

## ALAB MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 5, 2020

### **MEETING HELD REMOTELY DUE TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS – ALL ATTENDED EITHER BY WEBINAR OR CONFERENCE CALL**

**Members and Alternates Attending:** Lisen Bonnier, Daniel Chavez, Jerry Diefenderfer, Sarah Kramer, Dick Nock, Jean-Pierre Wolff, Jutta Thoerner, Krista Burke, Melissa Danehey, Mary Bianchi, Kaylee Ellis, Dan Rodrigues, and Mark Battany

**Staff Attending:** Marc Lea – San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture; Kylie Hensley – San Luis Obispo County Department of Planning and Building

**Absent Members:** Craig Pritchard, Tom Ikeda, Mark Pearce, Don Warden, Butch Yamashita, George Kendall, and Claire Wineman

**Guests Attending:** Brent Burchett – San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau, Jerry Reaugh – EPC Water District

**1. Call to order, introductions, quorum determination:** A quorum of 8 voting members was required. A quorum was reached and the meeting was called to order by Chair Rodrigues at 5:05

**2. Open comment: (for items not on the agenda):** none

**3. Review/approval of March 2020 meeting minutes:**

**Motion:** Nock - Approve March 2020 minutes.

**Motion 2<sup>nd</sup>:** Bonnier

**Approved:** Unanimous by all voting members. Abstain: Krista Burke and Jerry Diefenderfer because they were not in attendance at the March 2020 meeting.

#### **4. ALAB Membership Updates – Marc Lea**

- A reminder, as voted on at our last ALAB meeting in March, there is a new ALAB chair and vice-chair. Dan Rodrigues will serve as the chair for the next 2 years and Lisen Bonnier will take over the Vice-Chair role.
- On April 21, 2020, Jerry Diefenderfer was appointed by Supervisor Arnold to serve as the District 5 ALAB representative. That position has been unfilled for quite some time so Jerry takes over the rest of that term which runs through 1/1/21. He can serve another term if he and Supervisor Arnold agree to that once the current term expires in January 2021.
- Dan Rodrigues, Claire Wineman, and Butch Yamashita will all be re-appointed to ALAB for another four-year term at tomorrow's Board of Supervisors Meeting.
- Direct Marketing/Organics Representative: Jutta Thoerner's term has expired. She can continue to serve until that position has been filled. Larry Kandarian, who is the current alternate for that industry group, has indicated that he is willing to take over that position so we will try to get him officially appointed in the coming month.

- The only vacancy remaining at this point is the Strawberry Representative which has never been filled since it's inception a couple of years ago.

## **5. Updates from Ag Department staff**

- Although the Ag Department offices are closed to the public due to the COVID-19 crisis, there is still staff available to assist growers and industry with any essential services. Contact the main office by phone or email if you have any questions or need to request services from the Ag Department.

## **6. Presentation/Discussion: Proposed Ordinance Amendments affecting the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin and the Agricultural Offset Program**

Kylie Hensley, San Luis Obispo County Department of Planning & Building

- Kylie Hensley from County Planning gave a presentation titled "Water Neutral New Development Phase 1.5 Ordinance Amendments"
- That presentation is available at the following link:  
<http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Agriculture-Weights-and-Measures/All-Forms-Documents/Information/Meeting-Minutes/ALAB-Meeting-Agendas,-Minutes,-Presentations/2020/WNND-Phase-1-5-Presentation-5-4-20-ALAB.aspx>
- A hearing on these ordinance changes is expected to go to the Planning Commission on June 11, 2020. A hearing date for the Board of Supervisors is still to be determined.
- Comments should be submitted by Friday, May 8, 2020 to Hensley. That will not be the last opportunity to provide comments, but comments made after May 8<sup>th</sup> will not likely be incorporated into the Planning Commission hearing presentation or staff report.
- Jerry Reaugh had input on the fallowing program. He and the EPC water district consider fallowing to be an essential component for the development of the GSP program over the Paso Robles groundwater basin.
- Jerry Diefenderfer had questions regarding the changes in the boundaries for both the Paso Robles groundwater basin and the area of severe decline.
- Kylie mentioned that the changes that were made in the basin boundaries were done in order to align with the boundaries established in the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). Affected property owners (both those being added or removed from the basin boundaries or the areas of severe decline) will be notified by the County. Kylie also mentioned that if a basin boundary bisects a parcel the entire parcel would be subject to the ordinance.
- There is a link available to access an interactive map for reviewing specific parcels or geographic areas: [www.slocountywwcp.org/prgwb](http://www.slocountywwcp.org/prgwb)
- Lisen Bonnier had a question regarding the fallowing program.
- Hensley explained that growers would not lose eligibility for the Ag Water Offset program if they allowed fields to go fallow for up to five years. Ag Water Offsets can still be applied for during a fallowing period, and current irrigation is not required to be eligible for the program.

