

Pierce County Agriculture Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes – June 26, 2019

Wednesday, June 26, 2019, 6:30pm-8pm

Allmendinger Center, WSU Puyallup Extension and Research Center
2606 W Pioneer Ave, Puyallup, WA 98371

Attendance

Committee members:

Carrie Little – Little Eorthe Farm, Becky Weed – Harlow Cattle Company, David Schactler – Eatonville Nursery, Jerome O’Leary (alternate for Paul Mosby – Mosby Brothers), Jordan Jobe (alternate for Jim Kropf – WSU-Pierce County Extension Director), Ken Scholz – Snowshoe Evergreen, Dan Picha – Picha Farms, Tim Curtis - Sterino Farms (alternate for Jake Sterino), Dan Hulse – Tahoma Farms, Councilmember Pam Roach – Pierce County Council

Dan Muir – Coordinator, Pierce County Agriculture Advisory Committee
Hugh Taylor - Office of Pierce County Council

Members of the public:

Judy Hurley – Assistant to Councilmember Dave Morell and a Drainage District 19 Commissioner, Amy Cruver – Assistant to Councilmember Jim McCune and Drainage District 13 Commissioner, Kate Devalan – PCC Farmland Trust, Sarah Wilcox – Farming in the Floodplains project. Brian Johnston – Planning and Public Works, Letticia Neal – Planning and Public Works, Melissa McFadden, Planning and Public Works, additional staff – canyon road regional connection project.

Meeting

Carrie Little, Committee Chair, welcomed all to the meeting.

Motion: Mr. Scholz made a motion to accept the May meeting minutes. Mr. Curtis seconded. All voted yes, none opposed. Motion passes to approve May minutes.

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

Public Comment

none

Chair’s Report

Report waived to add time to the agenda

Coordinator’s Report

Conservation Futures Citizens Advisory Board has a seat open for an agriculture representative. Please consider joining this committee or asking others if they are interested. Ryan Walker would like to share more information with the committee on the current status of Conservation Futures applications. Mr.

O'Leary suggested that in lieu of a meeting would Mr. Walker consider sending a summary out to the committee through email. Mr. Muir will inquire if this is a possibility.

Canyon Road Regional Connection Project

Letticia Neal – Transportation Improvement Manager and project manager for the Canyon Road Regional Connection Project.

Ms. Neal updated the committee on the new developments in the project since she last presented to the committee at the November 2018 meeting. Updates on the right of way and environmental permitting, new information on bridge that crosses the Puyallup River, update on outreach and community groups in the area.

Railroad crossing is now at 60% design level. Currently acquiring right of ways and properties on the railroad crossing part of the project. Final design is underway which will include stream relocation and culverts. Environmental permitting is underway which will include individual corps permit and a revised wetland delineation report.

River crossing – Two bridge designs are being considered. An at grade bridge and a grade separated bridge. The grade separated bridge would reduce travel time for through traffic but will greatly impact local traffic. It appears the County has chosen to go with the grade separated bridge.

Committee members expressed concern that the speed of traffic will increase through the agriculture area and this will be more dangerous for the local farms to operate their tractors and use the road and for customers who visit the farm stands.

It was brought up by the committee that if multi-million-dollar changes can be made to the bridge design then it should be relatively easy to accommodate the concerns of the farmers and residents as to the width of entryways to properties and other small items. These items can have a large impact on the efficiency of their farming operations. Ms. Neal stated that there is a discussion that is currently occurring with Sterino Farms on a development agreement. The committee feels it is important for other farmers and landowners to also be involved in discussions about what will be designed on their properties.

Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Committees (WREC) - Water Resource Inventory Area 10 (WRIA 10)

Allan Warren of the Pierce Conservation District represents agriculture on the WRIA 10 committee as a voting member. There has been a non-voting seat created for an additional representative on the WRIA 10 committee. The WRIA 10 committee is formed as part of the Hirst Fix, or ESSB 6091, which states that each committee should have "A representative designated by a local organization representing agricultural interests...". Instead, it appears that the Department of Ecology has been the agency that has appointed the ag reps and that they assigned Conservation District personnel in this role.

The Washington Farm Bureau has taken a position that this is against the law and that the Department of Ecology is not a local organization representing agricultural interests and should not, in good faith, appoint an agriculture representative to these committees.

The Ag Advisory Committee will want to consider if it wants to take a position on this.

The Ag Advisory Committee asked Mr. Muir to ask Mr. Warren if he would be willing to step down and work to get a farmer as a voting member on the WRIA 10 committee.

Old Business

The County Council passed a resolution, R2019-59, establishing the Agriculture Drainage Task Force. All the amendments that the Agriculture Advisory Committee suggested were in fact adopted by the Council.

New Business

County Lobbyist – Mr. Taylor distributed an example resolution of the County Council's declaration of priorities to the Washington State Legislature. The Agriculture Advisory Committee has several issues identified that could use the assistance of a lobbyist. The Committee should decide if it wants to submit a letter to the County Council requesting these issues be included in next years legislative priorities resolution.

Meeting adjourned