a potluck event at the Mullis Center.

Report from Farmland Preservation Subcommittee and Critical Needs Task Force Sustainable AG group

Peggy Bill reported that the Sustainable AG group met several times over the summer. The group is in flux currently because Lovell had to step down as coordinator. Peggy, Charley Anderson, Pamela Gross and Lovell Pratt met with Jefferson LandWorks to learn

more about their farm preservation efforts. Shore Bank is a key component of their success.

Peggy also gave a brief update on the grain project of the Lopez Community Land Trust's Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development committee. They have an intern "OJ" who is collecting data on grain varieties and distributing wheat and barley seed for trials. Reports will be made available later in the year. Tom Schultz announced that WSU had applied for a USDA SARE grant for a regional grain project.

Report from Farmer Enrichment Subcommittee and the Future of WSU San Juan Extension programs

Tom Schultz reported that the Farmer Enrichment Subcommittee has met several times over the summer. A "Farm&Food" listserv is now up and running. The San Juan Island Community Foundation gave WSU Extension Ag program a mini-grant to coordinate the AG Tent. Farm Wheels was put on hold for 2009 due to a lack people to work on it. The Subcommittee has been working on developing a series of culinary workshops featuring local chefs using local foods.

Tom reported that WSU San Juan Extension would be cut back drastically (programs lost, open only 2 days per week) if Ballot Position 1 or the "levy lift" does not pass in November.

NEW BUSINESS

Water Element – Vicki Heater, Water Resource Management Committee (WRMC)

Vicki Heater told the ARC that the WRMC has been working to craft language to include agriculture in the new water element. Vicki met with ARC members this summer and drafted some language. ARC members asked Shireene Hale to include a provision for protecting water from being exported off of ARL. The WRMC felt this language was counter-productive and not enforceable. Vicki proposed a new section be added "Agricultural Water Use Goals & Policies." The committee reviewed a draft. There will be more opportunities for revision as the public process progresses.

Eat Local for Thanksgiving Campaign

Eliza presented the ARC with a proposed resolution to support the Eat Local for Thanksgiving Campaign organized by Puget Sound Fresh of the Cascade Harvest Coalition. Jim Sesby moved to submit the resolution the San Juan County Council and to support the campaign by distributing materials throughout the community. Hawk seconded. *Motion unanimously approved.*

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10PM.

The next ARC full committee meeting will be on October 26, 2009 (time and location to be announced).