

Solano County Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) Meeting
Wednesday, December 12, 2018
3:00 PM
501 Texas Street, Downstairs Conference Room
Fairfield, California 94534-9700
Phone 707-784-1310

MINUTES

Ag Advisory Meeting December 12, 2018

Meeting called to order at 3:00 by Russ Lester

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

Members not present: Ian Anderson, Jennifer King, Al Medvitz

Guests present: Simone Hardy, Agricultural Commissioner; Jose Arriaga, Assistant Agricultural Commissioner; Christine Rodgers, CAO's Office; Wendy Rash, NRCS; Ruston Banks, Solano Sherriff's Office; Morgan Doran, UC Ag Extension; Sarah Hawkins, Farmbudsman; Mike Yankovick, Resource Management;

Buce Brazelton moved and Jeff Ditmer seconded approving the agenda, passed unanimously.

Bruce Brazelton moved and Moira Burke seconded approving the meeting dates for 2019

Craig Leathers moved Bruce Brazelton and approved the minutes with the addition of Sarah Hawkins to the list of guests. Russ Lester abstained, otherwise passed unanimously.

New Business

A. Update on recent Board of Supervisor's activity

Board put a moratorium for an additional 10 months and 15 day extension on marijuana events in the county, with the exception of one event at the County fair grounds.

B. Planning Commission

Currently an armory is in an agricultural tourist area- on Abernathy Road, right off of 80. Wants to get a zoning change to the ATC designation on his land, to allow for his mostly WWII military vehicles. The military vehicles are not in keeping with agricultural tourism that the site is zoned for. Through discussion, the AAC decided to send a letter to the Planning Commission with a cc to the Board of Supervisors, asking for a delay in the decision and expressing concern about the precedent this would set. Moved by Mary Helen Seeger and seconded by Moira Burke and passed unanimously.

C. Planning Report for Ag Tour Working Group

Tour will be agendized next month for the BOS. Refining the second round of save the date cards being sent out, as the official invites will be sent after the BOS approves the tour. Morgan will be doing a test drive of the route before the next meeting to make sure the timing works. The budget has been put together, and will be a part of the BOS approval in January.

D. Discussion of Committee Openings

Small Farm/grapes and Processing positions are open on the committee and it would be nice to have those filled in general and with some younger farmers in particular.

E. Review of Draft Letter asking the Board of Supervisors to consider updating the Ag Study for Solano County

Minor edits suggested. Craig Leathers moved and Moira Burke seconded approving the letter to be sent, approved unanimously.

F. Review of Draft Letter to BOS recommending support for the submission of a proposal to fund a Countywide LESA

Edits were suggested to the letter to make it more clear what is being asked for, and it was decided that Simone Hardy and Wendy Rash should meet with Bill Emlin of Resource Management to discuss putting the letter together to make sure his department is on board with supporting the project.

G. 2019 Meeting Schedule

Approved at the beginning of the meeting

CONTINUING BUSINESS

a. Agricultural Updates

Staff has been hired and are now working in an office in Dixon, so there's a second location where farmers can get permits, etc.

Department has received funding for weed management, and had a meeting to discuss getting more funding for weed abatement, with artichoke thistle as a priority.

Will be getting more monies for ag programs from the unrefunded gas tax fund, so it will be working on priorities to use the funds on. Ideas include programs the county used to do before the Great Recession, i.e. weed abatement, trapping, looking for exotic agricultural imports, legacy pesticide waste turn-in, etc. Also looking for suggestions from farmers- ideas can be sent to Simone or Jose directly.

Farm Bill passed the Senate, goes to Houses next. Will make hemp production legal in the whole country. Groundwater protection areas would be expanded under this bill as well.

- b. Renewable Energy Working Group- no update
- c. Farmbudsman- Update that the Solano SBDC will be going to a local host, to be announced.
- d. Bicycles- Officer Ruston Banks heard comments from the committee about fall bicycle ride issues- permitted rides lasting longer than they were supposed to, no officer presence, etc. Also talked about efforts to clean up and deter illegal dumping, helped by a trailer camera which will hopefully catch dumping in some of the areas where dumping is more common. There's a sheriff's department app that allows you to report from your smart phone instead of having to call dispatch, should you want to report a dumping incident without talking to people.

A request was made to have the bicycle committee meet again since there hasn't been one in a while.
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- e. LESA progress- see letter above
- f. GSA Report- TAC met- small group as many were away sick, so didn't discuss much. Grant money is finally coming in to the GSA, and some adjustments of boundary areas as groups realize that they have different goals and needs.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE

Mary Helen Seeger shared some information from the American Farmland Trust and Solano Land Trust women's farmer learning circle

Russ Lester's farm has won its second Governor's Environmental and Economic Leadership Award (GEELA), which is California's highest environmental stewardship award- quite an achievement!

Next meeting will be January 9, 2019

Adjourn meeting at 4:40