

# Pierce County Agriculture Advisory Committee (PCAAC)

## Meeting Minutes

April 28, 2021, 6:30pm-8pm

Zoom conference call

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6:30pm - Call meeting to order  
- Roll Call (Quorum), Introductions

### Attendance

Committee members:

Jerome O'Leary – Snowshoe Evergreen (Chair), Dan Picha – Picha Farms (Vice Chair), Tim Curtis – Sterino Farms, Micha Ide – Bright Ide Acres, Jim Kropf – WSU-Pierce County Extension Director, Carrie Little – Little Eorthe Farm, Paul Mosby – Mosby Brothers Farm, Dave Schactler – Eatonville Nursery

Dan Muir – Coordinator, Pierce County Agriculture Advisory Committee

Speakers:

Jennifer Arnold, Reciprocity Consulting, LLC

Mike Poteet, Pierce County Agricultural Planner

Helmut Schmidt, Pierce County SWM Floodplain Services Supervisor

Other Attendees:

Councilmember Amy Cruver – Pierce County Council, Councilmember Hans Zeiger – Pierce County Council, Grayson Crane – Pink Moon Farm, Amy Danberg, Jamison Grzyb – Pierce County Environmental Biologist, Judy Hurley – Assistant to Councilmember Dave Morell, Brian Johnson – Planning and Public Works, Anika Moran – Tacoma Farmers Market, Leticia Neal – Planning and Public Works, Alison Nichols – Pierce Conservation District, Mike Poteet – Pierce County Agriculture Planner, Tom Swanson - Office of the Pierce County Council, Hugh Taylor - Office of the Pierce County Council, Maxine Hill – SR162 Community Group, Allan Warren – Pierce Conservation District, Sarah Wilcox

### Meeting

Jerome O'Leary, Committee Chair, welcomed all to the meeting.

**Motion:** Mr. Picha made a motion to approve the April 2021 agenda. Ms. Micha seconded. All voted yes, none opposed. Motion passes to approve April 2021 agenda.

**Motion:** Mr. Picha made a motion to approve the March 2021 meeting minutes. Mr. Schactler seconded. All voted yes, none opposed. Motion passes to approve March 2021 meeting minutes.

### Public Comment

Maxine Hill, SR162 Community Group, reported that it is evident that the Department of Transportation will move forward with building a roundabout on SR162 at McMillin. Ms. Hill stated that the SR162 Community Group wants to see the agriculture community in the Alderton/McMillin Community Plan

area be successful. Ms. Hill requested that the agriculture community reach out to them if there is any way they can help ensure the farms in the area stay economically viable into the future.

### **Chair's Report**

Waved report to add time to the agenda.

### **Coordinators Report**

The Resolution for an agriculture/transportation corridor pilot project in the Canyon Road Regional Connection Project area is still in draft form. We should expect to see it sometime in the next month.

### **Elk Fencing Funding update**

Carrie Little spoke with WDFW and they are moving forward with discussions with landowners in the Orting area on Elk fencing projects. There is \$300,000 available for the area and there is no deadline to spend the funds this year.

### **Transportation Budget, Canyon Road Regional Connection Project**

Councilmember Zeiger reported that the Pierce County Council is reviewing the letter the PCAAC sent to the Council requesting an Agriculture Corridor be developed in this area. The pilot project would examine several key concepts. These include but are not limited to:

- Signs (designating the area, speed limits, etc.)
- Reduced Traffic Impact Fees for new farm businesses in the Corridor
- Traffic Control Plans for seasonal farm events
- Crosswalk locations
- Standards for shoulder widths, turn lanes, roundabouts, and bridge widths to support agricultural equipment.
- Level of Service criteria for roadside ditch maintenance
- Road lighting and sidewalk standards in agricultural areas

The PCAAC can expect to see a draft of the legislation soon.

As far as the Canyon Road Regional Connection Project itself, Councilmember Zeiger supports its completion and wants to see a win/win in relation to how the project impacts agriculture in the area. Pierce County has asked the state legislature for \$50M in funding for the project but that has yet to move through the legislature. Pierce County will also look for Federal funding. It is estimated that a total of \$260M will be needed to complete the construction portion of the project.

Mr. Mosby asked how many agriculture acres would be lost do to the construction of the project. Ms. Neal stated it would be 10.2 acres for the roadway improvements.

### **ARPA funding for agriculture**

Councilmember Cruver reported that \$250,000 will go to Farmers Markets, EBT and SNAP programs. Farmers are eligible for business relief loans and PPE. The next round of funding will examine the Ag Food Hub that the County Executive has requested. Mr. Swanson added that the first cut of ARPA funds extended some of what was funded through the CARES ACT of 2020. There will be more updates at the next PCAAC meeting.

### **Agricultural Drainage Task Force**

Mike Poteet reported that the Agricultural Drainage Task Force was formed through Resolution 2019-59s.

Jennifer Arnold of Reciprocity Consulting is the facilitator of the Agricultural Drainage Task Force. The Task Force consisted mainly of farmers but also included Drainage Districts and other agencies. The work was distilled down to three deliverables:

1. A Decision Support Tool which is a self-guided tool to help landowners and farmers find the proper agencies to contact for varying drainage issues.
2. A Drainage Network Analysis in the Clear Creek area
3. A Policy Issues and Possible Actions document

Mike Poteet presented the web-based Decision Support Tool, Helmut Schmidt presented the Drainage Network Analysis and Jennifer Arnold presented the Policy Issues and Possible Actions document. The policy focus areas are Proactive Planning for Ag Drainage, County Code, County Road Maintenance and Construction, Wildlife – Beavers & Elk, Reed Canary Grass. There are 12 possible policy actions and 20 separate action steps.

The Agricultural Drainage Task Force will review these documents further at their next meeting. A presentation will be made to the Pierce County Council in June.

### **New Business**

Paul Mosby would like to see the County Council have a Mission Statement toward agriculture in the County. Mr. Mosby would like to see greater promotion of Pierce County agriculture products in grocery stores, farm stands, etc. He would like to see an increase in marketing budgets.

Mr. Muir suggested creating a “visioning subcommittee” that could address topics like mission statements and advertising and marketing. He will work with interested committee members and schedule a meeting.

### **Meeting Adjourned**