

LARIMER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

March 11, 2015

Present: Gail Meisner, Debra Herston, Greg Schreiner, Tim Clouse, Jason Brothers, Lew Gaiter, Brenda Gimeson (liaison), Charles Gindler (liaison), Nic Koontz, Minerva Lee, Jon Slutsky, Bill Spencer (liaison), Zach Thode, and George Wallace.

Absent: Ted Swanson, Val Manning, Sarah Fox, Karen Crumbaker (liaison), Sam Adams (liaison USDA NRCS), Jennifer Bornhoft (liaison), and Richard Seaworth.

- I. Gail Meisner called the meeting to order at 12:35 p.m. Introductions were made.

- II. Consideration of minutes from January 14, 2015 meeting was postponed since several members will be late, and we didn't have a quorum at that time. Gail gave some updates:

The Board of County Commissioners approved the work plan of the Ag Advisory Board as drafted. They would all like to attend one of our fall meetings. It was suggested that such a meeting be scheduled Thursday, November 19 since our regular meeting falls on a holiday. The members agreed to the date and it will be scheduled.

The Poudre High School FFA had a very successful fundraiser, selling 850 tickets and raising over \$30k to enable them to attend the National Convention to be held in KY. Gail has been invited to be a part of their advisory board. She encouraged the AAB Education Committee to support their efforts. There are 62 student members of this new chapter of FFA.

Rocky Mountain Farmers Union: Jeni Arndt replaces Randy Fisher. She is available to attend the July meeting to discuss the legislative session. The members liked that idea and asked it to be scheduled.

Gail will now meet with Lew Gaiter bi-monthly on Mondays prior to our AAB meetings. If members have any items they want discussed, please let Gail know.

It was 1:15pm before Gail could call for consideration to approve minutes from January meeting. Minerva moved for approval, and George seconded the motion. Minutes were approved.

III. At 12:45, the group broke into committees.

IV. Lew Gaiter arrived promptly at 1:00p. He also said the BCC would like to meet with AAB in the fall, and was pleased that a meeting time had already been established.

One item that is a “hot button” issue at this time is the Flood Plain regulations. The Planning Committee is meeting now to discuss. In LaPorte, if a structure has a substantial loss (over 50%), that structure cannot be rebuilt. A wording change is requested to include “damaged by flood” to distinguish damage cause if damage was due to some other peril. Zach asked about buildings within a building envelope situated beside a river, as they were once built for access to water. Lew differentiated between Flood Fringe vs Floodway within the Flood Plain, and said structures could not be rebuilt within or relocated to the Floodway. Temporary vs Permanent Pump Stations to divert water were suggested, as there is an Ag exemption for these structures.

Lew asked about burn bans. During April/May the Sheriff’s office always have calls concerning this issue. George and Zach told him we had worked on revisions to that regulation last year. Gail said she had trouble accessing the permitting site, and finding the line for linear irrigation ditches vs acreage/piles measurements.

Gail asked about a problem a farmer at Taft/Drake has concerning taxation of his property as a vegetable grower and hog farmer.

George said Ted Swanson had volunteered to be a liaison for the AAB to the Open Lands Board and he should apply soon for a position on that board.

George would like to meet with the BCC to summarize their work with the Poudre Basin Watershed Working Group, and Brenda said she would set up the meeting; and any member of the AAB could also attend.

Due to scheduling conflicts, Lew will call in for the next two meetings at 1:00p

V. The group broke into Action/Focus Groups, followed by more time for committee work.

Gail explained to the groups her expectations for the Action/Focus Groups: Each group should have something to take to the Board of County Commissioners to inform them of their assigned issue. She would like to see one go by June 1st. Greg would like to see deadlines set for each group to have a presentation ready, and request a time with BCC. Deadlines were set as follows: Animal Cruelty—ready by May 15th and notify Brenda to schedule for after June 1st. GMO--ready by June 1st and notify Brenda to schedule by June 15th. This will give Brenda two weeks to schedule. Brenda reminded members that the focus was to inform the BCC about issues and how they pertain to agriculture, not to take a stance on one side or the other.

VI. Action/Focus Groups reported about their discussions.

GMO vs Organic: Discussion will focus around misinformation; the different sectors, GMO/NonGMO, Conventional; Base crops vs veggies. GMO Labeling, which started it all.

Animal Cruelty: Focus on Ag Production animals using an overview of the realistic issues: Nutritional/Husbandry; Production Practices, food/water/shelter; Handling, electric prods vs Temple Grandin methods; Perceived cruelties but common practice in industry, such as castration, branding, de-horn.

VII. Committees reported their discussions.

Education – Wants to help Poudre HS FFA such as possible farm tours for them to see and maybe intern in one of these areas. Further member discussion stated ideas from whether our job was to influence decision makers and provide these opportunities, or to only support other organizations. Discussion then centered on the purpose of the Education Committee. Current website is not being utilized and would be time consuming to create and maintain—value uncertain. Future discussion, possibly at next meeting, to be about this committee’s purpose and focus.

Water & Land Conservation– Working with Poudre Water Sharing Working Group and need to come up with approach to maintain land and water connection. Would like to get a representative on the Open Lands Board to continue to monitor what is going on in the County. This will be an important mission. The Open Lands Master Plan is an element of the Larimer County Master Plan. Would also like to find a way to identify land and water owners interested in conserving—may work with ditch companies to get lists. There are a couple of entities that might be interested in buying—water utilities and Open Space. Members actively working with the City to see about a pilot program for new farmers. Nic will provide an update at future meeting. EIS is the next steps of NISP and that will likely be in July. This Committee is ready to go to Commissioners with report on Water Sharing Working Group and ask for support of upcoming programs. Brenda to work with George to schedule.

Legislative– Provided updates on five bills that were active in this session. 1) S Platte Study Recommendations—more in Weld County than Larimer. 2) Animal Cruelty—billed killed. 3) Income Tax Deduction for Leasing Out Ag Asset 4) Flex Bill—given farmers right to transition use of water rights without designating a specific use—killed for speculation 5) Small Business Cottage Food Act – increases the net revenue a producer can sell per product from \$5000 to \$20,000 each year.

VIII. The meeting was adjourned at 3:12pm.