



OFFICE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION

Washington State
Conservation Commission
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APPROVED MINUTES

The Farmland Preservation Task Force met on October 1, 2008 at the Red Lion Hotel at the Park in Spokane, Washington. Chair Bob Hart called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Task Force Members

Bob Hart, Chair
Sheryl Cox
John Mankowski
Representative Joel Kretz
Jacob Anderson
Senator Jim Honeyford
Representative Larry Springer
Commissioner Rudy Plager
Commissioner Don Munks
Jeff Emtman
Lynn Bahrych
Lee Faulconer
Dee Caputo
Richard Thomason
Fred Colvin

Commission Staff

Mark Clark, Executive Director
Ron Shultz, Special Assistant to the Exec. Director
Josh Giuntoli, OFP Program Coordinator
Lori Gonzalez, Administrative Assistant
Eric Kopp, North East Regional Manager

Guests

Rich Baden, Spokane CD
Marianne McCerty, McCerty Consulting
Leonard Bauer, CTED
Jennifer Quan, Dept. Fish & Wildlife
Bob Hoff, Eastern Radio Network
Bob Lee, Senate Staff
Sheila Collins, Governor's Rep. from Eastern WA
Lambert Sanders, Local resident
Chris Bieker
John Larsen, WACD

Lisa Coverdale (Interim State Conservationist)

Approval of the August 6, 2008 Farmland Preservation Meeting Minutes

Rudy Plager moved to approve the presented minutes from August 6, 2008

Jacob Anderson seconded

Motion passed

Future of Farming Update

Lee Faulconer, Department of Agriculture & Task Force member

Continuing to compile information collected from the various focus groups that were held throughout the state earlier this year. (FOF) will have their second to last steering committee meeting tomorrow October 2, 2008 to work on the final outline in which the agency's intent to have the FOF report completed in December of 2008.

Lee mentioned and suggested the group look at the Department of Agriculture's Future of Farming website. There are several core documents on competitiveness, land use, agricultural landscape and many more.

RCO Projects Grant Ranking Update

Ron Shultz & Jacob Anderson

On the spreadsheet provided, Mr. Shultz pointed out to the group one of the Spokane tour stops from September 30th, Latah Creek which was ranked #15 as one of farmland preservation proposals submitted.

The groups presented their projects to the group and were ranked on a scoring process. They are not sure what is getting funded or how much until the budget is out and how much is in WWRP.

International Farm Transition Network Conference

Conservation Staff, Steve McGonigal attended the International Farm Transition conference in July of 2008 in Richmond, Virginia. Steve wrote a report on what he observed from other state programs and outreach education. Mark Clark asked the task force to read over the report and spoke of transition programs that are happening in other states and asked the TF to let him know if they have any thoughts or ideas to contact Josh Giuntoli Conservation staff or Mark Clark.

Chair Hart noted a couple programs that he was impressed and suggested a good way to reach out and educate farmers on transition programs is to utilize the network and facilitators at Washington State University Extensions. Another type of program Chair notes is utilizing skilled attorney's that practice law in our state of Washington that can help put these programs together that is legal within Washington state law.

Chair Hart Bob noted Northwest Credit Banks have been really supportive and have that contact with the local farmers and working with their families.

Regional Transfer of Development Rights Program (TDR)

Presentation Leonard Bauer, Community Trade of Economic Development

Mr. Bauer presented to the Task Force the program which is under Chapter 43.362 RCW (2/SHB 1636) which is: *The creation of a regional transfer of development rights marketplace will assist in slowing the conversion of rural agricultural and forested lands.* Mr. Bauer spoke of the CTED and Policy Advisory Committee. This committee meet to identify challenges for cities, identify state funding incentives, and consider creation of a regional TDR market mechanism.

CTED will be submitting their proposals to OFM by October 31, 2008. Final recommendations due to Legislature and Governor by December 1, 2008.

Heather Ballash from CTED created the power point. Questions regarding the transfer of development rights you may contact her or visit CTED's website at www.cted.wa.gov/growth.

CTED presentation can be found on the Commission's website at www.scc.wa.gov.

North East Regional Report

Josh Giuntoli Conservation Staff

OFP staff gave a report on the legislatures work session on agricultural building permit fees and provided an analysis of what staff was able to discover regarding the varying permit costs around all 39 counties. Staff also remarked that while the buildings are an important issue, other permits associated with agriculture are equally as high i.e. grading permits.

ACTION ITEM: Mark Clark and Conservation staff will draw up recommendations by next meeting on what it would look like if the State were to weigh in on the importance of having agricultural structures and reviewing the whole uniform building proposals.

