

## **Agricultural Resources Committee**

Minutes of May 22, 2007

2:00 – 4:00 PM

Steps Wine Bar & Cafe, Friday Harbor

**ARC Members Present:** Jane Burton Bell, Peter Corning, Christine Dahl-Sesby, Eliza Habegger, Ralph Hahn, Todd Goldsmith, Bruce Gregory, Sara Jones, Danna Kinsey, Jim Lawrence, Julie Miller, Tom Schultz, Madden Surbaugh, Ron Zee

**ARC Members Absent:** Ken Akopiantz, Rebecca Moore, Mark Tompkins

**ARC Friends Present:** Richard Anderson, Westcott Bay Cider; David Bauermeister, NABC (via phone); Candace Jagel, WSU Ag Program Coordinator; Cloud McCauley, San Juan Island; Lovel Pratt, San Juan Island; Rick Ruben, San Juan Island; Jim Sesby, Heritage Farm, SJI; Bill Watson, EDC staff; Peggy Weir, San Juan Island

**Guests Present:** Patrice Barrentine & Fred Berman, WSDA Small Farms

**CD/ARC Staff Present:** Eliza Buck, Steve Hussey

### **MINUTES**

The minutes of the April 24, 2007 meeting were approved as written. Todd Goldsmith moved acceptance, and Jim Lawrence seconded the motion. Minutes were unanimously approved.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Steve Hussey of the San Juan Islands Conservation District (SJICD) introduced himself and said that he was on the Stormwater Management Committee. He invited anyone with questions about the Stormwater Utility Tax to speak to him after the meeting.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Presentations were made by each of the subcommittees.

#### *Marketing*

Madden Surbaugh and Tom Schultz presented for the Marketing Subcommittee.

- Madden gave an update on the local food establishment certification program. The subcommittee decided to use the Tif & Gif design for a window decal. It will be made of static vinyl. The program will require food establishments to show that at least 5% of their annual food costs are from local (islands) food products. This will be a self-policed program. Food establishments will fill out an application and pay \$25 annually to be part of the program. Qualifying food establishments will receive a decal, an electronic file with a certificate that will include space for the business to list the names of islands farms that supply them, and a link on the ARC website. The ARC website will have a special page that will list all the participating food establishments. This page will ideally be linked to other local agencies (i.e., the

- Chamber of Commerce & the San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau). Reciprocal links between participating restaurants will also be encouraged. Sara Jones moved to accept the program as presented and Julie M. seconded it. The committee approved unanimously.
- Tom reported that the subcommittee agreed to support the effort of the San Juan Island Grange to develop a permanent farmers market. The Coop group led by Cloud McCauley decided to support the Grange rather than continue to pursue a natural cooperative grocery store. Cloud announced that a final coop meeting/potluck will take place on 5/29 at 6 pm at the Friday Harbor Grange Hall. She will present the findings of the feasibility study.
  - Jane Burton-Bell announced that the Farmers Market Association is sponsoring a potluck dinner with guest speaker Nina Planck on 6/24 at 6 pm at the Friday Harbor Grange Hall. She passed out postcard announcements.

### *Preservation*

Eliza Habegger and Sara Jones presented for the Preservation Subcommittee.

- Sara reported that the electronic bulletin board or forum is now up on the ARC website. Jane said she had trouble with logging on to the forum. Eliza B. will investigate.
- Eliza H. stated that the ARC will sponsor two workshop/potlucks with guest speaker Mary Embleton of the Cascade Harvest Coalition who will speak about the Washington FarmLink program. This informal event will bring together landowners and potential lessees. These events will be held on Lopez and Orcas Islands in September. Invitations will be sent to people who are listed Ag Open Space.
- Eliza B. announced that a link to the state's Community Trade & Economic Development (CTED) farmworker housing infrastructure loan is now on the ARC website, and that program coordinator Pat Arnold has made a commitment to attend the September ARC meeting.
- Peter Corning told the committee about a meeting between the Land Bank, the Home Trust and the CD about creating an innovative solution to farmworker housing. The basic concept is for a cooperative demonstration farm with cluster housing built by the Home Trust on Land Bank land. Peter proposed that a task force form to study this opportunity and draft a prospectus or mini-strategic plan. Peter, Jim, Eliza H. and Danna Kinsey will explore further.
- Ralph Hahn interjected that labor and housing was a critical piece missing in the Economic Development Element (EDE) as submitted by Barney & Worth. He requested real numbers to revise the EDE by September.

### *Regulation*

Todd Goldsmith presented for the Regulation Subcommittee.

- Todd reported that the subcommittee did not meet in May.
- Candace Jagel received guidelines on how to build safely from the Fire Marshall.
- Todd brought to the committee's attention the fact that farm equipment is considered business property and as such must be claimed for business property taxes. This must be filed with the County Auditor's office.

- Todd told the committee that the Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) wetland section that would impact agriculture is on hold until 2010. [coordinator's note: SSB 5248 "Preserving the Viability of Agricultural Lands" was passed in August 2007 calls for a "time-out" on new or amended CAO provisions for agriculture. To learn more about this bill visit:  
<http://www.cted.wa.gov/DesktopModules/CTEDPublications/CTEDPublicationsView.aspx?tabID=0&ItemID=4935&Mid=944&wversion=Staging>]

