



**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

April 13, 2015

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

Members Absent: None

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- I. CALL TO ORDER** – 7:00 pm by Wayne Vineyard
 - II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA FOR APRIL 13, 2015 AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 9, 2015.** Motion to approve: Aguilar / Jordan /MPUV
 - III. PUBLIC COMMENT** - None
 - IV. AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLY UPDATE** – Nevada County Irrigation District and Placer County Water Agency

Nevada County Irrigation District – Chip Close and Sue Sindt

- Water Storage better/Snow pack worse than last year.
- Forecast is 20% of Normal.
- Carry over goal is 110 AF but can be above with a purchase from PG&E combined with conservation efforts.
- State curtailments expected to be pre 1914 as the current curtailments have expired.
- Energy Water conservation measures enacted on March 17, 2015
- April 1, 2015 after Governor visit – 41 new measures – NID asked to conserve 35% w/most conservation requirements directed at treated water consumers.
- Stage II level drought for ag customers, Stage III for treated water customers.
- Conservation pricing means rate increase on the way – treated water customers only.
- Voluntary service reductions requested – response has been positive.
- Purchase water pricing based on price of PG&E water affects all customers.
- Ag season ends October 1, 2015 but drought could move that up. NID understands different agriculture means different water usage.

- Conservation can lead to tiers reduced by up to 25% with tier 3 at higher pricing.
- Extensive growth in area ponds is due to the warm weather and limited water flow.
- New water flow boxes now allow access to debris catching apparatus.
- Report water waste here: <http://nidwater.com/report-water-waste/> or call: 530-271-6799

Placer County Water Agency – Tony Firenzi

- Last year, snowfall was 60% of normal, this year it was only 10% and the April storm melted existing snowpack.
- Full reservoirs, no snow.
- Added one more pump to the American River canal. Achieved 35% conservation not including Zone 5.
- Thanks to customers, carryover and conservation was more than double the projections – 3% +1% of normal.
- PCWA is at or above normal.
- Meeting with PG&E April 14, 2015 to find out allocation – waited to see results after the last rainfall.
- Expects allocation to be the same or very slightly less than last year.
- Mandatory 20% conservation and the state wants more. PCWA asking 25% as state may modify conservation based on location and usage.
- Stage II draught conservation begins April 16, 2015.
- Canal customers – 10% reduction, same as last year – hoping for customer cooperation.
- Proposition 1 for drought relief – PCWA would like to install a 6th pump in the American River and install 2 potable wells off Highway 65 in Rocklin. Also allows for building of another dam, time will tell.
- No change at this time to irrigation season – there will be more staff, longer hours – to monitor no spillover at end of canals.
- Water rights reverting back to post 1914. From 1957 to 1967 rights allowed 120K acre feet. 340K acre feet?
- Curtailment is defined as diverting water from nature to storage. Curtailment probably implemented May or June. Risk is Fall warm rains – last year was storm by storm management to allow diverting.
- PCWA and NID agree to come back at alternate meetings to report on water status.

V. AGRICULTURAL WATER EFFICIENCY ASSISTANCE – Linda Yager of PCWA, Elisa Noble of PCRCD, Mike Brenner of USDA NRCS

Placer County Water Agency – Linda Yager and **Placer County Resource Conservation District** – Elisa Noble

- Under a short time frame – new program offers assistance to make non-treated water lands more efficient in water usage
- Rebates available on a first come, first served basis.
- Funding accessible thanks to PCWA – funded by Prop 84.
- Organizations partnered together will evaluate systems. Assist and maybe use “E-Quip” or this new program.
- Program is for untreated water customers.
- NID customers may qualify – rebates may take longer but are doable if the property is in Placer County.
- Replacing high water usage plants with drought resistant ones may also qualify, filtration may be included – call to discuss.
- Paperwork submitted for approval same day by end of day.
- Reimbursement is about 50 percent with a \$5000 maximum rebate.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service – Mike Brenner

- E-Quip = Environmental Quality Usage Incentive Program- Highly competitive, many applicants.
- Conservation efforts are not specifically water focused – drought funding included last year, none this year.
- Need more than just water conservation to rank high enough for assistance – invasive weeds, fire danger, etc. – but can focus on changing irrigation system.
- Five opportunities per year to apply for funding with the next cycle beginning April 17, 2015.
- A reasonably articulate person can apply for funding and USDA NRCS will follow up.
- If focus is only water usage, go with PCWA/PCRCD program.