Marketing of Washington Agricultural Products

Power Point by Lee Faulconer Department of Agriculture

WSDA International Marketing Program

Power Point by Rebecca Weber International Trade Specialist, Department of Agriculture

Ms. Weber introduced the program to the task force and what their goals which are: To increase sales for WA State's food and agriculture exporters by matching sellers with qualified buyers, addressing market access barriers to open or expand markets, and to follow the Governor's trade missions.

Ms. Weber also told the task force about their searchable database of food & agricultural supplier's website: <http://impact.wsu.edu.wasuppliers>.

Domestic Marketing & Economic Development

Power point by Eric Hurlburt

Mapping

Power point presentation by Josh Giuntoli & Ron Shultz

Josh Giuntoli worked with Luke Rogers of the University of Washington in regards to their current database, GIS layering maps. WSCC has contracted with UW to provide a series of maps specific to agriculture. Contract expected to be completed sometime around the end of September/early October of 2008. Mr. Giuntoli has been working with different departments utilizing different GIS maps in which will be used in the mapping layering project.

Maps will show acres in agricultural use as identified by assessor data, acres in agriculture classified under current use chapter 84.34 RCW as identified by assessor data, acres in

agricultural use, but not in current tax status, and acres in agriculture related use as identified by assessor data.

Lynn Bahrych moved to support the continuation for the mapping project of the University of Washington with the additional focus on the agricultural element and this project would have the endorsement of the Farmland Preservation Task Force.

Fred Colvin seconded

Motion Passed

Conservation Easement Account

Ron Shultz, Commission Staff

The Conservation Easement Account was established by the legislature in the Commission's statute (RCW 89.08.540) however, the legislature has never funded the account. WSCC requested approximately 15 million dollar budget request to OFP to help fund the Account. The funding of the account would provide grant funds to local government, conservation districts, and eligible nonprofit organizations to acquire easements in farmland for the purposes of maintaining these lands as working farms or forest.

Ron and staff came with 2-3 options/recommendations for the task force to consider:

1. Recommend to the legislature that the Conservation Easement Account be turned over to the Washington State Conservation Commission from the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program and oversee the program.
2. Instead of Recreation Conservation Office (RCO) group doing the rankings, OFP; possibly through the Task Force submit a ranked list for RCO for funding.
3. Option three, not listed in packet: Task Force would through the OFP and Commission provide the input policy framework developing the ranking criteria used by RCO or even various groups ranking projects currently needing to be funded relating to farmland preservation.

Action Item: Staff should start forming a structure on the 3 options presented of what this package would look like with the policies with the consideration it is different within the counties.

Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife Land Division Overview

Presented by Jennifer Quan & Don Larsen, Department of Fish and Wildlife

Presentation can be found on Commission website at www.scc.wa.gov

Conservation Commission Budget

Ron Shultz

Ron Shultz presented to the Task Force WSCC's budget items that were submitted to Office of Financial management that would be of interest to the OFP task. Items and amounts are

Working lands Initiative \$1,724,000, Conservation Markets \$200,000, OFP Grants \$600,000, Local Agriculture Planning Technical Assistance, Under Served Landowner Assistance, Community Based Stewardship (outreach) 3,716,000.00, Forest Landowner Assistance \$3,180,000, Conservation Easement Account \$15,426,000.

Proposed 2009 Quarterly Meetings

Mark mentioned due to the current budget crunch the task force could move to quarterly meetings. More discussion on moving the Task Force to quarterly meetings will be in December.

Recommendations Draft Outline for Farmland Preservation Task Force Report

Ron Shultz

Staff is looking at starting to draft the report of recommendations to the legislature in December. Ron Shultz provided a brief step-by-step of what the report would/could include and the timeline:

1. What is the Farmland Preservation Task Force
2. What happened at the meetings, tours, meeting topics
3. Factors leading to the loss of farmland:
 - a. Issues identified: Include issue briefing information used in the meeting packets
 - b. Each issue would have a series of recommendations

Timeline

- c. First draft by end of October
- d. Draft circulated via e-mail in first week of November
- e. Responses back after 2 week review

Draft report and recommendations will be discussed at December meeting in Wenatchee, WA.

Much discussion on how essential it is to mention water in the report. There is simply no sustainable agriculture if we have no water.

Next meeting agenda items

Regional reports- where we are on RCO grants

Have a Thurston County Update

Klickitat County Zoning Update

ACTION ITEM: Sheryl Cox suggested Ron, Mark or Josh Call Jack Fields to connect with Jim Sizemore w/Cattleman's Association.

Meeting adjourned at 4:23 pm