



**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	

11477 E AVENUE
AUBURN, CALIFORNIA 95603
TELEPHONE: (530) 889-7372
FAX: (530) 823-1698
www.placer.ca.gov

MINUTES

PLACER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION MEETING

MARCH 9, 2015

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

Members Absent: None

-
- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – 7:00 pm by Wayne Vineyard
 - II. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA FOR MARCH 9, 2015 AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 9, 2015.** Motion to approve: Aguilar / Brenner/MPUV
 - III. **PUBLIC COMMENT** - None
 - IV. **REQUEST FOR LETTER OF SUPPORT, STRATEGIC AGRICULTURAL LANDS CONSERVATION PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION** – Scilacci Farms, Nikki Streegan, Placer County Planning Department
 - Sustainable Ag lands Conservation preserves large working high quality farms.
 - tight deadline of April 1, 2015
 - Josh Huntsinger states he's met with many groups and hopes this is the first of many applications for this grant.
 - Parcel is between Wise Road, Waltz Road and crosses Coon Creek.
 - Request is for Josh to write a letter for support of Scilacci Farms to enter into this program..
 - Motion to have Josh write letter in support. Perry/Beard/MPUV
 - V. **PLACER COUNTY WINERY ORDINANCE, REQUEST FOR COMMENTS** – George Rosasco, Placer County Planning Department
 - 5 workshops since May 2013 with MACs currently in process.
 - Planning Commission is satisfied with the draft ordinance shared today and is looking for comments from the Ag Commission.
 - Comes down to a few main issues to work out.
 - Tasting room regulations
 - Noise regulations
 - Number of events per year (the biggest issue)

- For the requested changes to the current ordinance click here:
<http://www.placer.ca.gov/~media/cdr/Planning/WineryOrd/DRAFTWineryOrdinance.pdf>

Public Comment

- Lori Lewis, homeowner – lives 900 ft away from one and within 2 miles of 3 wineries – PaZa, Lone Buffalo, Dona Dal Cielo and Gold Hill event center. Music at wineries begins on Saturday morning and plays until 5pm, then from 5pm to 10pm; Gold Hill has music and loud parties. Sunday, more music. No code enforcement officer is on duty at these times. Winery Ordinance created in 2008 was fine until people started asking for enforcement. This new ordinance has changed drastically and it does not address the music, which is the real problem.
- Susan Ames, homeowner – Lives 1200 feet away from Wise Villa and Gold Hill event center. She's experiencing the same issues as Ms. Lewis. Why must the music be amplified? Gold Hill events so loud she must shut her windows to keep the noise level bearable. How does scraping the land to install a parking lot reserving farmland in Placer county?
- Mora Rowe of Placer County Visitor's Bureau – The Agri-tourist is valuable. Travel and tourism is currently the top California industry and the largest of any other state, bringing in \$100 billion annually. Placer County has great food and wine. In 2013, 2.7 Million tourists spent 2.1 Billion in California wine regions.. Fastest growing travel sector is culinary tourism. Agri-tourism is defined as any business conducted by a farmer for the enjoyment and education of the public, to promote the products of the farm, and to generate additional farm income. Placer County needs to stay on trend and encourage tourism in order to preserve itself.
- Dean Farkour – Lives on Wise Road – Agrees with all Ms. Rowe has said. But it's a ruse, it has nothing to do with agriculture. Money is really what this is all about. There is no concern for homeowners in the area. He lives on a ranch where he raises and sells cattle. If others had to live where there was a live band playing every weekend, they too would be unhappy. Has lived in his home for 40 years and would like it to remain the quiet space it was when he moved in.
- Marilyn Jasper of Sierra Club and Public Interest Coalition - – Last year when the event center zoning text was amended , a letter was sent from the Agriculture commission to the Planning commission stating: "credible commercial agriculture must be a primary use of a parcel with events being a secondary use" – Vintners association is trying to circumvent the standing event center ordinance. In the 4 to 5 years after winery ordinance of 2006-2008, only one winery followed the rules to apply for

and obtain an event permit. She suggests the wineries practice using the ordinance already in place before they change it. This ordinance is more about lifestyle and investment than agriculture, but the wineries cannot make it on the backs of their neighbors. She asks the commission not to be influenced by invalid panaceas. What is the tipping point? Mentions AB1322 bill that, if passed, will allow the serving of alcohol in barbershops and salons.

