

Solano County Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) Meeting
Wednesday, February 13, 2019
3:00 PM
501 Texas Street, Downstairs Conference Room
Fairfield, California 94534-9700
Phone 707-784-1310

MINUTES

Ag Advisory Meeting February 13, 2019

Meeting called to order at 3:13 by Russ Lester

Members present: Bruce Brazelton, Jennifer King, Ian Anderson, Mary Helen Seeger, Moira Burke, Jeff Dittmer, Russ Lester, Lisa Howard,

Members not present: Al Medvitz, Craig Leathers, Barbara Comfort,

Guests present: Jose Arriaga, Acting Agricultural Commissioner; Priscilla Yeane, Deputy Agricultural Commissioner; Christine Rogers, CAO's Office; Wendy Rash, NRCS; Morgan Doran, UC Ag Extension; Sharon Garrett, Agricultural Office Staff; Sarah Hawkins, Farmbudsman; Davina Smith, County Counsels Office; Mike Yankovick, County Planning/Resource Management

Ian Anderson moved and Bruce Brazelton seconded approving the agenda, passed unanimously.

Mary Helen Seeger moved and Moira Burke seconded approving the minutes with a couple of spelling corrections, passed unanimously.

New Business

A. Update on recent Board of Supervisor's activity

The Bos approved the zoning change for the Armory on Abernathy Road, which also allows the use permit to go forward. Mary Helen Seeger made the point to county staff that the AAC would like to hear about these sorts of situations making their way through the planning process more than the week or so before they get to the Planning Commission so the committee has more time to give input.

The Board also approved the Farm Tour date

Some discussion of a county flood plan being done in the near future.

B. Planning Commission

No update

C. Planning Report for Ag Tour Working Group

Refined the agenda and schedule. May have a budget issue related to the lunch costs going up, group would like to seek some outside sponsors to help cover that cost, shortfall is around \$500-600. The chair of the AAC was recruited to write a letter to support

sponsorship of the Farm Tour. Karen Ross has accepted an invitation to come on the tour and may have a small speaking role. So far we have about 15 rsvps to the tour invite.

D. Discussion of Committee Openings

Still need someone for grapes, and someone for small farms/processing openings on the committee. Asked again for people to recruit people they know who may be good on the committee.

E. Appoint the Board Officers for the 2019 Term

Russ Lester was nominated by Ian Anderson to be Chair for the 2019 term. Mary Helen Seeger seconded the nomination. Vote was unanimous in favor.

Moira Burke was nominated by Mary Helen Seeger to be temporary vice chair until a replacement can be talked into taking the position. Jennifer King seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous in favor.

F. Follow-Up on Ag Study

Letter of support was drafted and given to Sustainable Solano for their CDFA block grant
Letter was drafted regarding the zoning issue with the armory, and is available for review
Letter was drafted to support a new agricultural futures study. Jose read through the last one and found that there are still quite a few lessons and recommendations that are still relevant, asked the committee if a new one is needed quite so soon, or if a new one should be drafted more closely to when the next update to the general plan is done, so it is more relevant. Discussion of maybe asking for/supporting an update to the study done by the Agricultural Department staff instead of a full-fledged new study. A working group was proposed to look through the previous ag futures study to see what is relevant still, and what would be good to update in the near term. Planning on looking at asking for a new full report in five or six years. Will hold off on sending letter of support until the working group has a chance to look over the last report.

G. Follow up On ATC Zoning

See above

CONTINUING BUSINESS

a. Agricultural Updates

CASPIR- a new app rolled out by the state for pesticide complaints by farmworkers. The state will triage the messages to the counties, so the counties can follow up on pesticide complaints. Does not change any of the rules, the thought is that it makes reporting easier for communities that have a hard time reporting. Soft roll out right now, not much publicity around it.

Industrial hemp- has been legalized in the US. California is developing regulations around hemp currently. So far research institutes are the only ones who can grow it, until regulations get nailed down. Testing will be required of THC levels to make sure they aren't above a certain level. Fiber probably isn't valuable enough for many California farmers to switch over to it, but growing for certified seed might be an avenue to explore.

The Agricultural Commissioner position is open, the committee would like to be involved in reviewing applicants at some level. Chris Rogers will let the CAO know about the AAC's interest in being involved at some level. Maybe make sure a farmer is on the interview panel, and can give feedback.

Exotic Pest Update:

- b. Renewable Energy Working Group
No updates
- c. Farmbudsman
Presentation will be given to the BOS on February 26
- d. Bicycles
No update
- e. LESA progress
Sustainable Lands requests for proposals for grants. Wendy has met with Bill Emlign and LAFCO and they are supportive of moving forward with an application for a county wide LESA process. Still unclear what staff is going to be dedicated to the process since LAFCO has a very small staff right now, but because they are so involved in spheres of influence and shaping where development is going, they seem like possibly the best vehicle for this process. Concerns were raised that short staffing might influence how effective the tool actually ends up being.
- f. GSA Report
Next meeting will be March 14. Proposed schedule is up on the SQA web site for public review.

Technical committee- tentative schedule was released, committee asked for review time. Draft web site is up and being tested/reviewed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE

Next meeting will be March 13, 2019

Adjourn meeting at 4:42