



King County
Water and Land Resources Division
 Department of Natural Resources and Parks
 King Street Center
 201 South Jackson Street, Suite 5600
 Seattle, WA 98104-3855
206-477-4800 Fax 206-296-0192
 TTY Relay: 711

King County Agriculture Commission
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 11, 2024 – 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
Zoom Video Conference Call

Commissioners Present (Y/N)					
Kevin Scott-Vandenberg, Chair	Y	Andrew Ely	N	Leann Krainick	Y
Darron Marzolf, Vice-Chair	N	Janet Keller	Y	Shelley Pasco	N
Jessi Bloom	Y	Henna Khan	Y	Stacey Smith	Y
Henry Wong	Y				
Ex Officio Members Present (Y/N)					
Jordan Jobe, WSU	Y	Matt Mega, KCD	Y		
County Staff/Representatives Present					
Patrice Barrentine, DNRP	Richard Martin, DNRP		Josh Baldi, DNRP		
Joan Lee, DNRP					
Guests Present					
Alyssa Bowers, WSU	Shane Clyburn, farmers markets		Chenelle Tyack		

Meeting Summary

- **Actions: Approval of Agenda; Updates from multiple people; Proposed Move to New Section within DNRP WLRD; Approval of letter regarding Proposed Ordinance 2023-0310; Agriculture Strategic Plan adopted by the commission.**

Meeting called to order by Chair Kevin Scott-Vandenberg at 6:02 pm (no quorum); quorum at 6:21 pm

Roll Call/Announcement of Staff & Public (Kevin Scott-Vandenberg)

Roll call of Commissioners and announcement of staff and public guests was completed via Zoom’s chat function.

ACTION: Approval of Meeting Agenda (Kevin Scott-Vandenberg)

Moved by Andrew Ely, seconded by Stacey Smith, and passed unanimously.

No new Meeting Minutes were available (Kevin Scott-Vandenberg)

Patrice Barrentine, staff liaison, conveyed several sets of minutes are now pending and due the Commission and will work to rectify this as soon as possible.

Public Comment – Specific Agenda Item (Kevin Scott-Vandenberg)

Chenelle Tyack inquired about the Snoqualmie Valley Preservation Alliance, which Patrice said she would have a follow-up with her.

Updates (Patrice Barrentine, Richard Martin, Matt Mega, Jordon Jobe, Alyssa Bowers, Henry Wong, Leann Krainick)

Patrice gives updates regarding nominations progress, policy updates, and upcoming events.

Nominations Progress: 3 new voting commissioners added (Stacey Smith, Henna Khan, Leann Krainick). Nayab Khan and Henry Wong were two agriculture commissioners rotating off after this meeting.

Changes in King County Council (changes in districts 4 and 8). Terms for councilmembers Jeanne Kohl-Welles (District 4) and Councilmember Joe McDermott (District 8) have ended, replaced by Jorge Baros (District 4) and Teresa Mosqueda (District 8).

Policy Updates: Dow Constantine transmitted the proposed updates for the 2024 Comprehensive plan. This update includes the proposed Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County Community Service Area Subarea plan, along with amendments related to land use and zoning, development regulations in King County Code, and the Vashon-Maury Island Community Service Area Subarea Plan.

Proposed Ordinance 2023-0310: Increasing Minimum Wage in Unincorporated KC

Washington State Legislative Session (Jan 8 – March 7): important topics for this session include spending Washington’s carbon tax, tweaking the cap-and-invest program, and taking a stab at utility rebates.

Right to Repair Bill (HB 2059) is an act relating to supporting the servicing and right to repair of certain products with digital electronics in a secure and reliable manner to increase access and affordability in Washington. This includes agriculture equipment. This will be followed as it progresses in the legislature.

Patrice goes over upcoming events, which include the Washington State Farmers Market Association Annual Conference (February 23-24, 2024) in Leavenworth, Oregon State University Modernizing Home Food Preservation Conference (February 29-March 2, 2024) in Portland, WSDA Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training (January – March), and the WSDA Compost Reimbursement Program.

King County Ag Program (Richard Martin) gives updates on the farmland leasing program and FFF.

He introduces the commission intern, Lyn Tampi, then discusses updates on the King County Ag Program, specifically its farmland leasing program. There has been significant growth in the leasing program, however, tenant farmers and community organizations involved on farms must be heard and given power in making decisions on how farms are managed. This can be done at the end of each farm season with an exit interview that details what went well and what didn’t, along with what the farmers would like to see in the future. There is also a position that supports landowners that are having issues with navigating the regulatory permitting landscape. A vision will be developed for this position and will be recruiting someone by the second quarter of this year. Richard then touches on Farm, Fish, and Flood (FFF), which needs a new program manager.

King Conservation District (Matt Mega) gives updates on the community ag program and upcoming projects.

Matt Mega from King Conservation District (KCD) gives updates on the community ag program that helps startups, ongoing support, and big farm numbers. This year, four gardens were awarded the opportunity to start community ag with \$3,500 to buy the supplies they need. King Conservation District has established eight gardens that were also awarded \$1,000 for supplies they need. In the last quarter, 29 farm plans were completed, four dairy plan updates were completed, 121 site visits by the team, and around 600 total people were engaged in the agricultural world. The agricultural drainage project exceeded their target, with 13,000 linear square feet of maintained agricultural drainage lands. There were some projects that did not make as much progress, so KCD is hoping to make more progress in those areas. KCD is interested in bringing together partners to look at the opportunities on farmland and engage with farmers.