#### *Coordinator's Report*

- San Juan County Fair – Candace and Eliza B. working with Christine Miller at SJCF to put together a special exhibit on sustainable agriculture. This will be a group effort between ARC, WSU, NW Agriculture Business Center (NABC), Lopez Island Farm Education (LIFE), Noxious Weed Board, Solid Waste, Island Grown Food Cooperative (IGFC).
- ARC newsletter topics list handed out, Eliza B. asked for recommendations. Steve H. recommended adding something about stormwater fees. Todd G. asked to mention the local government offices that were involved in the farmstand regulations recommendations.
- ARC Logo acceptance - Sara motioned to accept the ARC logo. Madden seconded. Committee unanimously voted to accept the new logo.
- ARC draft budget - Ron Zee presented the draft ARC budget. In June, Chair and Vice-chair will meet with Pete Rose to go over the budget. Asked for a motion to approve budget. Jane moved to approve budget. Bruce Gregory seconded. The budget included funding for 1 FTE coordinator position and operational support. The budget for 2008 includes \$30K from the San Juan County Council, \$10K in cash and in-kind contributions from the SJICD, and a possible grant from the Conservation Commission's Office of Farmland Preservation. Ron and Kevin Ranker have met with two staff members from Senator Cantwell's office to look at funding opportunities. There are funds from the USDA in the rural economic development area that will be reviewed over the summer. Committee accepted the budget.
- Talking points handout in support of the ARC distributed to the committee. Request to email out the talking points.
- Recommendation to the San Juan County Council on Climate Change  
Ron presented a draft recommendation to the committee. Ron spoke to Kit Rawson of the Marine Resources Committee (MRC) and Ralph Hahn of the EDC about sending in recommendations to the San Juan county Council to explore and develop a climate action plan. King, Whatcom, and Clallam counties have plans in place or in development. Todd moved to send the recommendation to the SJCC and Peter seconded. Tom asked to include "local" to the language: . . . recommends that the San Juan County Council develop a climate action plan as soon as possible to aid and support [local,] state and national, and international mitigation . . . Ron also encouraged members to sign a citizen's petition. Ralph asked "who is going to implement the plan?" He pointed out that the SJCC is having problems solving operational issues. Peter moved to amend the motion asking Ron to make changes that reflect the concerns discussed and email out a new draft. Sara seconded. A

“modified” climate change recommendation approved in principle, with suggested changes.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Presentations by Fred Berman and Patrice Barrentine, WSDA Small Farms

Patrice Barrentine is a new coworker with Fred Berman since February. Fred will cover small farms (northern, eastern WA) and Barrentine (southern, eastern WA) will cover direct marketing. Fred was doing a KOMO TV program called “What’s for dinner in the heart of Washington,” that features what’s in season and how to prepare it. The program has gone to chefs of Seattle. Fred now thinks of himself as a “farmsbudsman” – a go between agencies and farmers. His office is not regulatory, but they can help with regulations.

Fred has been an organic farmer for 27 years and a restaurateur for 25 years mainly in Whatcom County. Patrice is a great resource of direct marketing. They are both involved with the farmer/chef connection, which puts the farmers together with buyers. They work with distributors to help them with issues. They also try to help with infrastructure issues – poultry processors, meat processors, value-added products throughout the state. They worked with NABC to host a dairy roundtable. They do coordination and collaboration with agencies statewide.

They are on their way to Omak to address the Okanogan Producers Cooperative to present some direct marketing ideas. Barrentine handed out copies of the presentation and commented on how it appears that marketing issues are similar for San Juan and Okanogan counties.

Fred commended the ARC on the good work that they are doing. Patrice also commended the committee. She gave more of her background – eight years as a buyer for the Olympia Food Coop. She is also involved with the South of the Sound Community Trust – a rare collaboration of the land trust and farmland preservation. She offered her support and asked to be kept apprised of the committee’s work.

They produce the Green Book. They are also producing a farmer’s market manual. Hopefully, it will be printed in 6-8 weeks. Of particular interest and a good resource for those starting up a farmers market. They also have a number of resources on their website – <http://agr.wa.gov/Marketing/SmallFarm/>.

They have a grant in process for funds to serve Latinos, women and dairies, plus a school fruit and vegetable program trying to focus on US based foods. They shared information on the Community Farmland Trust that develops low-income housing (cluster homes) and protects farmland. It is a 501(c)(3). Whatcom Community Land Trust also a good model. Paul Schissler, WCLT director, has a lot of information to share.

### *Letter of Appreciation to Claudia Coles*

Peter passed out a draft letter from the ARC to Claudia Coles, the safety program manager at WSDA, thanking her for the Department’s decision to relax the requirements for processing poultry on small farms. Under the existing “temporary permit,” a fully enclosed processing facility is not required, but the opportunities for selling locally-grown and processed poultry are very restrictive. Early in 2007, Synergy Farm sent in a proposal to WSDA to permit a lower-cost temporary enclosure to be used as a way to qualify for a

"food processing license," which would allow frozen chicken sales year-round to local restaurants, in farm stores, etc. This triggered a reconsideration of the Department's policy, and the upshot was that, with additional measures to ensure food safety and environmental protection, the Department will now allow a part of the process (the slaughter and plucking activities) to be conducted out of doors. [For further information about this policy change and the new requirements, contact Scott Fox at 360-794-9260.]

### *Elections*

Jane motioned to keep current officers and Sara seconded.

Ron Zee was unanimously approved for chair.

Todd Goldsmith was unanimously approved for vice-chair.

Tom Schultz was unanimously approved for Farm Marketing subcommittee chair.

Eliza Habegger was unanimously approved for Farmland Preservation subcommittee chair.

Ken Akopiantz was unanimously approved for Farm Regulation subcommittee chair.

Madden recommended that we tell the Council that it doesn't work for officers to serve only one term.

Todd asked that expiring members to route letters of intent to renew or decline to renew for another term through ARC staff so we know how many positions are open.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The County Council will hear public testimony on the Uniform Business Rules on June 3, 2007.

Lopez Farm Tour sponsored by the Lopez Grange will take place on June 10. Contact Sara Jones for more information.

### **NEXT MEETING**

Our next meeting will be in September. Meeting date, time, and place to be announced in August.