

## **Farm Steering Committee June 5, 2024 Minutes**

The Farm Steering Committee met at the WSU Extension Office at 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, Rebecca Benjamin and Martin Mills

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

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

**UW Students:** Malia Wing, Ben Hagen, Will Palmer, Tony Charvoz, Abby Newbold, Clelie Fielding, Aziz Alazon, Absent: Justin Patterson, Greg Suskin, and Will McPherson

**Port Commissioners:** None

**Introduction/Review of Draft Plan/Implementation Matrix.** Eric Toews provided a brief introduction to the changes made on the draft plan since the last meeting and asked the committee to continue its discussion and deliberation on the draft plan. The implementation actions matrix reflects what was heard and will reflect near-term and long-term action items.

Discussion and additional changes proposed:

**Strategy 2.2.** include an approach for Developing a Habitat Restoration Plan, and sub-bullet points of the specific funding sources and potential funding.

**Strategy 2.3** simplify bullet two to read, “Develop a habitat restoration and management plan”. And add sub-bullets under coordination with agencies to reflect wetland specialist and engagement of technical advisors, and a separate bullet adding engineering firm to develop a feasibility and alternatives analysis. Rebecca Benjamin agreed to provide her suggested edits.

Aside from NOSC and Jefferson Land Trust, include Conservation District, and Jamestown and Port Gamble S’Klallam tribes

**Strategy 2.4** Question of adding grazing and haying and possibly definition of arable crops. There was discussion of how this sits under the goal of Restoring Habitat and then agreement to delete this strategy and move paludiculture under Strategy 1.

**Vision:** There was discussion and refinements to the last sentence to now read, “The ag-supporting infrastructure developed and maintained by the Port supports the processing, storage and distribution of local ag products, and the property has been wisely stewarded to help nurture farmers in our community.”

**Key Challenges:** The second bullet was revised to read, “site conditions that contribute to flooding and poor salmon habitat.”

**Opportunities:** Discussion ensued about how best to seek input from the larger community about what infrastructure would be of value (as reflected under Strategy 1.1 bullet two). Although the matrix reflects an update of the Farm Census, there was discussion of prioritizing a near term food system assessment and ag assessment and/or partnering on additional research (research needs of the ag community and seek funding or assess the feasibility and funding) to reflect restaurant owners, fisherman, and other layers of food production. The airport light industrial park might be adapted to accommodate cold storage. “Starting with Ag community, participate in and collaborate in food system assessment efforts?” Food system survey assessment would build broader support for a cold storage facility than an agriculture needs assessment although recognizing that the pressing needs of farmers need to be at the forefront. WSU might assist on ag needs while the Port works on the broader economic needs in the food system (larger food system asset mapping with Port collaboration, but not necessarily leading the effort).

An edit under Strategy 1.2 sub-bullet 5 to read, “an area that could provide small and large parcels for lease.” Consider changing “change to benefit new and existing farmers”.

**Matrix:** Eric Toews received support for grouping the list by topic and including a note that projects could be added. The Committee discussed whether to recommend the Farm Steering Committee continue as an advisory or ad hoc committee for ongoing research and community collaboration efforts. Feedback was that work might best be accomplished from October to March and it could be a combination of existing and new players depending on what is needed. There was support for both an ad hoc committee and regular check-in with a farm advisory group.

**Map:** Additional revisions included the legend has stream buffer but it is not in the map, Naylor's Creek needs to be redrawn, and there is land not yet characterized. There was support for Eric Kingfisher to assist with a revision or new map to reflect areas best suited for different uses. It might also incorporate Roger and Sandy Short's map notations reflecting infrastructure, including water and electrical systems, soil types, reference points, and the flooded areas as captured in the drone footage. Potential lessees will want to reference this map. If the Port provides stakes/ribbon, Martin Mills offered to stake areas as mowed to put points in GIS.

After confirming, the Committee supported this recommended plan, Eric Toews agreed to follow up on specific changes as discussed, including follow up with Rebecca Benjamin, matrix and map revisions. There was acknowledgement of the following needs: site caretaker with eyes on the property, conversation with the Shorts on the duration of their residence, and new signage or gating until a public access plan is completed. Due to member availability, Martin Mills, Kellie Hanwood and Al Latham were available to assist with the presentation to the Port Commission on July 10 with the final plan to circulate before July 10.

The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.