

Farm Steering Committee May 29, 2024 Minutes

The Farm Steering Committee met at the WSU Extension Office Kivley Center, 97 Oak Bay Road, Port Hadlock. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Members present: Janet Aubin, Martin Frederickson, Keith Kisler, Laura Llewellyn, David Seabrook, Kellie Henwood, Al Latham, and Martin Mills **Absent:** Rebecca Benjamin

Other Attendees: Heidi Eisenhour, Jefferson County Drainage District and Erik Kingfisher of the Jefferson Land Trust

Staff: Deputy Director Eric Toews, Administrative Assistant Joanna Sanders, and University of Washington Katie Cotie.

UW Students: Will McPherson, Abby Newbold, Tony Charvoz, Ben Hagen, and Greg Suskin

Port Commissioners: Petranek and Hasse

Introduction by Eric Toews on the purpose of the meeting for Committee discussion on farm goals, activities, and to formulate recommendations. Provided were a list of consolidated goals and activities, an implementation matrix of priorities to date, including timeline, cost, and partners as well as a farm plan template. Comments from Al Latham and David Seabrook were provided.

Discussion and Deliberations: The Committee discussed and worked through revisions to the plan's purpose, key challenges, and opportunities in the plan template. Katie Cotie and Eric Toews recorded changes. Initial comments were that the challenges are well stated. Alternative language to "hub" was recommended. There was consideration for ongoing management and maintenance responsibilities (managing canary grass especially in the creek channel, mowing and/or grazing as the map reflects a lot of area to be grazed, and maintenance of infrastructure such as roads, buildings). Toward the goal of improving riparian habitat, the topography of the farm remains a challenge with water quality and dissolved oxygen issues in areas that are not draining. A long-term desire or opportunity is adding cold storage. Tenant/lessees might not maintain leased space like a property owner so staffing or dedicated farm staff oversight is imperative. If habitat goals are a factor, then not all the acreage would be farmable. Leasing land (with water) is an opportunity as is maintaining the water right. "Incubating" needs partner business for providing access to farmland and agriculture. Add information on the Port's purpose, so that it is clear that this is for long-term economic development.

To be added under Goal 1 Support, Sustain and Expand Local Ag, was food system resiliency. In particular, processing that does not require a commercial kitchen. A question that arose was whether the residential water right and well could be reclassified under a different use.

There was considerable discussion and ideas for a better location for seasonal hunting, public access, and birding rather than under Goal of Support, Sustain and Expand Local Ag. Ideas were to put under Goal 2 Restore Habitat (as a new strategy 2.3), to move it instead to Opportunities, or move Hunting to Goal 3 and add strategy 3.4 support license and use agreements to provide a return on investment and provide examples on what those would include. Another option

considered was to add a strategy under each goal related to hunting, birding and public access. Alternatively, if we are going to talk about a land access strategy, then put these in Goal 4. Erik Kingfisher spoke about creating best management practices with assistance by NRCS and Conservation District.

When considering what types of farming to include, suggestions were greenhouse or nursery production, forestry activity including, but not limited to “agroforestry, orchard, or paludiculture, and secondary forest products.”

Additional changes included the following: Under Strategy 2.1 remove “regulators” in that section, research the potential to remove re-meander to improve Chimacum Creek Habitat and Switch 2.2 and 2.3 to be first on list before 2.1.

Goal 4 might include a provision for Port staff to consider short-term leases. Add a strategy pertaining to short-term leases to ensure the farm is actively worked. Regarding Strategy 4.2, consider retaining a farm caretaker or farm manager. Address in the matrix existing housing and the unused or unrealized development right.

Eric Toews summarized the next step would be to prepare a tracked changes version for next week.

Next public meeting: June 5, 2024. The meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.