

# Clark County Agricultural Preservation Advisory Committee (APAC) Meeting #4

Sixth Floor Training Room of the Clark County Public Services Center  
1300 Franklin St., Vancouver, WA. June 17, 2008, 6 to 8 p.m.

## *Meeting Summary*

### In attendance:

**Committee members:** Lorrie Conway, Bruce Wiseman, Bill Zimmerman, Joe Beaudoin, Tom Van Laeken, Denise Smee, Sue Svendsen and Kathy Silvera.

**Staff:** Patrick Lee

**Facilitator:** Doug Zenn & Adrienne DeDona, JLA

**Public:** Jim Carlson, Fairgrounds Neighborhood.

### Introductions, Agenda Overview & Review Meeting Summary #3:

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

### Survey Results Overview:

Doug gave an overview of the farmlands preservation strategies survey that the group completed between meetings. The results were sorted by relative support: high, medium and low. The group agreed to review several from each category, then continue with additional items as time allowed. (The survey summary and complete results are included as appendix A and appendix B respectively) The strategies discussed and group recommendations (*in italics*) are below.

**High Ranking Draft Strategies** (high ranking strategies were supported by more than 80 percent of the participants):

- Strategy #13 – Work with the Cooperative Extension Service, local community colleges, and existing high school vocational programs to create training programs for new farmers. *The group agreed to roll it into Strategy 16 due to the County's investment in the 78<sup>th</sup> Street Property.*
- Strategy #15 – Establish position(s) within Clark County to serve as a friend of the farmer or “farmbudsman” to help farmers receive better, more efficient service from Clark County. *The group agreed to roll 15 in with 16, 17, 18 and 19.*
- Strategy #16 – Develop a demonstration Farm (or several farms on smaller sites) to serve as testing sites for research and technical assistance on high intensity urban fringe farming. The farm(s) would also provide public education to teach citizens about farming. *The group agreed to roll it in with strategy 13, 15, 17, 28, and 19.*
- Strategy #18 – Create a “Clark County Fresh” logo and marketing efforts. *The group agreed to roll it in with items 13, 15, 16, 17 and 19. The marketing tasks would give the “farmbudsman” position some focus and they all have some crossover with the proposed 78<sup>th</sup> Street Property Concept.*

**Medium Ranking Draft Strategies** (medium ranking strategies were supported by between 60 and 80% of the participants):

- Strategy #7 – Expand the existing tax incentive programs to provide further benefit to farmers. *The group agreed to keep this strategy, but it would need to be modified.*
- Strategy #9 – Assist Farmers in securing health insurance. 71.4% of members voted to keep this item for further consideration. *The group agreed that this item would be kept, but would be a low priority. The group agreed it is a good idea, but nearly impossible to achieve.*
- Strategy #10 – Continue to work with the Cooperative Extension Service to make sure Clark County farmers have dedicated agents for horticulture and livestock, and sufficient resources from a statewide dairy team *The group agreed that that this item be kept, but modified to exclude the statement about the statewide dairy team.*

**Medium/Low Ranked Draft Strategies** (low ranking strategies were supported by less than 60% of the participants):

- Strategy #1 – Acquire additional development rights for key farmlands. *The group agreed to keep this item*
- Strategy #2 – Use existing publicly owned land or acquire farmland to create a lease-back program to farmers. *The group agreed to keep this item. It's a good option to pursue, including making existing opportunities more available and to create a formal lease-back program in the County.*
- Strategy #3 – Develop a farm link program matching retiring farmers with current farmers or new farmers. *The group agreed that this item didn't need to be considered as a formal program since it was occurring already in an informal manner.*
- Strategy #4 – Utilize clustering, transfer of development rights, and density bonuses to encourage landowners to keep their lands in agricultural use *The group agreed to keep this item but modify it (remove the concept of clustering).*

**Special Presentation by Jim Johnson from the Oregon Department of Agriculture:**

Jim Johnson provided an overview of the State of Oregon's policies and procedures for preservation and regulatory requirements of farmland. A summary of the PowerPoint presentation is included as attachment C.

**Public Comment:**

Jim Carlson, Fairgrounds Neighborhood near 179<sup>th</sup> Street, shared with the group that he serves on the Three Creeks Advisory Council. Through that process, he has recognized that various groups are planning land uses based on their respective needs. He suggested identifying specific areas where farming should be actively supported in the county. He believes this message needs to be delivered to the Board of County Commissioners through all three of the active advisory committees: Agriculture Preservation Advisory Committee, Three Creeks Advisory Committee and the Rural Lands Advisory Committee.

**Next Steps & Final Notes:**

There was a short discussion by the group about refining a Rural Center map. It was suggested that a growth boundary be drawn around these areas. This could prevent sprawl and increase denser development within the rural centers. Transfer of development rights could happen if such a program existed. This would ultimately help preserve land in the outlying rural areas.

Pat commented that the inventory of available farmland is becoming more of a challenge. They are looking for a better resource to get data. The Farm Service agency should have this

information, but until just recently the information wasn't public information. It should be public information now, so Pat will try again to get the information from them.

The committee reviewed assignments to undertake before the next meeting.

- Send out the results of the survey – and submit concrete suggestions.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 15. The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.