



Date: Wednesday, January 11, 2023
Time: 12:30 PM
Location: Hybrid - In-Person: Lake Estes, 3rd Floor, 200 West Oak Street, Fort Collins or Virtual, Zoom Link: https://larimer-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_i8-Z_4qCSzGq6j2f_6y6eQ

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

The Larimer County Agricultural Advisory Board (AAB) met on Wednesday, January 11, 2023, at 12:30 p.m. in a hybrid setting in person and via Zoom.

The following Board members were present: Zach Thode (Chair), George Wallace (Vice Chair), Kristin Ramey (Secretary), Tim Clouse, John Cravens, Travis Horton, Maureen McDonough, Franklyn Garry, Greg Schreiner, and Beth Conrey.

The following officials and staff were present: John Kefalas, County Commissioner; Abbe Stapleton; Matt Lafferty, Principal Planner; Alyssa Martin, Planner II; and Christina Scrutchins, Recording Secretary.

Guests present: Sara Mayer

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

Items Moved: Staff Updates and Discussion Item – Item No. 3 - Election of Officers

Items added: Thornton search of properties and Rocky Mountain Farmer Union Guest.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 9, 2022

Member Thode made a motion to approve the agenda.

Member Ramey seconded.

Motion carried (10-0).

INTERACTION WITH COMMISSIONER KEFALAS ON AGRICULTURAL AND COMMUNITY RELATED ISSUES

Commissioner Kefalas spoke about the January 10, 2023, swearing-in for all elected officials. Commissioner Kefalas gave an update regarding the following approved motion at the January 10, 2023, Administrative Matters Meeting: that the Board of County Commissioners' Division of Responsibility Policy and Colorado Counties, Inc, 2023, directing staff to take the memorandum of understanding to the Solid Waste Policy Council's next regular meeting for their review and comments and return to this Board for final direction regarding contract negotiations, and regarding the Larimer County Budget. Within the budget, it includes about 380 million in operating and the rest related to capital projects.

DISCUSSION:

- Some members feel the Land Use Code makes it difficult for agricultural producers to add houses to their property, to help offset some of the cost of getting labor to their farms, and to become more effective at producers in the county.
- The approval regarding the memorandum of understanding to the Solid Waste Policy Council included hazardous waste.
- The recycling center will stay at its existing location and will have a transfer station for solid waste as well as a recycling facility. In the future, composting will be available.
- The Community will be able to bring solid waste to the facility but ultimately it will be the commercial hollers.

- Larimer County is doing its best to address the problems with housing affordability and agriculture workforce development.
- Larimer County has partnered with a consultant to update the Land Use Code that will include Agriculture related housing.
- The collection point will be at the current location where it will then be separated, sorted, and recycled. Then, the trash will be bundled and transported to be disposed of.
- Larimer County partnered with Cascadia to help understand if there are any gaps in the Land Use Code and what kind of housing opportunities do not exist within the county.

STAFF UPDATES

ITEM NO. 1 – INTERN UPDATE - CAESAR GARDUNDO

- Members Thode and Cravens have been working with CSU staff for the past year effectively getting an intern.
- Boulder County lost their Agg. Extension Specialist and currently trying to rehire the position.
- Karen Heartmaker has officially retired and Carrie Rollins was promoted to the Regional Director Extension of Front Range.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

ITEM NO. 1 – 2023 WORK PLAN – DISCUSSION AND COORDINATION

- a. Local Food Systems
 - Audrey Snyder, with NOCO Food Partnership, will be attending the March meeting to give more updates regarding the food system.
- b. Food waste and animal feed potential
 - The food waste and composting project is tier two but is on hold until Tier one is complete.
 - Member Thode will be speaking with the Conservation district on how they could engage at a level in that composting, and food and bio waste as a partner.
- a) Engagement and coordination with County Projects:
 - i. Water Plan
 - The deadline has been extended to January 31, 2023.
 - ii. Climate Smart Larimer County
 - It will be moving forward with a meeting taking place on January 17, 2023.
 - iii. Pollinators
 - Lafferty placed a call to the Natural Resource Department and further communication will be discussed in the future.
- c. Voluntary AG District – George
 - Did not meet over the holidays but would like to meet with Commissioner Kefalas. Commission Kefalas recommended that he investigate finding out who would be the best person to reach out to get a group together.
 - Members and staff also discussed that it could be placed on the Colorado Accounts Association agenda/work sessions.

- Discussion regarding if it is good to have a meeting with landowners to see if it would be good to have the zoning district within Timnath changed to the AGG zone district.

d. Vertical AG

- Members and staff discussed how the Vertical Ag will be included in the Land Use Code such as where Vertical Ag should or should be within Larimer County, and for staff to notify AAB of any hearings and allow the opportunity to provide input.

ITEM NO. 2 – BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES AND IMPACT FUND GRANT PROGRAM

The Behavioral Health would like for the County to know that there is a funding opportunity within the county and to spread their resources out. They will have grant applications available on a routine basis for any projects or efforts needed to improve the Behavior Health and Ag community.

ITEM NO. 3 – ELECTION OF OFFICERS (Moved down to the end of the meeting)

Commissioner Kefalas stated that he would like to review the bylaws, members would like to be more active in recruiting community members, and any member that you like to add a topic to the agenda for the following meetings will need to contact Matt or the Chair.

Chair – Zach Thode

Vice Chair – Amber Graves

Secretary – John Cravens

ITEM NO. 2 – MEETING PROCEDURES – Moved to 3

Staff will send out the current bylaws with past revisions for review, Bylaws will be a discussion item in May, and discussion of the location of the future meetings and possibly have the meetings be held virtually only.

ITEM NO. 4 – LOCATION OF MEETINGS

Motion: I move the Larimer County Agricultural Advisory Board designate www.Larimer.org as the place for posting notice of public meetings, and if exigent or emergency circumstances prevent the online posting at such location, public notice shall be physically posted at the bulletin boards located at the north and south entrances to the Larimer County Courthouse Offices Building at 200 West Oak, Fort Collins, Colorado, in accordance with Colorado's open meetings laws.

Motion made: Maureen

Second: John

ITEM NO. 5 – RIGHT TO FARM AND THE ROLE OF LIVESTOCK GUARDIAN DOGS

Members discussed that the dogs that are to protect the livestock should be labeled as guardian animals and should be included in the language “right to farm”. The Right to farm policy will be discussed at the March meeting.

Staff stated that the right-to-farm policy could have the option to allow the new language.

THORNTON SEARCHING OF PROPERTIES (ADDED ITEM)

Thornton purchased several properties in both Larimer and Weld County for water rights. Amber Graves and George Wallace are on a steering committee that advises Thornton on its handling of these properties as they begin to work to move the water from the properties to the city of Thornton. They reported being hopeful that, as a result of the committee’s work, Thornton will ultimately decide not to develop their Larimer County properties (all of which, fortunately, are outside of any Urban Growth Area) and keep them in agricultural production or open space by offering to sell them to producers or local government entities. Thornton's willingness to talk with the local communities and those affected by their land and water purchases shows that they are open to working with the locals on how they would like to see the land used in the future that Thornton currently owns.

Fort Collins owns several properties within Larimer County along with many properties within Weld County and Thornton is highly likely going to make an offer to the tenants or the cities due to running out of growth areas.

Staff presented the Comprehensive Plan to show the standing intergovernmental agreement with the town of Timnath that recognizes their northern boundary of growth. The County will work with each of the cities and towns in Larimer County to reach mutually beneficial Intergovernmental Agreements which address the Principles and Policies of the Comprehensive Plan and the growth management concerns of each jurisdiction.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN FARMER UNION GUEST (ADDED ITEM)

Sara Mayer stated that Senator, Janice Martin of District 16, would like to mention that she is looking for producers that are in the area to help within an advisory group. She would like to be able to reach out to the advisory group if she needs help with anything that may come up in the future. If any of the AAB members are interested, they can reach out to Sara at sarah.mayer@rmsu.org.

ADJOURN

With there being no further business, the hearing adjourned at 3:10 p.m.