

KINGS COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CHARLES DRAXLER - DAIRY INDUSTRY
JIM GREGORY - AG CHEMICALS & PETROLEUM
MICHELE COSTA - KINGS COUNTY FARM BUREAU

DON MILLS - WATER
BILL TOS - NUT CROPS
VACANT - SMALL FARMS

JOHNNY STARLING - AG PROCESSING
BOB PRYS - FEED/SEED & GRAIN
BRIAN POTTER - AG EQUIPMENT

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

MINUTES OF MEETING October 12, 2011

Call to Order:

Chairman Starling called the meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Committee to order at 1:30 p.m. in the Ag Commissioner's Multi-Purpose Room, 680 N. Campus, Hanford, California.

Committee Members Present:

Don Mills, Charles Draxler, Michele Costa,
Jim Gregory, Johnny Starling

Committee Members Absent:

Bill Tos, Bob Prys, Brian Potter,

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Greg Gatzka, Kathy Sargent

Ex-Officio Members Absent:

Carol Collar, Tim Niswander, Jay Salyer

Auxiliary Members Present:

Kerry Arroues, Peggy Gregory

Auxiliary Members Absent:

Jeff Tyner

Committee Coordinator Present

Joe Neves

Committee Coordinator Absent

County Staff Present:

Larry Spikes, Colleen Carlson,
Chuck Kinney, Mark Sherman,
Kara Bounds,

County Staff Absent:

Terri Yarbrough

Visitors Present:

Diana Peck, Joe Machado, Alan Scott
Hugo Calvillo

Unscheduled Comments:

1. Alan Scott of the Citizens for California High Speed Rail Accountability advised the Committee of an informational meeting concerning High Speed Rail scheduled for Tuesday, October 18th at 5:30 pm at the Brandman University site at 325 Mall Drive in Hanford.
2. Committee Auxiliary Member Kerry Arroues introduced Hugo Calvillo as the new District Conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service

Minutes: July 13, 2011 Meeting:

A Motion was made and seconded (Draxler/Mills) to approve the minutes of the July 13, 2011 meeting. The Motion carried unanimously with Tos, Prys, and Potter absent.

NEW BUSINESS

New Meeting Date and Time:

Chairman Starling asked Committee Member Jim Gregory to provide the Committee with background and history of the past meeting dates and times. Mr. Gregory explained that the meeting time was previously at 12:00 noon but due to schedule conflicts experienced by some members with other meetings, the meeting time was changed to 1:30 pm. Committee Member Chuck Draxler commented that the noon meetings were better for him and did not disrupt his work schedule as much as the later meetings. Mr. Sherman noted that a change to the date of the meeting will require a change to the Committee bylaws. After some discussion by the Committee, Mr. Gregory made a motion that the Ag Advisory Committee meeting day be changed to the second Thursday of the quarter instead of the second Wednesday of the quarter and the meeting time changed back to 12:00 noon. The motion was seconded by Mr. Draxler and the motion carried unanimously with Tos, Prys and Potter absent.

Update on the Williams Act:

Senior Planner Kara Bounds of the Community Development Agency provided a update for the Committee of the effects of AB 1265 (Nielson), enacted on 13 July 2011, on contracted agricultural land and the actions taken by Kings County in response to the legislation. Ms. Bounds spoke of the fact that the state has not reimbursed the County for subvention payments for the last couple years and currently results in an approximate \$2.5 shortfall for the County. She also stated that the county has not accepted any new contracts for the past 3 years. The county chose to modify existing agriculture land preservation contracts by adopting Senate Bill 863 last year and Assembly Bill 1265 this year which established reduced 9 and 18 year term contracts. Larry Spikes, County CAO, then stated that the County implemented these bills as an alternative to filing non-renewals on all contracts, and pointed out that Imperial County filed non-renewals on all of their contracted parcels.

Mr. Draxler asked if someone from the County could come to the next Farm Bureau meeting to provide the Williamson Act information to Farm Bureau members. Mr. Spikes indicated that he would go to the next Farm Bureau meeting to talk about the Williamson Act changes.

Update on the High Speed Rail EIR/EIS Project Review:

Secretary Gatzka provided an update for the Committee on the progress of Kings County agencies to review the Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) and prepare comments concerning the High Speed Rail project from Fresno to Bakersfield. Mr. Gatzka presented the same power point presentation to the Committee that was given to the Board of Supervisors the day prior at their regular meeting with the addition of some concerns which directly impact agriculture. Mr. Gatzka expressed his thanks to the Kings County Farm Bureau and the American Stewards of Liberty for initially bringing the High Speed Rail issues to the County's attention.

Mr. Gatzka informed the Committee that because the High Speed Rail Authority has refused to answer questions and work with the County and other groups, that the Community Development Agency is having to rely on a thorough review of the EIR/EIS to try to determine the actual impacts of the High Speed Rail project on property owners, business owners, and the impacts to agriculture in the County. As part of the Power Point, Mr. Gatzka covered the numerous failures of the EIR/EIS to address the key

issues and potential impacts to Kings County and pointed out that the High Speed Rail Authority has built in a number of exit (escape) clauses into the environmental document in an attempt to postpone addressing impacts until a later date. He stated that there was no guarantee that the Authority would adequately address the impacts later and made it clear that if the impacts are not addressed in the EIR/EIS, they would not be required to do so later.

The Committee discussed several points of Mr. Gatzka's presentation and two members of the Concerned Citizens for High Speed Rail Accountability, Joe Machado and Alan Scott, provided the Committee with additional information and background reiterating the Authority's failure to work with property owners and address actual impacts of the project. Mr. Machado informed the Committee that he had requested a professional appraisal of the potential impacts to his dairy facility from the High Speed Rail project stating that his loss would be approximately \$1.8 million.

After discussing other issues including the business plan and the infrastructure that already exists along Interstate 5 that could support the project along I-5, Don Mills made a motion, seconded by Jim Gregory that the Agricultural Committee express its recommendation to the Board of Supervisors not to support the High Speed Rail Project unless it is moved over to Interstate 5. The motion carried 4-1 with Chuck Draxler opposed and Tos, Prys and Potter absent. Mr. Draxler stated that he supported the Board in this matter but felt that the project should not be constructed in Kings County at all.

Correspondence: None

Member Comments: Jim Gregory spoke briefly about solar projects stating that the west side of the central valley is a magnet for solar projects because the infrastructure (electrical transmission lines and water wells) are readily available which are positive factors in developing solar arrays.

Staff Comments: Secretary Gatzka reminded the Committee that the election of officers would be held during the next meeting in January 2012.

Adjournment

With no further business before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be January 12, 2012 at 12:00 noon.

Respectfully Submitted,



Gregory R. Gatzka, Secretary