- Phil Maddux, owner of Lone Buffalo – it is impossible to comply with the current ordinance and survive as a small winery in the county. Since original winery ordinance was put into place, only one complaint has been filed. The same people show up to the meetings to create fear of the change. Vintners want to comply, as events aren't simply about money, but to draw people to their wineries to promote their product and sell it. They wish to codify what they are already doing and what they are doing isn't producing complaints.
- Teena Wilkins, owner of Vina Castellano – Agri-tourism is saving small family farms. 10 hours in 2 days. Having a winery nearby helps to increase surrounding property values. Weddings bring people from out of town who go home and tell others about their visit and recommend it to their friends, who come to visit. Use the systems in place and enforcement to accurately assess the issues. Farming is becoming increasingly expensive. Enough complaints from surrounding homeowners and the wineries will close and leave, to be replaced by tract homes. Where are all the complainants? There only are a few of the same folks who show up to every meeting. Planning commission says not enough space. There are right to farm laws in all 50 states. Promotional events will help farms thrive..
- Ken Ewell of Clos du Lac – Selling grapes is very hard to do. They must be processed within hours of harvest, expensive to ship. Buyers are local. Clos du Lac has a 20 acre vineyard. Sold 60 tons last few years at \$1500 per ton – cost to grow was about \$2500 per ton. There are 88 homes in the development where homeowners donate their time and money to the vineyard as their goal is to aid in the success of local wineries. Last year was the first time they sold the entire crop. Their goal is to assist in the success of local wineries because their success will aid in the success of Clos du Lac.
- Cindy Fake – grapes at scale grown here don't make money. To profit from growing, the grapes need to become wine. Winery is a bonafide Agri-business. Empathizes with the noise issues, but hopes all can come to some meeting point that allows wineries to have the events that promote

and sell their product. Selling on sight where the experience is part of the sale. Get the data – enforce the ordinance and file complaints. Wineries do support overall agricultural industry. Noise is an issue, but events do need to happen. Both sides need to find a comfortable solution while maintaining agriculture and the economy of Placer County.

- Wayne Vineyard – Sound is a problem as it travels in such a strange way. Past experiments in sound levels have shown the decibels to be at or below the max near the site of an event yet well over the allowable levels miles away. We need to find a viable solution as the potential for people to visit our wine country is great, especially from Tahoe tourism.
- Carol Rubin of Save Placer Farmlands – Vintners are currently allowed 12 days of temporary events. If that is not enough, they can apply for Ag Event Center permit and be allowed however many events the permit allows. The original revision to the ordinance allowed for more than 12 days. Wineries make it seem as if they aren't allowed any events. Why don't they just apply to be agricultural event centers, why do they need a special permit process? Zoning clearance mechanism allows winery buildings an easier pass than the installation of a swimming pool. Allowing unlimited daily events for 1 acre of grapes is not reasonable. Soon, breweries and distilleries will be asking for and getting the same allowances as wineries. There is a difference between tourism and drunken tourism.
- Mike Duarte of Popi wines Duarte Family Vineyards – wants to address the specific point of money making. It takes 18 months to deliver a steer to market and 6 months for other livestock. Appreciation for all types of farming but wants this area to grow more slowly than other wine regions have in the past. Alcohol will always be a problem. There is some misdirection in regard to lifestyle for vineyard growers, it's not about a life of luxury. Big investment, not a very fancy lifestyle. Open invitation to visit his ranch.
- Teresa Chaney of Newcastle – works with Save Placer Farm Lands. Empathy is important here. Many are in favor of the cooperative nature of economic drivers for Placer County, but polarized groups are pulling in different directions. The few people who show up to every meeting are spokespeople who represent hundreds of signatures. Asks for people to be reasonable and believes there is a win-win solution. While she was aware of the FBX zoning for her home and surrounding area and the sound of farming noise, she wasn't aware that would include the noise of music and events. Not a time for extremes, let's help the vintners and cooperate with the rest. Be very clear about what is happening. There is

no saturation maximum limit for these places. Encourages reasonableness and moderation. Consider how other counties handle this issue: how does Sonoma do it?

