

Pierce County Agriculture Advisory Committee (PCAAC)

Meeting Minutes

March 23, 2022, 6:30pm-8pm

Zoom conference call

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, 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:

Mike Lonergan – Pierce County Assessor-Treasurer

Other Attendees:

Dana Coggon – Pierce Conservation District, Councilmember Amy Cruver – Pierce County Council, Jamison Grzyb - Pierce County Environmental Biologist, Maxine Hill – SR162 Community Group, Sarah Howard – King Pierce Farm Bureau, Judy Hurley – assistant to Councilmember Dave Morell, Alison Nichols - Pierce Conservation District, Mike Poteet – Pierce County Agriculture Planner, Anitra Sudderth – farm in Alderton, Chuck Sundsmo – Master Builders Association, Chelsea Talbert – assistant to Councilmember Campbell.

Approve current agenda and past meeting minutes

Motion: Mr. Picha made a motion to approve the March 2022 agenda. Ms. Weed seconded. All voted yes, none opposed. Motion passes to approve March 2022 agenda.

Motion: Mr. Picha made a motion to approve the February 2022 meeting minutes. Ms. Little seconded. All voted yes, none opposed. Motion passes to approve February 2022 meeting minutes.

Public Comment

None

Chair's Report

Waived to add time to the agenda

Coordinators Report

- Mr. Muir reported that the Right to Farm subcommittee of the PCAAC met on March 16th and discussed the County's Right to Farm Code. The subcommittee is examining other Right to Farm Code examples and determining if there should be any suggested edits to the Pierce County Code. The next meeting is scheduled for April 13th, 6:30pm.

- Agriculture Corridor Pilot Program special meeting – April 20th, 7pm. This is a special meeting which will focus strictly on the Agriculture Corridor Pilot Program with the intent of receiving feedback from the public. All are welcome to attend.
- Regional Agriculture Development - Letter of Understanding. This is a letter with multiple government agency signatories from Thurston and Lewis Counties. The intent is for the signatories to collaborate and cooperate in the advancement of the agriculture industry in south Puget Sound/SW Washington. The PCAAC can consider if it wants to recommend that Pierce County participate as a signatory.

Councilmember Campbell/Council Staff Report

- CM Campbell reported that work continues to be moving forward on the study to examine regional meat processing capacity.
- Signage associated with the Ag Corridor Pilot Project is being installed.

Update on Legislative Issues – Tom Swanson

- Mr. Swanson reported the legislative session is officially over.
- Nothing has changed with the three Bills that the PCAAC has been tracking. None of these Bills passed.
- \$50M for the rural broadband initiative did make the budget.
- Money was included for salmon culvert replacement.
- If the PCAAC wants to recommend legislation to the Council for the next legislative session it should begin working on it in mid to late summer.

Acreage Values and the Agriculture Exemption - Mike Lonergan - County Assessor-Treasurer

Mr. Lonergan reported:

- By state law, the Assessor in each County in the State that has an agriculture exemption is supposed to have an advisory committee to the Assessor.
- The Agriculture Exemption should only tax agriculture landowners at the current use value of the agriculture operation as opposed to the 'highest and best use'.
- Pierce County does not currently have an advisory committee to the Assessor. The committee should be composed of 5 members.
- The Assessor needs to establish a new committee because the Agriculture Exemption has not been adjusted in many years.

Mr. Swanson reported:

- the work of this special committee is estimated to be around one meeting a month for 6 months followed by 2 annual 'update' meetings.

Motion: Becky Weed moved that the Pierce County Agriculture Advisory Committee nominate 5 people (with the possibility of associate non-voting members) to form the Advisory Committee to the Assessor. Paul Mosby seconded. All voted yes, none opposed. Motion Passes.

Mr. Swanson will prepare draft materials creating the new committee which can be review by the PCAAC at the next PCAAC meeting.

Pierce County Agriculture Program Report – Mike Poteet

- **TDR Program**
 - Background research on how to improve the Program continues, albeit slowly, with a focus on participation requirements, conversion rates, and pricing. Any changes must go through full Code revision process.
- **Meat processing study**
 - Scoping of the work is ongoing, with Thurston now more involved as partner entity
 - Regional Farmers' Call scheduled for 7pm on Monday, March 28
 - Reminders being sent on the 24th and 28th
 - Producers' survey being developed
 - WSDA compiling information from their Local Capacity Grants applications
 - USDA grant programs active and upcoming
 - NABC has been working on labor issues and will provide content and data once available
 - Still developing plans for processor engagement, but WSDA grant information will help
- **Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update**
 - Auditing of multiple sections (or 'Elements') has begun
 - Active
 - Environment
 - Open Space
 - Economic Development
 - Pending
 - Land Use
 - Critical Areas
 - Community Plans
- ***New Ag Planner position posted online***
 - *Have begun phone screening for possible full interviews.*
 - *Still accepting applications!*

Old Business

Mr. Muir reported he would work with Mr. Swanson and Mr. Kropf on exploring the possibility of the PCAAC doing hybrid meetings (in person/Zoom) at Allmendinger Center.

Adjournment