



**COUNTY OF PLACER
AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION**

JOSHUA P. HUNTSINGER
Agricultural Commissioner
Sealer of Weights & Measures

AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION MEMBERS

Tony Aguilar	Larry Jordan
Patricia Beard	William Morebeck
James Brenner	John Nitta
Dan Macon	Stewart Perry
Wayne Vineyard	

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MINUTES

PLACER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION MEETING

January 13, 2014

Members Present: Tony Aguilar, Patricia Beard, James Brenner, Larry Jordan, Dan Macon, William Morebeck, John Nitta

Members Absent: Stewart Perry, Wayne Vineyard

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- I. CALL TO ORDER**
 - II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA FOR JANUARY 13, 2014 AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 9, 2013. Motion to approve: *Macon/ Aguilar /MPUV***
 - III. PUBLIC COMMENT – None**
 - IV. UPDATE 2014 WATER SUPPLY – Sue Sindt and Chip Close with Nevada Irrigation District, Tony Firenzi with Placer County Water Agency, Brad Arnold with South Sutter Water District**

Representatives of each water agency presented water storage statistics, snow pack data, and drought contingency plans. Although water storage was below normal, the most critical concern was the lack of snow pack in the Sierras.

After presentations, the representatives answered questions from the Commission and public.

- V. ACTION ITEM: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM EVENT CENTER SUB-COMMITTEE – Dan Macon, William Morebeck, Patti Beard**

Dan Macon presented the sub-committees recommendations to the Commission.

Josh Huntsinger recommended clarification of \$1,000.00 agricultural production per acre, and reword 3b to protect the Right to Farm Ordinance.

Following discussion, the Commission took the following action:

Macon/Aguilar/MP 7 – 0 to adopt the recommendations with corrections.

A letter will be sent to the Planning Department informing them of the Commission's recommendations

VI. REPORTS

A. Agricultural Marketing Program – Josh Huntsinger

- PlacerGrown met with Merlot Marketing mid December to discuss strategic planning for 2014.
- Will invite PlacerGrown to the February meeting to give annual update.

B. Economic Development Board – Lyndell Grey

- The Placer County Economic Development Board is holding a public workshop on setting its priorities for 2014..
- Attended an Economic Summit, in November. Agriculture has become part of an overall look at California's economy.

C. Livestock and Natural Resources Farm Advisor – No Report

D. Horticultural and Small Farms Advisor – No Report

E. Agricultural Water Supply Issues – No Report

VII. AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER'S REPORT – Josh Huntsinger

- Time to renew pesticide permits.
- There are no new proposed cuts in CDFA budget.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS (NON-ACTION ITEM) – None

IX. ADJOURNMENT



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January 17, 2014

TO: Placer County Planning Commission

FROM: Josh Huntsinger, Agricultural Commissioner

SUBJECT: **Comments and Recommendations on Draft Zoning Test Amendment for Agricultural Event Centers**

On January 13, 2014, the Placer County Agricultural Commission unanimously (7-0, 2 absent) approved the following recommendation:

The Agricultural Commission feels that credible, commercial agriculture must be the primary use of a parcel under consideration for a conditional use permit for an Agricultural Event Center (AEC). The AEC itself must be a secondary use. We also believe that the Agricultural Commission's role regarding land use is to protect and enhance the productivity of agricultural land in Placer County. Finally, we want to ensure that other county agencies continue to differentiate between events on agricultural properties (like farm tours, sheep dog trials, etc.) and Agricultural Event Centers (physical facilities and land conversion). Based on this foundation, we have a number of recommendations for the Planning Commission to consider. Furthermore, a number of these recommendations will obviously require review by County Counsel.

With respect to the proposal developed for consideration by the Placer County Planning Commission, we have a number of concerns relative to the underlying principles stated above. We support the size limitation contained in the proposal (10, 20 and 40 acre minimums on agriculturally-zoned parcels with associated event center sizes). Unlike Williamson Act determinations (which provide tax benefits in exchange for an agreement not to convert the land from agriculture, and which require a one-time determination of potential agricultural productivity), conditional use permits convey a right to engage in certain activities. To ensure the integrity of associated agricultural properties, and to protect important farmland resources, we have the following recommendations:

1. To ensure that agriculture is and remains the primary use on a parcel that is submitting an application for an AEC, we recommend that an initial finding and ongoing verification be made regarding the level of agricultural production on the property. We recommend that an applicant must demonstrate a minimum of \$1,000 gross in agricultural production per acre. The initial determination could be made via inspection (similar to Williamson Act determinations), or it could potentially be made by requiring submission of a current IRS Schedule F. Ongoing verification could be made in a similar manner. We do not feel that a one-time determination at the time of application is sufficient.
2. As we've all experienced, the sale of an agriculturally zoned property does not ensure that the property will continue to be actively farmed or ranched. Consequently, we recommend that this conditional use permit run with the ownership of the property rather than with the land. This would require that a new owner demonstrate their commitment to agricultural production as the primary use of the land.
3. We feel that the Agricultural Commission should consider all proposals for AEC conditional use permits. Among the findings that the commission would need to make (in addition to 1 and 2 above) to recommend the approval of the permit are the following:
 - a. The building and parking footprints must not occur within current agricultural production areas on parcels designated as prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, farmland of local importance or unique farmland by the California Department of Conservation.
 - b. The operation of the AEC will not jeopardize Placer County's Right to Farm Ordinance. AEC-related activities shall not be protected by the county's Right to Farm ordinance.
 - c. The AEC is supportive of surrounding agricultural production.

With respect to road impacts, the Commission feels that the issue is best addressed by other agencies.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments from the Agricultural Commission regarding the draft Zoning Text Amendment for Community Event Centers.

cc Placer County Agricultural Commission
George Rosasco, Supervising Planner
Michael Johnson, AICP Agency Director