



OFFICE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION

Washington State
Conservation Commission
PO Box 47721
Olympia, WA 98504-7721
360/407-6200
Fax: 360/407-6215
www.scc.wa.gov

APPROVED AT MAY 2, 2010 MEETING

The Office of Farmland Preservation (OFP) Task Force met on December 2, 2009 in Spokane, Washington, at the Mirabeau Park Hotel and Convention Center. Chair Bob Hart called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

MEMBERS ATTENDED:

Chair Bob Hart
Jeff Emtman
Jacob Anderson
Lee Faulconer
Commissioner Rudy Plager
Sheryl Cox
Lynn Bahrych
Richard Thomason
Don Munks
Fred Colvin
Roylene Rides at the Door

COMMISSION STAFF:

Mark Clark, Executive Director
Ron Shultz, Policy Director
Josh Giuntoli, OFP Project Coordinator
Lori Gonzalez, Administrative Assistant

GUESTS:

Kelly Niemi
John Bolton, Jefferson CD
Richard Gries
David Brown, NRCS

ADMINISTRATIVE

Don Munks moved to approve the September 2, 2009, meeting minutes and Fred Colvin seconded. Motion passed.

CHANGES TO AGENDA

Because of travel constraints and timing, Chair Hart designated Executive Director, Mark Clark to cover the last few items on the agenda and adjourn the meeting.

The 2010 Meeting dates and locations agenda item was moved to the lunch hour so all members can participate in the discussion.

OFP ACTIVITY REPORT, RECREATION CONSERVATION OFFICE (RCO)/OFP GRANTS AND CHANGES RCO FARMLAND PROGRAM

Josh Giuntoli, OFP staff, reported to the Task Force that he had met with Mary Beth Lang, from Future of Farming (FOF) as an update between the two agencies and went through both the FOF and OFP reports and shared what had been completed over the year.

Mr. Giuntoli discussed changes to the RCO Farmland Program. Staff participated in the RCO process of revising scoring distribution. Two areas were changed. One was replacing the current environmental values criteria with new language and keeping the maximum points the same (22 maximum points) for environmental values. Second, was to exclude community gardens from Farmland Preservation Program eligibility.

Mr. Colvin moved for the Commission staff to write a letter to the RCO with the concerns the Task Force has regarding their criteria. Mr. Munks seconded. Motion passed.

STATE POLICY ON FARMLAND PRESERVATION

Chair Hart would like to get a clear direction today on the Task Force's stance on developing an Agriculture State Policy Statement.

Commission staff developed a one pager that summarized what had been discussed in the previous meeting in Okanogan, WA. Task Force members really liked the context and felt that it would be a very useful tool this legislative season, with a few suggestions; one of them was adding energy into the statement. Currently reads, agriculture resources of the land and water necessary for agricultural activity and the profitability of the farmer and rancher.

Discussion.

Mr. Munks moved to approve the draft Agricultural Policy Statement to include land, water and energy, remove the asterisks as staff recommendation as it is a Task Force recommendation and to move #5 to read #1 on the list and all others move down one. Jeff Emtman seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Mr. Faulconer abstains from the motion as an agency employee.

The Task Force agreed to recommend the Agriculture Policy Statement to the Conservation Commission Board.

DRAFT INDICATORS REPORT

At the Task Force's request at the September Meeting, OFP staff revised the indicators report that was presented and adopted at the September meeting. New detailed information had been added to show the various trends throughout the state. The Task Force liked the format presented. Chair Hart suggested the Task Force take a couple weeks to read through the document and if there were any comments or suggestions to let the OFP staff know.

NORTHWEST FARM CREDIT SERVICES (NWFCS)

Vice President, Wendy Knopp, gave a great presentation on the many programs available at NWFCS, how they analyze credit, what programs are available for special cases, and ended her presentation discussing farm succession plans. OFP staff will be following up with a contact at NWFCS to further discuss succession plans.

WORKING LUNCH

The Task Force discussed possible areas and dates for 2010. The Task Force will be meeting two times this year to cut down on travel costs. They agreed to do webinars and teleconferences if a discussion is needed.

Discussion on the importance of tours and hearing directly from the agricultural community should continue. Dates discussed: 1st or 2nd week in May and the 2nd or 3rd week in September. The Tri-Cities and East King County are options for the Task Force to consider.

NATURAL RESOURCE AND CONSERVATION SERVICE PROGRAM UPDATE

David Brown talked to the Task Force briefly described the requirements of the FRPP based on the national criteria and gathered a group of folks to incorporate the local expertise.

PILT/ESTATE TAX/MEAT INSPECTIONS/ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINION

Commission staff walked through issue briefs and updates on topics which were raised at the Okanogan task force meeting.

The first was the Payment in Lieu of Tax (PILT) program which compensates county's that have public land that historically would have paid property tax. PILT is an alternative to collecting WDFW violations which occur in the county. The issue brief describes the options available to counties and references a report done by the WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) on PILT and some of the gray areas they discovered.

The second brief related to estate tax. Staff provided a summary of Washington's estate tax law as was requested at the Okanogan meeting.

The third brief detailed legislation related to meat inspection. The proposed bill would establish a state meat and poultry inspection program for Washington State that is to be at least equal to those requirements imposed under federal law. The bill did not pass.

Finally, staff gave an update on the recent Attorney General Opinion related to the groundwater exemption. AGO 2009 No. 6 related to certain questions raised by the Kittitas County Prosecutor. The issue was the authority of counties and the Department of Ecology.

Meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.