

Solano County Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) Meeting  
Wednesday, January 8, 2020  
3:00 PM  
501 Texas Street, Downstairs Conference Room  
Fairfield, CA 94533  
Phone 707-784-1310

MINUTES

Ag Advisory Meeting January 8, 2020

Meeting called to order at 3:09 by Russ Lester

Members present: Russ Lester, Jennifer King, Lisa Howard, Craig Leathers, Barbara Comfort, Mary Helen Seeger, Bruce Brazelton, Moira Burke

Members not present: Jeff Dittmer, Ian Anderson, Al Medvitz

Guests present: Ed King, Agricultural Commissioner; Sharon Garrett, Office Assistant II (C); Sarah Hawkins, Farmbudsman; Chris Rogers, CAO Management Analyst (Principal); Wendy Rash, NRCS; Morgan Doran, UCANR; Priscilla Yeaney, Assistant Agricultural Commissioner; Traci Ellison, Solano Land Trust, Matt Tuggle, Engineering Manager Resource Management

Craig Leathers moved and Bruce Brazelton seconded approving the agenda, passed unanimously.

Craig Leathers moved and Mary Helen Seeger seconded approving the minutes.

New Business

- A. Update on recent Board of Supervisors activity  
Board of Supervisors discussed making an area of Dixon a priority conservation area.
- B. Planning Commission  
Russ Lester's lot line adjustment was approved, was the only item before the commission.
- C. Discussion of Committee Openings  
A current roster of members and vacancies was passed out to the committee to keep the openings that need to be filled at top of mind.
- D. Solano Capital Improvement Plans  
Matt Tuggle gave an informal presentation on the Solano Capital Improvement Plan, which is a 5 year plan, updated annually by Resource Management. For several years, federal money was pretty much the majority of funding for the county to improve roads because the gas tax was very low and didn't provide much funding. The county was able to put

more shoulders on roads to improve safety. Accidents have been halved and the accidents that have occurred have been less severe when they do happen on the roads where shoulders have been added. So, projects were helping with making county roads safer, but were limited in scope and variety.

The increase in the gas tax in 2017 made funds available for personnel, planning and maintenance projects beyond shoulder widening. For example, in Dixon, the accident rate was going up, and new funds allowed more signage, reflective striping, and LED enhancements to stop signs- which have led to a decrease in fatalities at these intersections.

Stevenson Bridge plan - there's an issue with the federal rules around rehabbing bridges with a certain type of rail, which is not architecturally pleasing at all. Rehab for the bridge will also include a thin carbon wrap and will give it about 70 more years of use. Due to Federal rules, a bridge to the side of the current bridge would mean both rehabbing the old bridge and building a new bridge, which would be prohibitively expensive at this point because it would have to fight competitively for money at the Federal level. Federal monies will only pay for destroying the old bridge. The county is waiting for some of the new rails to be developed—Texas is making some innovative versions currently—to see if more attractive rails can be obtained for the project before moving forward. The county is thinking that construction may be ready to move forward in two to three years. If the bridge obtained historical status, that would actually make funding harder, if not impossible, to get. Some alignment will be changed in the road approaches, although the current alignment acts as a traffic calming device, which is generally helpful from a safety standpoint, though not to people who are driving farm equipment. The structure of the bridge is actually still pretty good, though a bit weak seismically.

Resource Management is looking at doing some enhancement projects now-walking paths, historical preservation, beautification. Staff welcomes emails with recommendations/requests of projects around the county since they are able to look at a new pallet of projects. Several high traffic gravel roads are being paved. Acquisition project is under way to obtain right of way easements from willing sellers in areas of narrow roads with high traffic that could use widening to try to get some projects done where they can be done easily.

The county is putting traffic counters out on roads that are being used when 80 is backed up to see what can be done to keep those side streets from being used differently than what they were designed for.

E. February meeting needs to be moved due to Holiday

The February meeting will be moved to the 13th

## CONTINUING BUSINESS

a. LESA progress

Planning grant guidelines are out now which could fund LESA planning and technical assistance. Committee is in favor of funding being pursued, so Wendy will move forward on that.

b. Agricultural Updates

Priscilla Yeane is the new Assistant Ag Commissioner (Congratulations!).

Hemp update will be presented to the BOS in February or March.

Continuing to trap for citrus psyllid through the winter, and are sending out public information.

Making a push to get all bee keepers to register their apiaries with the county, as it is now required. BeeWhere is a new system to track where hives are being located and moved, so the county and growers can be aware of where there might be conflicting pesticide applications.

823 Nutria have been culled so far in the state since around 2016. Fish and Wildlife is bringing two dog teams from Maryland for a trial to track and eliminate nutria.

c. Farmbudsman

Succession planning class specifically for agricultural producers will be offered March 19, 2020 from 2-4pm at the Small Business Development Office, 505 Chadbourne Road, Fairfield. The class is free, sign up at [www.solanosbdc.org](http://www.solanosbdc.org)

d. Bicycles

Barbara Comfort brought up that cyclists aren't obeying traffic laws and is concerned that there is going to be fatalities as cycling volume goes up. Has noticed that there are more bikes riding at night out on country roads, which is concerning. Bruce noted that there is an app that uploads bike routes that people have ridden so people can learn about routes that may not be official/designated/sanctioned routes.

Barbara asked if the committee would be interested in writing a letter to the Board of Supervisors advocating for random traffic stops of cyclists who are violating rules. Barbara made a motion to send a strongly worded and urgent letter to BOS about this issue- that talking with them about it for several years hasn't improved behavior, and stronger action needs to be taken against non-compliant behavior. Craig Leathers seconded, there was discussion, passed unanimously

e. GSA report

Meetings were cancelled, but consultants are still working on drafting their report.

f. State Water Resilience Portfolio

No update

g. Ag Futures Study Working Group

Will be discussed at a future meeting

PUBLIC COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE

Traci Ellison, Solano Land Trust - there is funding available for ag conservation easements she welcomes discussing the usefulness of these with landowners. This led to a short discussion of land purchases and ability to appraise property values (especially large purchases in a short amount of time), and the changes of character of land use.

Next meeting will be February 13, 2020

Adjourn meeting at 4:50pm

Respectfully submitted by Sarah Hawkins, Farmbudsman and Sharon Garrett, Ag Office Assistant II (C)