Jordan and Alyssa from Washington State University (WSU)

They give updates on an upcoming event, the Washington Soil Health Initiative’s Annual Conference and the FFA convention at WSU, and updates on their master gardener program. The master gardener program is moving into their extension office in Renton.

<https://washingtonsoilhealthinitiative.com/soilcon/>

<https://extension.wsu.edu/king/>

Henry Wong gives an update on an upcoming event, Food Biz Week in Oregon and in Washington.

<https://businessimpactnw.org/food-biz-week-tickets/>

Farm Bureau (Leann Krainick)

She gives updates from the Farm Bureau, with five priorities: watching labor costs, control burdensome taxes, protect access and promote expansion of affordable water supply for agriculture, support voluntary conservation efforts, and reducing transportation costs from farm to table. The Farm Bureau meets every third Monday, in-person and on zoom.

Farm, Fish, Flood (Richard Martin)

Richard gives updates for Farm, Fish, and Flood, which had a meeting in December that included the formal release of the final report for the Buffer Implementation Task Force with eight recommendations, revisiting the 42 recommendations from FFF 1.0 that led to FFF 2.0 and prioritizing actions that lag and understand progress being made. They also discussed the best available science, and how that influences potential changes to the critical areas, ordinance, and King County. FFF's next meeting will try to wrap up prioritization efforts to get a better idea on where stakeholders should be focusing resources as well as looking at the Agricultural Task Force's Strategic Plan.

New Business: Proposed Move to New Section within DNRP WLRD of Agriculture, Forestry, Incentives Unit in January (Josh Baldi)

The Agriculture and Forestry Incentives (AFI) Unit will be moved back to the Rural and Regional Services Section on January 20th. This is purely an organizational change. There will also be a new DNRP director soon. Josh Baldi gives comments about the history of the unit, that it has been in the director's office since 2015 because of Farm, Fish, Flood, along with other reasons, and discusses the benefit of being moved back into the Rural and Regional Services Section (RRSS) in that it can be easier to facilitate collaboration with AFI and the other units within RRSS. He finishes off by saying the organization change will not diminish the work being done within AFI.

Joan Lee adds on, saying that even though AFI was moved to the Director's Office, the unit was still invited to the section's meetings. She is excited that AFI will be rejoining the Rural and Regional Services Section.

ACTION/Old Business: Proposed Ordinance 2023-0310 (Kevin Scott, Patrice Barrentine, Commissioners)

Proposed Ordinance 2023-0310 establishes an hourly minimum wage for employees of employers in unincorporated King County, employees of certain county contractors, and county employees. It was introduced and referred by the Metropolitan King County Council. It has been deferred by the Transportation, Economy, and Environment Committee in October and November. A public hearing was held by the Metropolitan King County Council in November, and the next meeting will be on January 16th, 2024, at 9:30AM by the Transportation, Economy, and Environment Committee.

Patrice had done interviews with the commission members to determine concerns related to the ordinance and drafted a letter. The concerns addressed were the competitive nature of the labor pool right now, competition, the complexity of the agriculture sector, the overtime exemption, and challenges in recent years (COVID, high inflation, pricing).

This letter was reviewed. A motion was made by Henna Khan, seconded by Henry Wong, and approved by five of the commissioners, not approved by one. The letter will be presented by Janet to the committee.

See presentation online.

ACTION/Old Business: Snoqualmie Valley Agriculture Strategic Plan Adoption (Patrice Barrentine, Janet Keller, Jordan Jobe, Carrie King)

Patrice presented the completed Ag Strategic Plan. The plan would reflect the needs of the agriculture sector in the Snoqualmie APD, would require support for and utilization of the plan to raise awareness of agriculture, and implementation of the plan would relate to items connected with the entity/service provider. In this case, the commission may support and/or prompt implementation for County actions through advisory letters.

The public review draft required outreach, which had more than 10 outreach actions and events, multiple presentations, newspaper articles and newsletters, and social marketing campaign and social media messaging. This public review process received over 100 comments from about 25 different people and entities, along with in-person Q&A. Each action was reviewed, looking to take actions, exclude actions, and having discussions on actions. The purpose of the plan is to improve long-term productivity of farmland, bring more acres into production, especially food production, increase opportunities for farmers to develop the necessary infrastructure to support or increase their farm businesses, and the proposed acreage needs for a long-term viable agriculture sector. To do this, an assessment of specific farmland resource property needs and assets in the SVAPD was made along with creating an implementation plan for project improvements to land and water access. In the appendix, tables were created showing all the issue papers and priority rankings by the task force, to show links to and works to support other plans, programs, organizations, and agencies, and to show how each of the strategies matched with the key values and themes. There are five main steps of this plan,

including increasing infrastructure, improvements, and protection; expanding the APD; gain regulatory relief; ensure the predominant use of agriculture; and target 3,789 acres with FPP deeds.

The next steps for this are adoption of the plan by the task force member entities in the January meeting. The IOC would then transmit a letter to the executive, then the plan would be implemented balanced with fish and flood. The IOC would take up the BTF and ATF acreage recommendations and finalize them.

A motion was made by Janet Keller, seconded by Henry Wong, and the plan was unanimously adopted by the commission.

See presentation online.

Public Comment – General (Kevin Scott-Vandenberg)

There was no public comment during this period.

Concerns of Commissioners (Kevin Scott-Vandenberg)

There were no concerns of the commissioners during this period.

Meeting adjourned at 7:58 pm

Next Meeting(s)

February 8, 2024, 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm (Zoom Video Conference Call)