

PORT COMMISSION WORKSHOP MEETING – Wednesday, July 10, 2024

The Port of Port Townsend Commission met in workshop session at the Point Hudson Pavilion Building, 355 Hudson Street, Port Townsend, and also online via Zoom.

Present: Commissioners Hasse and Petranek with Commissioner Hanke (Excused)
Executive Director Eron Berg
Deputy Director Eric Toews
Director of Finance and Administration Connie Anderson
Port Recorder Joanna Sanders

I. CALL TO ORDER (Rec. 00:00:00)

Commissioner Hasse called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

II. SHORT FARM PRESENTATION (Rec. 00:00:45)

Deputy Director Eric Toews gave background on the Commission's process of establishing the Farm Steering Committee and their scope of work, including the Port's goals and objectives. He reviewed the plan's structure and implementation matrix listing actions for future decision by the Commission. The Initial Conditions Report prepared by the University of Washington is available on the Port's Short Farm webpage.

Farm Steering Committee Representatives Al Latham, Kellie Henwood and Martin Mills were present to discuss their experience. Al Latham spoke of the committee's process to produce this high-level plan view and desire for select representatives to continue in an ad hoc format. Ideally two or three farmers could establish leases starting in September possibly even with adjacent farmers. Kellie Henwood thanked the Port for its involvement in supporting local agriculture. She spoke about the committee's detailed work and discussions on the plan strategies, the need for oversight of farm operations, and exploration of land access leases. Martin Mills indicated this initial effort resulted in a concise plan and is also just the beginning of developing a long-range strategy. Of urgency is gathering a knowledgeable ad hoc group to mobilize supportive resources and assist on a maintenance plan, including on-site supervision, and various ground maintenance so that meaningful transitions can occur without a backward slide. Similar to other Port operations, potential lessees will work to develop their ideas. County Commissioner Heidi Eisenhour, as participant in this process, recognized the value of being able to consult with the Short family concerning ongoing farm operations.

Eric Toews recognized the near-term urgencies and the importance of equitable access regarding leases. By September, some leases are expected to be in effect and the Port will have gathered subject matter experts for continuity of farm operations and development of that short-term plan with assistance by UW student Will Palmer.

Commission discussion included excitement over the work product, interest in management and caretaker costs, reviewing the plan in more detail, and discussing potential opportunities. Farm Steering Committee thoughts were that annually or semi-annually, the Port might decide to convene the Farm Steering Committee to check in on the challenges discovered and allow a chance for additional input and public comment.

Katie Cote of the UW spoke about the rich experience for the university students working on this project to produce actionable results which would not have been possible without the pragmatic perspective of farmers and conservation contributors.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT (Rec. 00:50:50):

Tony Kastella asked about accessing the expertise of Washington State University in the process. Kellie Henwood responded with a brief explanation of WSU/Landworks Collaborative. Al Latham also spoke about Conservation District/

Katherine Lee spoke about the lack of plan references to wetlands and the overarching wetland regulation. She had concern over the soils that do not drain.

Debra Kronenburg offered land use legal assistance related to the functional stream on the property as well as vital habitat for salmon restoration.

Roger Short spoke about the soils, the farm's lack of suitability for cultivation, and unknown data on salmon using the stream.

Tom Ehrlichman provided written comment and asked for delay of plan adoption until there is an assessment on wastewater before exploring a slaughter facility. He was also interested in property access from West Valley Road.

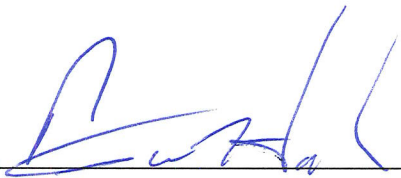
IV. COMMISSION ROUNDTABLE (Rec. 01:10:55): - none

V. ADJOURNMENT (Rec. 01:11:00): The meeting adjourned at 10:44 a.m., there being no further business before the Commission.


ATTEST:



Pamela A. Petranek, Secretary



Peter W. Hanke, President



Carol L. Hasse, Vice President