

KINGS COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CHARLES DRAXLER – DAIRY INDUSTRY
JIM GREGORY – AG CHEMICALS & PETROLEUM
DIANA PECK – KINGS COUNTY FARM BUREAU

DON MILLS – WATER
BILL TOS – NUT CROPS
GERALD THEODORE – SMALL FARMS

JOHNNY STARLING – AG PROCESSING
BOB PRYS – FEED/SEED & GRAIN
JIM MACIEL – AG EQUIPMENT

STAFF: MARK SHERMAN (559) 582-3211 EXT. 2675

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING October 14, 2009

Call to Order:

Chairman Mills called the meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Committee to order at 12:06 p.m. in the Multipurpose Room of the Agricultural Center of the Kings County Government Center, 680 N. Campus Dr., Hanford, CA.

Committee Members Present:

Don Mills, Diana Peck,
Jim Gregory, Johnny Starling, Jim Maciel

Committee Members Absent:

Gerald Theodore, Bill Tos,
Charles Draxler, Bob Prys

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Tim Niswander, Kathy Sargent

Ex-Officio Members Absent:

Greg Gatzka

Auxiliary Members Present:

Auxiliary Members Absent:

Peggy Gregory, Jeff Tyner, Kerry Arroues,
Jay Salyer, Carol Collar

Committee Coordinator Present

Joe Neves

County Staff Present:

Chuck Kinney, Mark Sherman,
Terri Yarbrough, Jeremy Kinney, Pete Moock,
Johanna Hartley, Deb West

County Staff Absent:

Visitors Present:

Bob Beede

Unscheduled Comments:

None

Minutes: April 8, 2009 Meeting:

Diana Peck asked that the minutes be amended to reflect that she was in attendance at the April 8, 2009 meeting. A Motion was made and seconded (Gregory/Peck) to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2009 meeting as amended. The Motion carried unanimously.

Water Use Survey:

Tim Niswander reported that he had sent a survey regarding water conservation with the annual renewal of pesticide permits and questionnaire. Mr. Moock advised Mr. Mills that the Board of Supervisors will be holding a water workshop at their next board meeting.

“Williamson” Act Update:

Chuck Kinney gave an update concerning the “Williamson” Act Program within Kings County. He reported that with the passage of the State budget the Governor blue-lined all but \$1,000 from the subventions for the Williamson Act Programs within California. At the September 1, 2009 Board of Supervisors meeting, the Supervisors decided to wait until more information was available before making a decision on what action the County would take. Mr. Kinney reported that some of the concerns were the impact that it could have on farmers and the related farming business economy, the potential impact to the County related to taxes, and the possibility of other alternative models which may be able to be developed such as a potential for a redevelopment-like agency to address agriculture in California.

Conservation Easements:

Jeremy Kinney provided an informational presentation concerning habitat conservation easements near the Lemoore Naval Air Station and agricultural easements. He reported that the program is a voluntary Farmland Conservancy Monitoring Program operated by the State Department of Conservation. The program is not a County Program and it was created specifically to support agriculture and prevent development on the subject parcels. Deb West asked if this would reduce the property tax base. Mr. Kinney stated that there is a one-time compensation to the property owner when the development rights are purchased and that it does reduce the assessed value of the property since the development rights can not be included in the property tax base.. Jim Maciel asked if local neighbors opposing the project could stop the project. Pete Moock stated that he would check on it and bring the information back to the committee.

Agricultural Exempt Building Permits:

Chuck Kinney reported that a barn was recently constructed on a dairy within the County which obtained the required zoning permit (Site Plan Review) as well as obtaining an agricultural exempt building permit; however, upon the final inspection for the agricultural exempt building permit it was determined that the building had been constructed in a location which did not comply with the approved SPR nor the building permit. During a Board of Supervisors hearing there were concerns of this potentially occurring again due to the lack of checks and balances in the agricultural exempt building permit process. Chuck Kinney reported that the Community Development Agency is recommending that the fee for the Agricultural exempt building permit be increased from \$90 to \$180 which would allow the Building Division to include one additional inspection up front which would insure that the footings for the foundation of the structure comply with the approved building plans and are properly located as indicated on the approved site plan. Mr. Kinney also asked for any recommendations from the Ag Advisory Committee.

A motion was made and seconded (Gregory/Peck) to recommend to the Board of Supervisors, an increase in the fee for the Ag Exempt permit to \$180 and adding an additional inspection.

Miscellaneous

Correspondence: none

Member Comments: none

Staff Comments: none

Adjournment

With no further business before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 1:55 p.m. The next regularly scheduled meeting is set for January 13, 2010 at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Gatzka", with a horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Gregory R. Gatzka, Secretary