



Heritage Farm Sustainability Plan Steering Committee Discussion Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 13, 2023, 1:00 pm to 2:45 pm
In-Person Meeting

Committee Members: Teresa Meyer, Kristine Perry, Bill Cline, Zorah Oppenheimer, Ila Stanek, Sandra Brown (Farm Advisory Team)

Clark County: Lynde Wallick

Guests and Other: N/A

* Not Present

1:00 PM Welcome

Lynde welcomed everyone and stated that there is no prepared presentation for the meeting. The committee will lead its own discussion.

There was a discussion about the feasibility of a farmers' market. Sandra and Kristine discussed their understanding from other farmer's market managers that there is not a substantial enough pool of farmers in the area to support an additional market. It might be possible to sell food from Heritage Farm at a farmers' market, but most surplus food is currently donated to the Clark County Food Bank.

Teresa, Sandra, Zorah, and Kristine discussed that discussing individual ideas for programming at the Farm is not productive use of time. The focus should be on the larger financial picture of the farm and how to support the programming that exists. Zorah noted that most of the programming ideas put forward will not decrease the general fund expenses, they will not be financially self-supporting.

Bill, Ila, Sandra, and Teresa discussed public access and their concerns over increased public traffic onsite. They are not supportive of a trail connection to Hazel Dell Community Park even if there is a gate. Kristine mentioned a recent incident of someone stealing leek starts from a garden.

Ila discussed the importance of showing the Council that the site has value so that they are less likely to consider selling the property when there is a change in leadership. She suggested projects like a mural onsite, expanded school partnership programming and a trail around the perimeter with historic interpretation. Others agreed that these ideas are good, but they do not increase revenue to the site or aid in the financial sustainability of the farm. Ila also suggested ideas about a wine tasting space at the top of the hill, and fermentation buildings near the northeast corner of the site.

Zorah discussed the importance of recording a conservation easement for the site and requested further explanation on the County's interest in doing so. She requested to know who would be involved in researching this and wanted confirmation she could contact the Washington Farmland Trust to talk about the benefits of an easement and its impact on grant eligibility. Lynde indicated she would discuss this with Rocky Houston, research the implications of the proposed easement and if appropriate schedule a meeting with the Trust. Zora said this should be the first step in the rest of the plan development. Sandra agreed that knowing more about this could inform the recommendations the committee makes.

Ila and Bill asked about the availability of grants for work on the property. Zorah discussed possible grants through the Farmland Trust. Sandra and Kristine noted grants for historic preservation. Lynde discussed that the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Board has grants for recreation, conservation, and agriculture. Grants can range from \$10,000 to over \$1,000,000; however, RCO grants typically require unrestricted public access. Zorah asked who would manage grants. Lynde discussed that at the County various folks manage grants dependent upon the programs they are managing. Lynde manages park and lands related grants. Typically, the County will submit grant applications and manage them. Partner organizations can apply for grants, but they must include the County in the process, as the property owner.

Kristine and Zorah discussed that there is no one person who manages grants and programming on the site. Further clarification was requested on the Farm Specialists role. Ila requested a schedule of all of the activities that occur at the site on a daily/weekly basis. Kristine and Sandra described that this is done annually, but that there isn't a person doing this daily. The Farm Advisory Team reviews project requests and is aware of what is going on, but daily publicizing or updating of a calendar isn't possible given the nature of a group of volunteers.

The group was supportive of the County having a position that would coordinate activities on the farm, support grant writing opportunities, and publicize the programs at the Farm site. Lynde discussed that the County had met with the folks that manage Luscher Farms in Lake Oswego, OR. That farm park currently has two City staff that manage the site, one that is a land manager and the other a programming coordinator. Both of those positions are funded elsewhere in the City budget, and not by revenue from the farm park. The programming coordinator is funded by the recreation budget. Lynde also discussed that a program coordinator position that would manage this type of park programming would be a bit of a one-off position for the County, as there are no community centers or other facilities that provide this type of programming.

Zorah asked about the top ratings from the cost recovery exercise from the January 30, 2023 meeting. Lynde reviewed the top selections were farm foundation fundraising, educational institution partnership and admissions. Lynde will forward that document to committee members. Zorah asked about the County's plans for the March workshop. Lynde reviewed the plan for that meeting: consultant facilitation of a committee discussion on survey results, public comments, and community leader interviews; committee discussion on the criteria for scoring of the alternative analysis; small group exercise to develop alternatives for consideration in the alternative analysis in the sustainability plan (these will be combination of programmatic elements and cost recovery options). Zorah asked for the criteria, programmatic elements, and cost recovery option lists to be sent to committee members.

Lynde asked about a suggestion from Kristine that a farm tour led by the Master Gardeners be provided for committee members. All those present were interested in this. Sandra suggested an hour-long meeting would be sufficient.

Questions for follow up:

1. Who would oversee grants?
2. Does the County have a reluctance to having a conservation easement?
3. Provide a definition of park types that are possible at this specific property and the pros and cons of each.
4. Can the County make exploratory efforts to learn more about conservation easement options before the plan is finalized? Who at the County would be involved in this?

2:45 PM Adjourn

Submitted by Lynde Wallick, Park Planner