

Clark County Agricultural Preservation Advisory Committee (APAC) Meeting #10

Sixth Floor Training Room of the Clark County Public Services Center
1300 Franklin St., Vancouver, WA. December 16, 2008, 6 to 8 p.m.

Meeting Summary

In attendance:

Committee members: Lorrie Conway, Clarence Petty, Tom VanLaeken, Bill Zimmerman, Mike Posey, Dan Roix, Doug Steinbarger, Ingrid Dankmeyer

Staff: Patrick Lee, Legacy Lands Program Manager

Facilitator: Doug Zenn, JLA

Introductions, Agenda Overview

Facilitator Doug Zenn kicked off the meeting with a review of the agenda.

Materials Review: General Comments/Observations

Bill Zimmerman asked for general clarification of the Resource Conservation Funding Board (RCFB) handout (Section 3: Evaluation Process.) He also expressed some disagreements with content in the second paragraph of the "Farm Preservation: Funding and Project Identification" hand-out.

Clarence Petty added that he would like to see information on the equine-related needs in the report. He provided for the group the Clark County Equestrian Survey conducted in 2004 as background information.

Final Review Open Houses

The group had no further comments to add to the Open House summary materials. The group felt the Open Houses provided a good representation of agricultural interests, which are documented in the summary information.

New Report Materials: Strategy Implementation and Matrix

Pat provided an overview of the Strategy Implementation document and the Lead Entity Implementation matrix. Doug Steinbarger expressed concern about whether the Conservation District is a good fit as a lead agency for the Agricultural Commission strategy. He recommended changing the designation of "1" for this strategy on the matrix to "2". Pat said this document was a first cut and suggested others look closely at the entities with whom they are most familiar and provide suggestions and additional feedback by email.

Dan Roix noted that it is good to point out others' (beyond Clark County) roles in implementation. Doug also suggested that it would be worthwhile in this text to note the power of partnerships in the ability to implement strategies.

Pat noted that a State study on the "Future of Farming" is supposed to be submitted in January.

New Report Materials: Farm Preservation - Funding and Project Identification

Pat explained that this document is part of the information needed to compete for agriculture preservation grant funds at the State and federal levels. All grants require some local match and finding local resources to compete is also important. Pat mentioned that a survey of Clark County voters had been completed in June indicating conservation priorities and willingness to pay for conservation strategies. Funding to keep working farms in production was among the higher priorities. Dan Roix indicated he would compile a summary of the survey questions relating to agriculture and forward to Pat for inclusion in the final report. The group briefly discussed voter approved levying and concurred with the survey results which indicated timing does not seem right at the moment to go to voters with a ballot measure.

Bill pointed out that land acquisition is only one of the tools needed. The report should be revised to indicate that it is only one of the strategies needed. Growth management policy at the state and local levels need to be addressed, or the other tools are less effective, he said.

Pat indicated that these new documents, once revised, would be included as appendices to the main report.

Appointments to Rural Lands Task Force

Pat explained that the upcoming Rural Lands Task Force would like to have several representatives of this group participate in the Task Force. Bill, Lorrie, Mike, Tom and Ingrid agreed to consider an appointment. Pat will follow up with candidates. The group also suggested contacting Anne Lawrence as a possible candidate.

Next Steps

The group discussed how to present findings from the APAC meetings. Doug suggested taking steps to ensure that the findings are viewed as a toolbox, and also viewed as a whole, not as individual pieces from which to pick and choose.

Others said they liked the balance between big and small operations and the diversity of industry types in the final products. The group noted that the final report should emphasize the overall benefits of having diverse and successful farming in Clark County.

The group reserved January 20 for its next meeting.