

Agricultural Resources Committee (ARC)

Minutes of January 22, 2008

12:00-2:00 PM

Skagit Valley College – Friday Harbor

ARC Members Present: Peter Corning, Christina Dahl-Sesby, Eliza Habegger, Sara Jones, Dana Kinsey, Tom Schultz, Jane Burton Bell, Todd Goldsmith (via phone), Bruce Gregory, Mark Tompkins, Madden Surbaugh, Ron Zee

ARC Members Absent: Ralph Hahn, Katie Hover, Jim Lawrence, Julie Miller, Rebecca Moore

ARC Friends Present: Richard Anderson, Westcott Bay Orchards; Candace Jagel, WSU Extension; Bill Watson, SJC Economic Development Council (EDC), Rick Karon, Sus Kellogg

CD/ARC Staff Present: Tim Clark

MINUTES

Sara Jones moved approval of the December 3, 2007 minutes. Peter Corning seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Announcement: Tim Clark has been hired as Project Coordinator for the ARC Agricultural Conservation Easements Education Campaign under a grant from the State Office of Farmland Preservation.

Public Comment: Rick Karon stated that he wants to work with the group because he has 40 acres of horse property and wants to keep it in open space but is worried about animal husbandry and its role in agriculture. He noted that King County defines horse operations as agriculture.

OLD BUSINESS

Concerning Land Bank leases, Eliza Habegger reported that she is conducting a market study for the King Sisters property and requested assistance. Sara, Peter, and Todd offered to help.

Candace reported on and passed out a proposal to create a series of enterprise budgets for specific products – goat dairy, poultry and a number of others. WSU, ARC and EDC with the help of NABC would be involved. Compensation would be given to farmers who could fill out budget. Each organization would contribute \$250, which would be matched by NABC, for a total of \$1,500 per budget. The WSU Cultivating Success workshop this spring will integrate enterprise budgets into the program. The plan is to create 12 budgets over the next three years. Candace has 15 budgets that she will share contact her at candace_jagel@wsu.edu.

Ron Zee wrote out the 2008 draft ARC work plan on the board, based on the results of the December meeting. After thorough discussion, the committee agreed to the following:

Two ARC Program Areas for 2008:

- Farmland Preservation (Program Chair-Eliza Habegger)
- Farmer Enrichment (Program Chair-Tom Schultz)

Project Task Forces under Each Program Area:

Farmland Preservation

Members

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Ag Conservation Easement | Katie, Eliza H. |
| 2. Assessor's Office Assistance | Sara, Bruce |
| 3. Land Bank Assistance | Katie, Eliza H., Jim |
| 4. Farm Enterprise Templates | Peter, Bruce, Danna, (Candace) |
| 5. Bulletin Board Enhancements | Sara, (Richard Anderson) |
| 6. Farm Worker Housing (inactive) | |

Farmer Enrichment

Members

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Permanent Farmers Market | Tom, Rebecca, Jane, (Bill), (Richard Anderson) |
| 2. ICL Program Expansion | Christina, Tom, Rebecca, (Richard Anderson) |
| 3. Fall Harvest Dinner | Madden |
| 4. Farm-to-School/Cafeteria | Jane, Danna, Mark, (Candace) |
| 5. Agri-Tourism Statement | Tom, Madden, (Rick Karon) |
| 6. Mobile Poultry Processing (inactive) | |

Program chairs will follow up with each task force to designate a project lead for each. Program chairs will stay in email contact with the task groups in their area and help facilitate task force progress when needed.

The ARC Coordinator's tasks under the 2008 Work Plan were identified as: Annual Report, Annual Budget, Annual Work Plan, Annual Newsletter, Website Management, Database Management, Grants/Development, Public Outreach, and No Net Loss of Farmland Resolution follow-up. Todd Goldsmith agreed to continue serving as ARC Representative on the County's Critical Areas Ordinance Review Committee.

Ron gave the ARC Coordinator's report in Eliza Buck's absence, stating that two grant proposals have been submitted to USDA. Agritourism is gaining a lot of attention in the region. Ron suggested that the ARC look at agritourism as a topic. He thanked Paul and Mary Brooke Barger for raising \$126.96 for the ARC from dance proceeds.

NEW BUSINESS

The EDC has recognized agriculture as an important element in the county though it is not a significant economic driver. Agriculture is only 1% of the economy in San Juan County. The Permanent Farmers Market (PFM) has been discussed by the EDC. The .09 Funds (sales tax the county keeps instead of going to the state), which can be spent for infrastructure projects. EDC is considering whether they can use some of those funds to help hire a project director for the PFM project of the Ag Guild. The EDC is also offering office space for that position.

Ten projects were chosen as top priorities for 2008, with the Agricultural Conservation Easements Education Campaign and the Permanent Farmers Market being the primary projects in their respective program areas. Tom Schultz added that there should be a mid-year assessment to determine success at our meeting in May. Jane Burton Bell noted that the Farm to School program should be an important priority. Madden Surbaugh noted that agri-tourism and culinary tourism are the fastest growing areas of

the tourism industry. *Bruce Gregory moved approval of the 2008 ARC work plan. Sara Jones seconded. Motion approved unanimously.*

Ron announced that the San Juan Islands Agriculture Guild is being created as a non-membership 501c3 and is applying non-profit status to promote development of a permanent farmers market on San Juan Island. *Christina Dahl-Sesby moved that Jane Burton Bell serve as the ARC representative on the Ag Guild's Board of Trustees. Bruce Gregory seconded. Motion approved unanimously.*

Committee vacancies: Chris Lohman resigned; Todd has agreed to talk to Larry Cochran and Brian Kvistand. Ron asked the committee to give recommendations to Eliza Buck.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

San Juan Island Permanent Farmers Market Summit II, Monday, February 4, 2008 1-4 PM Skagit Valley College Community Room

USDA Agriculture Business Census for 2007 are available, call 1-888-424-7828, if you'd like to be included; ARC to send notice to all farmers.

NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting will be **February 26, 2008**, 1:15-3:15pm, Lopez Library.