

Agricultural Resources Committee (ARC)

Minutes of February 26, 2008

1:15-3:15 PM

Lopez Island Library

ARC Members Present: Jane Burton Bell, Peter Corning, Christina Dahl-Sesby, Todd Goldsmith, Bruce Gregory, Sara Jones, Danna Kinsey, Jim Lawrence, Rebecca Moore, Madden Surbaugh, Ron Zee

ARC Members Absent: Eliza Habegger, Ralph Hahn, Katie Hover, Julie Miller, Tom Schultz, Mark Tompkins

ARC Friends Present: Owen Cheevers, Orcas Island; Larry Cochran, Lopez Island; Kai McIntyre, Orcas Island; Henning Semsdorf, S&S Homestead Farm; Bill Watson, SJC Economic Development Council (EDC)

CD/ARC Staff Present: Eliza Buck, Tim Clark

MINUTES

Todd Goldsmith moved approval of the January 22, 2008 minutes. Sara Jones seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Public Comment: Owen Cheevers proposed that a countywide Farm Trust be founded. He also asked the ARC to help with using food stamps at the farmers markets. Danna Kinsey noted that the WIC (Women, Infants & Children) program was available in the islands. Jane Burton-Bell said that the San Juan Island Farmers Market Association did accept food stamps but there weren't enough people using them. Participation is low because people don't want to be identified with public assistance.

Kai McIntyre introduced himself. He is the farm manager of Morningstar Farm.

OLD BUSINESS

Farmland Preservation and Farmer Enrichment: Project task group Updates

Tim Clark reported for the Farmland Preservation Program area. Articles about farmland preservation are being printed in local papers. Rack cards are being produced. Working with the County Assessor to mitigate lands going out of Ag Open Space status. There is a farmer on Shaw Island that is opting out and has given the Assessor two years notice. Task force will work with the landowners to find options. Maps are being developed to help prioritize regions of focus for farmland preservation efforts. Snohomish County will be a model for farmland mapping. We are in contact with their project lead - Linda Neunzig.

Tim is organizing four workshops on farmland preservation to be held on Lopez, Orcas, San Juan and Shaw in mid-March. There will be guest speakers talking about various topics. The workshops are part of the Office of Farmland Preservation grant.

Sample farm leases will hopefully be available through the ARC by the end of 2008.

Eliza Buck reported for the Farmer Enrichment Program area. She noted that the facilitation of a permanent farmers market has been completed by helping to form a new non-profit called the San Juan

Islands Agricultural Guild. The Ag Guild has met twice. There board is comprised of representatives from various organizations. Jane Burton-Bell is the ARC representative.

The Islands Certified Local (ICL) program task force and the agritourism task force have merged. Members are Richard Anderson, Christina Dahl-Sesby, Rik Karon, Rebecca Moore, Tom Schultz and Madden Surbaugh. The ICL program is expanding to include food processors and food producers. Fifty-two surveys were mailed and seventy were emailed.

Fall harvest dinner and mobile poultry processing task forces are currently inactive.

Jane Burton-Bell reported on the Farm-to-School task force. The Lopez Island Farm Education (LIFE) program is a model farm-to-school program. San Juan Island Slow Food Convivium hosted an event featuring Chef Tom French. While on island, Tom spoke to San Juan Island School District Superintendent Michael Soltman with the school-to-farm group. San Juan High School students are putting up a greenhouse on the Elementary School grounds. Orcas School District is purchasing local greens. The task force will contact all school district offices to let them know that the ARC has farm-to-school as part of its work plan.

Ron Zee made two announcements: Paul Barger has volunteered to help with the fall harvest dinner task force; and “Local Farms, Healthy Kids” is a bill going through the state house and senate that will dedicate funds for farm-to-school programs.

Madden Surbaugh of Steps Wine Bar and Café will be giving a fundraising dinner on May 18th for the permanent farmers market efforts of the Ag Guild.

CAO Update

Todd Goldsmith reported that it’s been a slow process after nine months. They’ve only worked on two out of five sections: critical aquifer recharge areas and fish and wildlife sections. Neither of the two sections has been completed yet.

Enterprise Budget Proposal (A)

Eliza B. reported on Candace Jagel’s proposal to fund enterprise budgets. Four groups: the ARC, the Economic Development Commission (EDC) and WSU San Juan County Extension will each contribute \$250 per budget to be matched by the NW Agricultural Business Center (NABC) for a total of \$1,500 per budget. The EDC, NABC and Extension have all agreed to contribute (WSU Extension can only give \$250 in 2008). ARC requested to vote on giving \$500 in 2008.

Madden Surbaugh moved to approve the ARC contribute \$500 be spent on 2 enterprise budgets in 2008. Sara Jones seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Sara moved to amend Madden’s motion by adding that the ARC also contribute an additional \$250 to cover the funds not available through WSU in 2008, so two budgets could be fully funded at \$1,500 each. Madden approved amendment. Motion approved unanimously.

The enterprise budget task force (Peter Corning, Bruce Gregory, Candace Jagel, and Danna Kinsey) will send out a proposal to the ARC prioritizing the enterprise budgets to be worked on.

Coordinators Report

Eliza B. reported that two new members joined the ICL – Doe Bay Resort & Spa on Orcas and Vortex Café on Lopez. Paul & Mary Brooke Barger donated \$109 in proceeds from their monthly dance events to the ARC.

NEW BUSINESS

The ARC will invite the Office of Farmland Preservation (OFP) task force to meet in the islands, and invite Lynn Bahrych, Vice Chair of the Washington State Conservation Commission and Steve McGonigal, Director of the OFP to attend an ARC meeting in the fall.

Bruce Gregory motioned that the ARC purchase ad space in the Puget Sound Fresh Farm Guide to promote the ICL program. Jane seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Ron asked the ARC to join the newly formed Stewardship Network of the San Juans and invited all to attend the first annual San Juan Islands Conservation Summit on April 19th.

Sara motioned that the ARC be a participating member of the Stewardship Network. Todd seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Ron asked the committee to postpone a discussion on “Growth, change and sustainability” until the County Council takes a position on it.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sara asked the Farmer Enrichment group to consider getting more information about farms and agriculture into the San Juan Islands Visitor’s Bureau annual guide. Eliza reported that the ARC became a member of the SJIVB and the ARC and ICL program are listed multiple times in the 2008 guide.

Ron announced that Neal Foley of Shaw Island has applied to become an ARC member. We should know about his appointment by the next ARC meeting. Peggy Bill of Lopez Island has been invited to apply for the Lopez opening. We have not heard back from her. (Larry Cochran, a farmer on Lopez, who was present, was also invited to apply.)

Ron announced that the San Juan Islands Conservation District is having an election of a new CD board member. To vote, contact Ron at 378-6621.

NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting will be **March 25, 2008**, Orcas Island (location and time TBA).