

**SOLANO COUNTY
AGRICULTURE ADVISORY MEETING (AAC)
DRAFT MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING ON
October 10, 2012**

The meeting of the Solano County Agriculture Advisory Committee (AAC) was held at the Department of Agriculture and UC Cooperative Extension Building, Downstairs Conference Room, 501 Texas Street, Fairfield, CA

Members Present:

Russ Lester, Barbara Comfort, James Wallace, Craig Leathers, Moira Burke, Mary Helen Seeger, Al Medvitz

Others present:

Jim Allan	Agriculture Commissioner
Mike Yankovich	Resource Management
Nedzlene Ferrario	Resource Management
Julia Jauregui	Gestamp Solar
Marrisa Mitchell	Gestamp Solar
Amy Morris	Gestamp Solar
Esteban Nunez	Gestamp Solar

Item 1 Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Russ Lester at 3:10 PM.

Item 2 Introductions of Members and Guests

Item 3 Changes and Approval of the Agenda

Agenda was not approved for lack of quorum.

Item 4 Review/Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Minutes of May, June and Aug Meetings were not approved for lack of quorum.

Item 5 New Business

(a) Report on the Board of Supervisor Meeting - Board Topics Related to Subject Matter of the AAC

1. Mike Yankovich reports nothing new from board on Ag issues.

2. Jim Allan- Solano County Crop Report was presented to the Board and is online at

http://www.co.solano.ca.us/depts/agriculture/crop_report/2009_2018.asp

Olives were featured on the cover, also emphasis on walnuts, livestock, alfalfa and grain. 1861 Olives were planted at Wolfskill. Barbara Comfort's olives planted in 1888, no pesticides since then. There was no rebound in the nursery industry. Crop report is the most often viewed part of the Solano website according to Google Analytics.

3. a. Jim Allan said there was approval for a full time Admin (lower rate) position rather than 1/2 time position

b. There is discussion at the County about moving the Ag Commissioner's Office.

To a possible location in Cordelia—more to come.

(b) Proposed Solar Project Gestamp Solar – Marisa Mitchell presentation

Gestamp Solar is based in Madrid, Spain with local headquarters in San Francisco.

Presentation was on the Peabody Solar Project which was introduced a year ago. The purpose is to generate distribute solar power to be used in Solano County 140,000 megawatts, \$80 Million Project near Meridan road/Hay road. It is on A-40, active irrigable farm land where alfalfa is now grown. It is allowable under a conditional use under current zoning. It includes 192 acres in I-80 greenbelt. It is not in the Williamson Act. The

panels would be 25' tall and rotating. They did extensive site surveys to pick location near power stations and grid.

BMP and EIR impact to AG would continue to be evaluated.

They will work with Fish and Game, Farm Bureau, County staff.

There will be a review and comment period in Feb. or March 2013.

It is not class 1 soil which has been verified by DelaValley Lab.

A conservation easement of 432 acres (1 ½ acre per acre developed) would be required.

Gestamp would have to put up bond for remediation and third party rehabilitation

No zone change would be required, land owner has agreed to a 30 yr lease

The project was initiated by Gestamp

There are only 2 substations in the County, "Peabody" and "Vaca-Dixon"

Gestamp looked around the two substations looked for suitable sites

these are the only parcels that made electrical sense to them.

Discussion by Staff and Committee:

This is the only solar application in county now.

There will likely be more. SMUD may have plans to put up panels

Renewable Energy Working Group has evaluated other counties' regulations and will present proposal to Committee soon.

What are the considerations for ground cover, pest control, weed control.

Soil may be sterilized in effect dead and not able to be rehabilitated.

Committee response was that they want to preserve Ag lands in the county and

Prefer urban infill - roof tops, etc.

Committee is not anti – alternative energy, we value "green" efforts, but our task is

to protect Ag lands. Ag values are the highest value, and once gone can not be replaced.

Gestamp and others will need to deal with "Right to Farm," adjoining ag farm activities or facilities, including dust issues.

Item 6 Continuing Business

(a) General Plan Update/Agriculture Region Study Dixon Ridge-Resource Management

Mike Yankovich reported that Resource Management is making changes based on public input, also reviewing previous traffic study and seeking new traffic study or data

Focusing on the interface with Highway 80 and Dixon offramps. Discussion of the options for farm vehicles crossing the freeway. The draft is on the Solano County website and a new version will be visible in a couple of weeks.

More information on the Dixon Ridge area road - A Negative Declaration is available for public review regarding transportation

Of particular interest is Pedrick Road, and traffic at high flow of Campbell's harvest, also Robin Road, Spearing, etc There are at least 3 growers who cross freeway with farm equipment.

(b) Exotic Pest Updates

LBAM funding being reduced, what will status of quarantine be.

More new pests:

(c) Future Budget Planning – Discussion

Continuing shrinking State and County budget

(d) Delta Water Issues

Al Medvitz has the movie that aired in Sacramento available for viewing: Over Troubled Waters and will make it available for circulation.

e. Williamson Act Update

No Discussion

f. Local Food Shed Working Group

No Discussion

g. Renewable Energy Working Group Nedzlene Ferrario

There was a strong preference for recognizing power generation for Ag processing.
No mitigation recommended for onsite use
Small solar - roof top - allowed by right
Med size facility would be less than 30 acres & large facility over 30 acres
Goal would be to avoid Williamson land and prime land.

h. Pesticide Update – new grower handouts available.

Item 7 Public Comments/Announcements/Correspondence

a. Public Comments - none

b. Announcements:

1. Annual wine tasting for Solano Grown Don Johnson at Winter Hawk Winery, Sunday Oct. 14th.
2. Knives Across the Creek , Nov. 4th Buckhorn Winters featuring Moira Burke' grass fed organic beef in butchery demonstration www.agricolagrassfedbeef.com
3. Pesticide Containers Recycling Day on Nov 13, 2012 from 8AM- 1PM

8. Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, Nov. 14, 2012 at 3:00 PM

9. Meeting Adjourned at 5:00 PM