

# Pierce County Agriculture Advisory Committee (PCAAC)

## Meeting Minutes

January 26, 2022, 6:30pm-8pm

Zoom conference call:

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6:30pm - Call meeting to order

### Roll Call (Quorum), Introductions

#### Members:

Jerome O'Leary – Snowshoe Evergreen (Chair), Dan Picha – Picha Farms (Vice-chair), Councilmember Marty Campbell – Pierce County Council, Tim Curtis – Sterino Farms, Ben DeGoede – DeGoede Farms, Micha Ide – Bright Ide Acres, Jim Kropf – Washington State University, Carrie Little – Little Eorthe Farm, Paul Mosby – Mosby Brothers, Dave Schactler – Eatonville Nursery, Becky Weed – Harlow Cattle Company

#### Support:

Dan Muir – Coordinator, Pierce County Agriculture Advisory Committee  
Tom Swanson – Office of the Pierce County Council

#### Speaker:

Letticia Neal – Planning and Public Works

#### Other Attendees:

Gary Chastagner – Washington State University -Puyallup, Councilmember Amy Cruver – Pierce County Council, Maxine Hill – SR162 Community Group, Mike Poteet – Pierce County Agriculture Planner, Ken Scholz – Snowshoe Evergreen, Rene Skaggs – Pierce Conservation District, Larry Stickney – assistant to Councilmember Cruver, Anitra Sudderth – farm in Alderton, Chelsea Talbert – assistant to Councilmember Campbell, Jenny Thacker – PRR.

### Approve current agenda and past meeting minutes

**Motion:** Mr. Schlacter made a motion to approve the January 2022 agenda. Mr. DeGoede seconded. All voted yes, none opposed. Motion passes to approve January 2022 agenda.

**Motion:** Ms. Little made a motion to approve the November 2021 meeting minutes. Ms. Weed seconded. All voted yes, none opposed. Motion passes to approve November 2021 meeting minutes.

### Public Comment

None

### Chair's Report

- Mr. O'Leary is involved with the Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan Advisory Committee. The committee is mapping and evaluating challenging areas for flooding and surface water management issues. Mr. O'Leary represents agriculture on the committee.
- There have been some preliminary conversations with members of the shellfish industry, Port of Tacoma, and elected officials on the possibility of replicating the Billion Oyster Project which is

restoring oyster reefs to New York Harbor. This could potentially be beneficial to shellfish farmers as well as providing environmental benefits.

### **Coordinators Report**

- Chair, Vice-Chair election.  
Mr. Curtis nominated Mr. O'Leary to continue as Chair and Mr. Picha to continue as Vice-Chair for 2022. Mr. Schactler seconded the nominations. The Committee voted yes to continue with the current Chair and Vice-Chair.
- Mr. Muir reminded committee members to identify their committee alternates if they so choose.
- Mr. Muir reviewed the past subcommittees of the Agriculture Advisory Committee including the policy subcommittee, agricultural drainage subcommittee, and visioning subcommittee. It is always possible to continue these subcommittees or create new ones.

### **Councilmember Campbell/Council Staff Report**

- Pierce County Council elected Councilmember Campbell as Vice-Chair of the Council.
- There has been some redistricting on Council District boundaries.
- Meat processing facility needs in the County continues to be discussed.

### **Agriculture Corridors Pilot Program - Corridor Lighting - Leticia Neal**

Ms. Neal reviewed the Resolution that established the Agriculture Corridors Pilot Program.

- This program is intended to identify, evaluate, and apply approaches to the design, operation, and maintenance of arterial roadways in identified commercial agricultural production areas.
- Agricultural production area identification signage shall be developed for placement in the right of way at arterial roadway entry points into agricultural production areas.
  - Ms. Neal presented examples of the signage that has been created and locations where the signage has been installed.
  - The signs are smaller due to right of way issues with larger sign footprints.
- Lighting – The project is implementing lighting technology that illuminates the roadway but reduces light pollution beyond the road specifically.
- Sidewalks – looking at ways to incorporate sidewalks while trying to minimize the overall project footprint.
- Farm equipment crossing – incorporating into bridge design.
- Traffic impact fee reviews – still evaluating. Must be presented to the County Council first.

Committee members commented on the small size of the signs and that it would be more effective if they were larger.

Committee members would like an opportunity to give more feedback on what was presented at the meeting.

### **HB 1856 – Adding Counties to the Voluntary Stewardship Program – Dan Muir**

- Mr. Muir reported that HB 1856 – Adding Counties to the Voluntary Stewardship Program, has been introduced at the state legislature. This would allow Pierce County to opt-in to the

Voluntary Stewardship Program. This is on Pierce County's legislative agenda through recommendation of the PCAAC. Several people testified in favor including Jerome O'Leary, Dan Muir and Councilmember Zeiger. We will continue to track the bill.

### **Looking forward, planning, and key issues for 2022– Dan Muir**

- Mr. Muir would like to develop a 1- or 2-page condensed version of the much larger “key issues” document that would focus the work of the PCAAC for 2022.
  - Reviewed current topics that could potentially go into this document.
- Committee will continue to discuss this document at future meetings.

### **Pierce County Agriculture Program Report – Mike Poteet**

- **Floodplains for the Future pre-application**
  - Pierce Conservation District is Ag Lead for proposed projects totaling \$1.4M, which includes funding for **Project Development, Design & Construction** in three areas:
    - Drainage Enhancement Practices & Infrastructure Planning and Improvements
      - Informed by Drainage Task Force recommendations for drainage management plans, drainage network analyses, culvert replacement projects, on-farm drainage consulting and remediation, and sub-surface drainage system repairs and/or installations
    - Invasive Vegetation Management
      - Increase funding from \$50K to \$200K to support riparian zone clean-ups and replanting with non-invasive species to reduce blockages and sedimentation
    - BMPs and Technical Assistance
      - Expand current services offered by PCD by providing funds to complement existing USDA-funded programs like EQIP
- **Current Use Program**
  - Assessor had proposed outreach to PCAAC regarding requirements (per RCW 84.34.145 & WAC 458-30-345) to evaluate farmland taxation protocols.
- **TDR Program**
  - Quarterly meeting of TDR Technical Oversight Committee will be tomorrow morning, Jan 27 at 10-11:30am. The Agenda and previous agendas and meeting minutes can be found on the TDR webpage.
- **Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update**
  - To begin in early 2022, with target completion date of July 1, 2024.
  - Agriculture and natural resources will be given more prominent consideration during this cycle.
- **Soler Farm project with Haugen Dairy, Pierce CD**
  - Funds available from PC Flood Control Zone District and SWM for PCD to begin making site improvements, including demolition of some structures and increasing site security with a Caretaker. Long-term goal is for an integrated project to reduce flood risk, maintain agricultural viability, and improve salmon habitat on the old Soler property and its adjacent parcels.
- **General support on inquiries** from existing and prospective landowners
  - Code enforcement support

## **Old Business**

none

## **New Business**

- HB 1838 - Protecting, restoring, and maintaining habitat for salmon recovery.
  - This Bill affects farmers/food production significantly as it would take land out of production.
- SB 5882 - Clarifying the existence of riparian stock watering rights.
  - PCAAC briefly discussed.

## **Adjournment**