- Kevin Stevenson of Casque Wines and PC Vintners Assoc. – Vintners association submitted a winery ordinance draft 3 years ago. New draft was a drastic change from the submittal. Last year Casque purchased 20-25 tons of local grapes. An example of events that help the wineries: a customer requested use of his tasting room after hours. 6 hour event cost him approximately \$200 for staffing. He charged \$100 for use of the room with tastings. That event netted \$800 in wine sales. Income is from the sale of wine and their wine club. Wine club releases bring in 75 members and these events sell more wine than other weekend tastings. Has not had a complaint in years. Asks the commission to listen and research and they will find that in the past there is only one winery that is often the cause of complaints. Tasting room located at the Flower Farm in Loomis.
- Tony Aguilar asks George what some nearby counties are doing regard to events at wineries. George pulled the data for many and shared that Placer County is more restrictive than most other counties. He also notes that Amador County has 40+ acre parcels and that Placer's challenge is size and density.
- William Morebeck – was on the committee for ordinance in Nevada County. Theirs was simple and not very restrictive. The hope was to make it least restrictive while continuing to be good stewards to the land. Eldorado is zoned better and the parcel types are spaced well from each other. Code enforcement officer to enforce code on weekend (on call). Code enforcement is not proactive so much as reactive.
- Jeff Evans of Bear River Winery – Neighbors appreciate him “putting Meadow Vista on the map.” Bear River holds quarterly wine club releases. Under the current ordinance, one release would use up 4 of the 6 events allowed. Last year they finally saw a profit of \$17,000. Wine parties help sell wine. Contrary statements should be filtered. Currently, Bear River winery holds no live music but would like to. For now they just crank up the stereo.
- Public comments conclude and George states that the Ag commission can either make recommendations or offer individual comments. Comments or recommendations open until mid April. It's true that most complaints are about the same few wineries. Increase enforcement and work with surrounding community. The ordinance can still evolve. Currently the penalty for non-compliance is to stop the event. If the event isn't halted, then a judicial citation is issued and held before Superior court which has

been very lenient. Admin Citation hearing process can fine up to \$500 a day per violation and up to \$1000 in some instances. The fine increases with multiple violations.

- Stewart Perry adds: The ABC is not lenient. The fine is \$10,000 to start for serving inebriated individuals even if in a limo and not driving.
- Vineyard appoints a Subcommittee to make recommendations at next meeting. Committee members are Tony Aguilar, Patricia Beard, William Morebeck, Stewart Perry and Josh Huntsinger.

VI. REPORTS

A. Agricultural Marketing Program – Josh Huntsinger

- Ag Day at Gold Country Fairgrounds – March 18, 2015.
- PlacerGrown and Ag Department meet with Merlot Marketing to plan marketing year ahead.
 - Farmers Markets, Farm to Fork, Celebrate PlacerGrown week, Mandarin Festival and Orchard Days
- Economic Development Breakfast on March 18, 2015 honors nominee Lincoln High School staff for recent grant work.

B. Economic Development Board – Lyndell Grey

- Economic Development Breakfast at Blue Goose shed. Laura Kennedy will be preparing local food and produce. Josh nominated Lincoln High School Farm due to their recent grant work for career pathways in agriculture.

C. Livestock and Natural Resources Farm Advisor – Roger Ingram

- Forage information handout was distributed.
- February's forage measured at 70% of normal. There is some concern as lack of forage supply does impact livestock.
- Grazing Land Regulatory Action Program is still in the listening phase
 - Science Symposium at UC Davis on March 3 and March 4, 2015
 - Only 4% of water bodies are affected negatively by grazing.
 - Plans to update website and collaborate

D. Horticulture and Small Farms Advisor – Cindy Fake

- Advanced Farm Business Program begins March 18, 2015. Next event will include Labor Accounting.
- Pest Management workshops coming up.
- Only 5 spaces left in the Beginning Farming Academy April 10 and 11, 2015.

- Sierra College holding a Direct Farm Marketing course through May 2015.
- Specialty Crops program ends in June 2015 and there are a few more tastings coming up at local food banks and farmers markets. First tasting at 9:30 am at March 15 Auburn Farmers Market – Sateed Leek and Mushrooms. Success of program has opened up selection to repeat beginning in October with more focus in schools.

E. Agricultural Water Supply Issues – Josh Huntsinger

- Quick PowerPoint presentation supplied by NID.
- Bowman Lake at capacity already but not much snow on the ground.
- PCWA and NID will be at April meeting – South Sutter may also attend.
- Wayne Vineyard talks about drought a bit.
- South Sutter was full two weeks ago, now about 50% of normal.

VIII. AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS

- Form 700 notices went out – Due April 1, 2015
- Placer County Environmental Health's MOU for the Hazmat program is still in the works, more details as they become available. Working on a flat fee and to cap all fees at about \$400.00. Agriculture Department may just take over to reduce cost to agriculture customers:

IV. ADJOURNMENT - 9:30 p.m.

- Next meeting April 13, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.