

ALAB MEETING MINUTES

Monday, February 4, 2019

Members and Alternates Present: Lisen Bonnier, Tom Ikeda, Dan Rodrigues, Sarah Kramer, Don Warden, Jutta Thoerner, Krista Burke, Kaylee Ellis, Craig Pritchard, Jackie Crabb, Butch Yamashita

Staff Present: Marc Lea and Lynda Auchinachie – San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture, Brian Pedrotti – San Luis Obispo County Department of Planning & Building

Absent Members: Mark Pearce, David Pruitt, Dick Nock, Claire Wineman, Jean Pierre-Wolff, Mark Battany

Guests Present: George Kendall – Upper Salinas-Las Tablas RCD, James Green – Farm Bureau, Patricia Wilmore – Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance, Daniel Jones – Central Coast Greenhouse Growers Association

1. Call to Order: 5:05 pm Vice Chair Rodrigues

2. Open Comment:

- Patricia Wilmore announced the Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance had selected Joel Peterson as their new Executive Director. Joel brings considerable marketing expertise and local experience to the position.
- Sarah Kramer indicated that The Wine History Project was having a ZIN-SLO exhibit presentation at the Farm Bureau February 7, 2019, from 5 pm to 7 pm. Libbie Agran will be the guest speaker.
- Marc Lea shared information regarding the California Renewable Energy Agriculture Program grant opportunities. March 5, 2019 is the deadline. March 5, 2019 is also the date for the UCCE Ag Innovations Conference in Santa Maria. The conference is organized by Surendra Dara and further information is included below.
<http://cesantabarbara.ucanr.edu/files/298787.pdf>

3. Previous Minutes – December 2018

Motion: Warden Approve December 2018 minutes.

Motion 2nd: Bonnier

Approved: Unanimous by all voting members.

4. ALAB Members – Organizational Updates

- Patricia Wilmore indicated there was an Ag-At-Large alternate position opening on the WRAC.

5. ALAB Governance: Marc Lea gave a series of updates on recent and upcoming membership items.

- Lisen Bonnier has been reappointed by Supervisor Gibson to serve another four-year term as District 2 Representative. George Kendall will be the new Upper Salinas-Las

Tablas representative once his appointment is approved by the Board of Supervisors (BOS). There are three new alternate members: 1) Jackie Crabb representing Coastal San Luis RCD, 2) Mary Bianchi representing Upper Salinas-Las Tablas RCD, and 3) Butch Yamashita representing the Nursery industry.

- The Chair and Vice Chair positions are two-year terms and there is one more year remaining for each.
- ALAB members agreed there was no need to track non-electronic mailing addresses.

6. Update/Discussion: Agricultural Worker Housing Ordinance Update

Brian Pedrotti, San Luis Obispo County Department of Planning & Building

- Brian Pedrotti indicated that the BOS initiated the update of the agricultural worker housing ordinance in 2017 with direction to provide for a streamlined process and eliminate unnecessary barriers. Brian has worked with stakeholders, community groups, and other interested parties to develop a new framework to improve both the Inland and Coastal land use ordinances.
- A public draft of the new agricultural worker housing ordinance will include the opportunity to have up to 12 single family style residences or group quarters housing up to 36 workers with a ministerial permit. The chart identify qualifying crops has been simplified and the 5-mile distance limitation for group quarters has been eliminated. Ag worker housing is also proposed to be allowed in the Residential Rural land use category.
- ALAB members discussed opportunities for using facilities for ag tourism activities, expanding what could be permitted through a ministerial permit, and recommended changes such as qualifying group quarters at 2-3 employees per acre for irrigated row crops.
- A public review draft with a 60-day comment period was going to begin February 5, 2019.

7. Updates from County Agriculture Department staff – Marc Lea

- Crop report surveys are now due. All 2018 crop report data that growers can provide is appreciated.
- The Agriculture Department will be contracting with a consultant to prepare another “Economic Contributions of San Luis Obispo Agriculture” study based on 2017 data. A final report is anticipated summer 2019.
- Approximately 100 cannabis projects have been submitted to the Planning Department. The majority of the permit requests are for indoor and/or outdoor cultivation. Only a handful have been approved. In anticipation of increased cannabis production within the county, the Agriculture Department is going to hold a workshop for cannabis cultivators regarding pesticide rules and weights and measure requirements. The workshop will be held on February 20, 2019 from 3-5 pm.
- Based on the number of phone call inquiries, there appears to be considerable interest in growing industrial hemp for CBD. Regulations still need to be in place before commercial hemp can be planted. The fee and testing regulations are being developed

by California Department of Food and Agriculture and are out of local control. Commercial growers must use seeds from an approved source.

- County Planning, in conjunction with the Office of Emergency Services, is updating their Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Agricultural pest infestation and plant disease are identified in the existing study.
- WRAC will be discussing a draft letter to the BOS in which there is a recommendation to convene a joint ALAB and WRAC subcommittee to identify strategies to optimize water use and groundwater recharge in agricultural settings that are appropriate for our county.

8. Future Agenda Items: Wildfire prevention on agricultural land.

Next meeting – March 4, 2019

Meeting Adjourned 6:25 pm

Respectfully submitted by Lynda Auchinachie, San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture