

SOLANO COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday, March 10, 2021, 3:00 P.M.

Teleconference Meeting

Meeting called to order at 3:00 by Russ Lester.

Members present: Ian Anderson, Bruce Brazelton, Moira Burke, Barbara Comfort, Lisa Howard, Craig Leathers, Russ Lester, Al Medvitz.

Members absent: Jeff Dittmer, Jennifer King.

Guests present: Ed King, Agricultural Commissioner; Allan Calder, Resource Management Planning Manager; Morgan Doran, UCCE Advisor; Misty Kaltreider, Water and Natural Resources Program Manager; Priscilla Yeaney, Assistant Agricultural Commissioner; Amy Sharp, District 5 Board Aide; Teri Knight, NRCS District Conservationist; Dan Carey, farmer; Greg House, farmer; Chelsea Deussenberry, Superior Farms.

Agenda Approval: The agenda was approved with no additions or deletions.

Meeting Minutes: The minutes of the regular meeting of February 2021 were unanimously approved as prepared.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Update on recent Board of Supervisor's activity
BOS reduced building permit fees 30% for LNU fire reconstruction and approved plans to open a temporary assistance center in Vacaville for permitting assistance that will serve fire victims for the next 3-5 years. Supervisors Vasquez and Mashburn expressed interest in amending the County's MOU with DWR, or negotiating a new MOU, to ensure public access is allowed in and around Liberty Island tidal restoration projects.
- B. Update on recent Planning Commission activity
Lisa inquired about the status of a proposed 2 million gallon capacity winery at Rockville and Russell Rds. in Suisun Valley. Concerns include sourcing enough grapes for that scale of production and the applicant's ability to obtain a special use permit because the proposed capacity exceeds defined winery category sizes in the Suisun Valley Strategic Plan. Ag Department and Resource Management will report back on the status of the project application.
- C. Committee Openings
Ed has a meeting scheduled with Supervisors Vasquez and Mashburn to seek direction on pending new committee member applications.

D. Delta Conveyance Recommendation Letter to the Board of Supervisors

Al re-drafted the initial letter to include climate change concerns and emphasized that as an agricultural advisory body the committee can speak with authority on ag-related issues including affirming that a substantial reduction in surface flows through the Delta would negatively affect agriculture. Barbara recommended writing a succinct letter in defense of agriculture at this time with caution that this is an ongoing issue to monitor and the committee can continue to advise the BOS as needed. Moira suggested adding salinity impacts to ag, habitat protection and carbon sequestration. Russ also recommended addressing impacts of salinity fluctuations on restoration areas. Misty advised the committee to review the Delta Stewardship Council's *Delta Adapts* climate change vulnerability assessment and how it may be undervaluing agriculture. The *Delta Adapts* vulnerability assessment and forthcoming adaptation plan will be used to guide policy decisions as the Delta Conveyance proposal advances. The County will be commenting on *Delta Adapts*. Al suggested committee members make another round of edits to the letter and resubmit to Al and Barbara for final revision.

E. Yolo Bypass/Cache Slough Partnership – Ag Sustainability Work Group

The Ag Sustainability Work Group is developing a work plan to help entities support agriculture in the Bypass as various projects are implemented. Meeting commitment will extend through the next 4-5 months. The committee motioned and approved Al to serve as the AAC's representative on the Ag Sustainability Work Group.

F. 2021 Committee Officer Nominations and Elections

The committee motioned and approved to delay officer nominations and elections until April.

G. 2021 Committee Goals

The committee motioned and approved to postpone adoption of 2021 goals until April.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

A. COVID-19 Impacts on Solano Small Farms

No update.

B. Ag Futures Study

Will consider annual committee goals as a means to identify and prioritize issues for recommended inclusion in a new ag futures study.

C. Ag-Bicycle Issues

A scheduled bicycle advisory subcommittee meeting with STA, Public Works and AAC representatives was delayed until later in March. Will report out during the April AAC meeting.

D. LESA

Russ noted that new grant funding may be available to restart LESA work. Teri Knight, new Solano NRCS District Conservationist, introduced herself. Will continue to monitor.

E. Agricultural Updates - Ag Department Staff

The department has been advocating for Public Health to start mobile COVID-19 vaccine clinics for ag workers. In the meantime, vaccine appointments are available at the Solano Fairgrounds clinic.

This Spring the Ag Department will begin new pest detection surveys in cooperation with UCANR for two species of invasive shot hole boring beetles that are native to southeast Asia. These beetles have become established and caused widespread damage in southern California riparian areas and urban trees. UC research shows that almonds may be susceptible to infestation. Initial surveys in the county will run through October.

F. GSA

Board of Directors meeting scheduled for March 11. Draft Chapter 2 is available for review.

G. State Water Resilience Portfolio

No update.

H. Flannery Associates Land Acquisitions

No update.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE

Morgan Doran announced that UCCE will hire a new Director for the Capitol Corridor region. Morgan will transition back to his previous role as a full-time livestock advisor.

Next Meeting Date – April 14, 2021

Meeting Adjourned – 4:43 p.m.