

SOLANO COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday, April 14, 2021, 3:00 P.M.

Teleconference Meeting

Meeting called to order at 3:04 by Russ Lester.

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

Members absent: None.

Guests present: Ed King, Agricultural Commissioner; Allan Calder, Resource Management Planning Manager; Misty Kaltreider, Water and Natural Resources Program Manager; Jim Leland, Resource Management Principal Planner; Priscilla Yeane, Assistant Agricultural Commissioner; Amy Sharp, District 5 Board Aide; Dan Carey, farmer; Elena Karoulina, Sustainable Solano; Steve West, CHP.

Approval of the Agenda: Agenda approved with no additions or deletions.

Review/Approval March 2021 Meeting Minutes: March meeting minutes approved as prepared.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Update on recent Board of Supervisor's activity
 - Adopted LNU Recovery Strategic Plan addressing debris removal, rebuilding process, new infrastructure, future storm preparation and evacuation planning and flood control mitigation.
 - Adopted a public nuisance abatement ordinance that creates a more structured process for addressing nuisance complaints. Ordinance did not change the process for resolving ag-related complaints, previous process relying on ag commissioner and, if needed, the Ag Grievance Committee remains in place.
 - Adopted interim urgency ordinance prohibiting new commercial wind turbine construction in the unincorporated portions of the county.
 - Adopted resolution honoring John Pierson former Ag Advisory Committee member for his tenures as Farm Bureau President and Director and his long commitment to Solano agriculture.
 - The Board also acknowledged March 23 as Ag Day in Solano and March 21-27 as Ag Week.

- B. Update on recent Planning Commission activity
Have not met since last AAC meeting. Sunset Exploration Drilling Company is looking to reopen a natural gas well in Suisun Marsh. Project was approved many years ago for a different drilling company. Restarting the project may require revisions to the previously issued use permit and a Planning Commission hearing. Many concerns from community regarding potential impacts on water quality.
- C. E&C Winery Proposal – Derrick Lum; Resource Management Planning Staff
E&C filed a use permit application for a large-scale winery—defined as producing 100,000 gallons per year—on property they own off Rockville Rd. Contains all facilities of wine production from crushing grapes to bottling to delivery. Proposal has 3 phases: 1st phase 125,000 gallons per year; 2nd phase 500,000 gallons per year; and 3rd phase 2 million gallons per year. Forecasting it will take about 10 years to reach full capacity and build out. Also proposing to hold special events i.e. weddings, private parties, marketing etc. Project is in early stages of evaluation. Planning has requested more information from E&C regarding traffic and grape sourcing. As the project progresses it will go before the Planning Commission. Different use permit triggers may go into effect as the winery moves through the proposed phases including requirements for grape plantings and fruit sourcing and traffic mitigation.
- D. Delta Conveyance Recommendation Letter to the Board of Supervisors
Latest draft was sent to members for review. Al motioned/Barbara seconded to approve the letter and forward to the Board. Motion passed by unanimous vote. Ed format on letterhead, Russ will sign, and Ed will send the letter to the Board.
- E. Ag Advisory Committee Review Project
Ed met with Supervisors Vasquez and Mashburn regarding current committee vacancies and pending applicants in the queue. They have directed Ed and the CAO to undertake a review of the committee. Committee has been in place for 20+ years and they want to ensure it is positioned to succeed into the future. The supervisors asked that outside assistance be considered for this project. Ed made an initial inquiry to consultant Ag Innovations and is now waiting for them to return with a proposal/scope of work. Some committee members feel this task is the responsibility of the County/Board of Supervisors, not the ACC members who are volunteers. Concern was also expressed over putting a hold on approving new members until this review is completed. Ed will convey concerns to the Board and report back with more information about the scope of the project and committee vacancies during the May meeting.
- F. 2021 Committee Officer Nominations and Elections
Motion approved for Russ and Moira to continue in their current positions as chair and vice chair.

G. 2021 Committee Goals

Proposed motion to adopt the 2021 committee goals advising the Board on the following (with an included goal to improve communications to/from the BOS):

- Assess LNU fire recovery efforts and seek ways to assist ag recovery in the burned area.
- Monitor COVID-19 impacts on small farms.
- Promote agritourism as a valid method to preserve family farms.
- Begin consideration and planning for a 2022 Ag Tour.
- Compile recommendations of ag issues for inclusion in a new ag futures study.
- Monitor and contribute to the development of the groundwater sustainability plan.
- Work with Public Works, STA and CHP on projects to promote safe ag transport and bicycle traffic on rural roadways.
- Monitor progress of the proposed Delta Conveyance project.
- Participate in the Yolo Bypass/Cache Slough Partnership's Ag Sustainability Work Group.
- Advise the Board of Supervisors on inclusion of agriculture on the Natural Resources Agency's *Nature-Based Solutions* and *30 x 30* initiatives.

Motion approved with abstentions from Barbara and Moira.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

A. COVID-19 Impacts on Solano Small Farms

No update.

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

No update.

C. Ag-Bicycle Issues

Had a subcommittee meeting with Russ, Moira, Public Works and STA staff. Public Works is going to conduct traffic count studies beginning in May and will be doing work in Suisun Valley to widen shoulders along Rockville, Mankas Corner, and Abernathy Roads and on Winters Road. Also considering installing city-to-city destination signs for cyclists at key interchanges. STA providing funds to the county for wayfinding signs and holding outreach events. AAC to continue providing specific site recommendations to Public Works for road improvements. Committee may also consider putting together a map that highlights roads in the county that receive heavy ag traffic at certain times of the year. Continue to involve the Sheriff and CHP for additional outreach.

D. Agricultural Updates - Ag Department Staff

- Gearing up for summer phytosanitary inspection and pest detection programs. Hiring 8 seasonal ag aides—representing a 35% department staffing increase. Deployed most all European grapevine moth traps despite a significant USDA funding decrease.
- Public Health and the California Health Medical Reserve Corps have held 3 on-farm mobile vaccine clinics. Still needing to coordinate one at Everde (Hines) and

the Dixon Migrant Center. Looking to schedule a short webinar with the growers regarding possible side effects with employees receiving their second shot.

- USDA has designated most counties as disaster areas due to the drought. Nearly 60% of Solano is in extreme drought. Emergency loan information is posted on the ag department website.

E. GSA

Board has not met but plan is continuing to be developed.

F. Flannery Associates Land Acquisitions

Land Trust organized a meeting with Supervisor Mashburn and concerned Rio Vista ranchers to discuss ongoing land purchases.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE

None.

Next Meeting Date – May 12, 2021

MEETING Adjourned – 5:08 p.m.