## **7. Presentation/Discussion: COVID-19 related impacts on local agricultural businesses**

Brent Burchett, San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau

- Brent gave an update on the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis to the local agricultural industry, including the negative impacts to various agricultural sectors. Negative impacts include: reduced food service sales, reduction in export demand, reduction in demand for fresh produce, increased concerns for employee safety, and broken transportation and supply chains,
- There are a few positive aspects of the crisis for agriculture, including a renewed appreciation for agriculture and for local farmers markets, reduced fuel prices, and increased grocery store sales, but those positive aspects are greatly outweighed by the serious economic impacts that the COVID-19 crisis is causing for local growers.
- The Small Business Administration (SBA) announced a clarification today confirming that farmers, ranchers, and agri-businesses are eligible for the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program. Growers and ag businesses are also eligible for the Paycheck Protection Program.
- There will be resources available for farmers through the Farm Service Agency (USDA). Brent recommends keeping all records and evidence of impacts to purchasing contracts or other declining sales.
- Brent discussed the local SLO County START Guide, which included input from numerous stakeholders from the agricultural industry. Brent also mentioned that this is a fluid draft and is not set in stone; input can still be offered and received.
- <https://www.readyslo.org/en/index.aspx> (The START Guide does not appear to be currently available online.)
- Marc Lea mentioned that if there are any farmworkers exhibiting COVID symptoms then local testing is available. Contact SLO County Public Health for details. Marc also mentioned that there is the possibility of the state obtaining PPE to be distributed at the local level for agricultural workers. There are no details available at the time, but if PPE did become available it would like be routed through the local Ag Department and then made available to local growers, Farm Labor Contractors, and other ag businesses.

## **8. Presentation/Discussion: Permanent Ordinance for Industrial Hemp Cultivation in San Luis Obispo County - Board of Supervisors Hearing on May 5, 2020**

Marc Lea, San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture

- Marc reminded the ALAB board that the permanent hemp ordinance goes to the Board of Supervisors tomorrow, and summarized all of the involvement ALAB has had with this issue, including the actions of the ALAB Hemp subcommittee summarized in the following document: [http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/getattachment/aee78394-9d73-45cd-a76d-fde5b7b454af/ALAB-Subcommittee-Results\\_Updated.aspx](http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/getattachment/aee78394-9d73-45cd-a76d-fde5b7b454af/ALAB-Subcommittee-Results_Updated.aspx)
- Marc reminded the ALAB members of the input that ALAB provided to the Planning Department in a letter dated December 18, 2019. Marc mentioned that few of the recommendations that ALAB provided were codified into the proposed ordinance by the Planning Department or the Planning Commission. [http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/getattachment/af9bd4a3-b41b-4e93-85be-277b46acc5f8/2019\\_12\\_18-ALAB-Hemp-Comments-to-Planning.aspx](http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/getattachment/af9bd4a3-b41b-4e93-85be-277b46acc5f8/2019_12_18-ALAB-Hemp-Comments-to-Planning.aspx)
- The proposed ordinance was reviewed and discussed, including the changes that were made to

the draft ordinance since the last version was discussed at the Planning Commission hearing in late January 2020: <https://agenda.slocounty.ca.gov/iip/sanluisobispo/file/getfile/121940>

- ALAB also discussed the County of Planning & Building Department's staff report written for the May 5, 2020 hearing; in that board letter, it was discussed that there is the possibility of including a hemp cultivation exclusion zone of up to 1-mile from a Village or Urban Reserve Line. This 1-mile setback was not a recommendation, but it was listed as a potential option that the Board could enact.
- ALAB had no additional comments or recommendations regarding tomorrow's Board hearing on industrial hemp cultivation.

**9. Future agenda items:** none identified

Chair Rodrigues asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**Motion:** Wolff

**Motion 2<sup>nd</sup>:** Bonnier

**Approved:** Unanimous by all voting members.

**Next meeting – June 1, 2020**

Meeting Adjourned 6:26 pm

Respectfully submitted by Marc Lea, San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture