

SOLANO COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINTUES

Monday, February 28, 2022

Special Meeting

Meeting called to order at 3:10 by Chair Lester.

Members Present: Russ Lester, Moira Burke, Jeff Dittmer, Lisa Howard, Ian Anderson, Al Medvitz, Barbara Comfort

Members Absent: Bruce Brazelton, Jen King

Guests Present: Ed King, Agricultural Commissioner; Terry Schmidtbauer, Resource Management Director; Allan Calder, Planning Manager; Jim Laughlin, County Counsel; James Bezak, Assistant Director Resource Management; Matt Tuggle, Public Works; Sean Favero; Will Brazelton; Chris Scheuring.

Teleconference Meeting Resolution:

Approved Teleconference Meeting Resolution #2022-02, by unanimous committee vote authorizing the meeting to proceed via teleconference as a result of the continuing COVID pandemic state of emergency on February 22.

Approval of the Agenda: Agenda approved with no additions or deletions.

NEW BUSINESS

Review of proposed agricultural zoning text amendments to Chapter 28 of the Solano County Code (ZT- 21-03).

Jim reminded the committee and attendees that the proposed changes include amendments to zoning definitions, tables and regulations. It is necessary to look at all three elements to understand how zoning rules are applied in practice.

Farm Bureau noted support for a letter recently submitted by a San Francisco law firm claiming that the zoning text changes as proposed need to comply with CEQA prior to implementation.

Committee members reiterated feedback expressing need for more time to study and evaluate the proposed changes to ensure they are protective of agriculture.

Committee members and attendees questioned how greenhouses differ from other ag operations that have specific regulations like hemp and dairies. Jim explained that the county's practice is to allow greenhouse by right and are interpreted as agricultural use under Williamson Act law. They could be possibly be further regulated in a larger revision to the zoning code. Al recommended a moratorium on greenhouses until further changes can be adopted into code. As an interim option

they could be allowed in the Dixon industrial ag services zoning district.

Staff clarified that the current Commercial Farm Equipment – Sale, Fabrication and Repair definition is broader than what code tables allow. The proposed changes separate definitions into Farm Equipment Sales and Farm Equipment Fabrication and Repair with intention to match how zoning tables are implemented—ag zoned uses are only intended for fabrication and repair, not sales.

The committee expressed concern to pull breweries/distilleries, greenhouses and research facilities from the current proposal so these items may receive additional and specific review.

Jim explained the latest revision to the proposed Research Facility definition to include “...intended to be useful or beneficial to commercial agriculture” and adds a minor use permit requirement for facilities less than 20,000 sq. ft. This change removes the need to be incidental to agriculture on the parcel in question. Dixon industrial ag services zoning district already permits research by right for small and medium size facilities.

Committee recommended staff further modify the Ag Research Facility definition to replace “...useful or beneficial” wording with “related” and to make research in the industrial ag zoning as non-incidental to agriculture on the property.

Committee will consider drafting a letter to the Board recommending additional attention be applied to breweries/distilleries and greenhouses including possible regulations based on size and impact.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE

None.

ADJOURNED MEETING – 5:48