VI. RECOMMENDATION FOR PLACER COUNTY WINERY ORDINANCE, REQUEST REVISIONS – Ag Commission Winery Subcommittee – Will Morebeck, Tony Aguilar, Patricia Beard, Stewart Perry

ACTION – MSA To Approve the Subcommittee’s Recommendation with the change to the private road approval – 9-0 (Unanimous)

- Subcommittee met and drafted a letter of recommendations to the planning commission.

- First 3 items on the letter address the definition of “events”. Changes recommended state: 6 public events are allowed per winery. Wine club, Private, and Countywide events are excluded from this number.
- Remove Administrative Review Permit requirement for the six allowed events for Farm and Agricultural – Exclusive zoning.
- Allowable size of event determined by available on-site parking
- Leave number of allowable events at six.
- Allow option for wineries on Farm and Agricultural – Exclusive zoned parcels to have more than six events annually with an Administrative Review Permit.
- Change threshold of people triggering the “Event” definition from twenty to fifty, and clarify that the number include only patrons – not staff.
- Agriculture Commission supports staff’s recommendation in regard to changes proposed to “Temporary Outdoor Events.”
- Agriculture Commission recommends required planted grape acreage be increased from one acre to two acres. Production must be on-site and the option for a functional equivalency of purchased grapes should be removed. Ordinance language should also reflect that *vine planting densities should be consistent with what is typically found in the Sierra Nevada Foothills.* – this is not retroactive to existing wineries.
- For Private Road Access, change the language from “*written approval of 2/3 of the property owners*” to “*written approval of the governing board of the applicable road maintenance association or homeowner’s association. If no governing board exists, written approval from a majority of property owners shall be required.*”

VII. REPORTS

A. Agricultural Marketing Program – Josh Huntsinger

- Merlot Marketing – PlacerGrown website was ugly prior to joining with Merlot three years ago. Still, the site isn’t smart phone or tablet friendly. Data shows 60+% access to site is by tablet or smart phone. Planning to update for compatibility.
- Certified Commercial Kitchens are required for food service – even for something as simple as sliced cheese. Very expensive. Big Day of Giving on May 5, 2015 – PlacerGrown signed up to raise funds to obtain a food truck for commercial kitchen purposes and mobility.

B. Economic Development Board – Josh Huntsinger for Lyndell Grey

- Economic Development Breakfast at Blue Goose shed was well attended. Laura Kenny prepared local food and produce. Lincoln High School Farm honored due to their recent grant work for career pathways in agriculture.

C. Livestock and Natural Resources Farm Advisor – Roger Ingram

- Rainfall Jan 1 – 4 inches.
- Forage measured at 92% of normal. Very good.
- Plants going to seed 90-120 days early.
- Follow up meeting for Slaughterhouse/Processing plant April 30, 2105
- Grazing academy begins week of April 20, 2015.

D. Horticulture and Small Farms Advisor – Cindy Fake

- Five part pest management series completed.
- Final Farm Business Workshop April 29, 2015 will cover farm insurance.
- Drought resistant watering course coming soon.
- Mandarin Field meeting next week at Rich Ferreira's, subjects will include drought and pests.
- UC Davis study on small Farm Specialists in cooperation with Yolo and Yuba counties. Interviewing farmers selling direct in 2013. If farm sold at least \$1000 direct – expect to be contacted. Need to interview at least 7 mandarin farms and 7 vineyards for generalization and privacy.
- Specialty Crops
 - Rock Creek School Saturday April 25, 2015 “Beauty of Buying Local” event.
 - Farmers Market Auburn - From 9:30 to noon will ask folks to show what they purchased at the farmers market for photographs similar to those in the book “What the World Eats”

E. Agricultural Water Supply Issues – Josh Huntsinger

- Nothing to add to prior presentations.

VIII. AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS

- Facebook membership site for area farmers and ranchers to discuss drought. Clearinghouse of water usage information shared between ag folk.

IV. ADJOURNMENT - 9:30 p.m.

- Next meeting May 11, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. – Cancelled
- Next meeting June 8, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.