



Heritage Farm Sustainability Plan Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 13, 2023, 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm
In-Person and Virtual Meeting Via Microsoft Teams

Committee Members: Matthew Baum, Teresa Meyer, Kristine Perry, Rob Freed, Bill Cline, Zorah Oppenheimer, Ila Stanek, Mark Wreath, Marcela Venegas Munoz*, Tanika Siscoe

Clark County: Rocky Houston, Lynde Wallick, Amy Arnold, David Stipe

Guests and Other: Clark Worth, Katie Wilson, Jack Bernhardsen, Emily Straw, Abbey Price, Lily Gehrenbeck, Milada Allen, Terry Allen

* Not Present

1:08 PM Welcome

Lynde informed the committee that Jazlyn Faulstick, who was with Visit Vancouver WA, is no longer apart of the steering committee. She said that Visit Vancouver WA will try to fill her position.

Kristine and Lynde indicated when the next tour is at Heritage Farm – on Friday, March 17, 2023 at 1:00 p.m.

Katie had everyone present in the conference room do brief introductions, reminded the online users how to participate, and reviewed the agenda items. The Workshop portion of the agenda will not be recorded and will not include an online meeting.

1:14 PM Group Discussion: Public Comments, Survey, Leader Interviews – Katie Wilson

Teresa, Bill and Zorah gave a brief summary of the meeting that occurred on February 13, 2023 indicating that they discussed various methods to meet the goal, including who is responsible for the farm, the possible grants they could receive, the process for obtaining a conservation easement, the park designations that are available for the property, the addition of a paid employee at the farm besides WSU or the County, the possibility of a non-profit organization taking over the farm, and issues surrounding having a farmer's market on the property.

Rocky, Lynde and Zorah discussed the topic of a conservation easement. Rocky state that the County could apply a conservation easement on the property without another party. Lynde researched various options, both through the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) for the State of Washington and through different organizations. Rocky indicated that if a grant was obtained through the RCO, a conservation easement would be required by RCO to keep the property open to the public, which would help align the farm's future use with its current use. Lynde further explained that the County would either apply for and manage the grants or assist

another user group in this process. Zorah added that they discussed using the conservation easement as a tool for funding.

Lynde and David discussed the park definitions noting that the “natural area” definition is not codified yet, that it’s an internal definition at this point. Zorah, Ila and Rocky discussed the definition differences between an urban natural area versus a natural area. Rocky listed off a few examples of property owned by the County that are not developed yet. David also explained the difference between a regional park and a community park.

David discussed the master plan noting that it has the highest value of protection for the farm; that it has been reviewed by the public twice and re-affirmed by Council. Ila, Matt and Rocky discussed the idea of turning a section of the farm into an AG (agricultural) park to further protect it. Matt, Rocky and David explained that the farm is protected under the master plan; that the next steps are to develop a sustainability plan.

Katie discussed the community survey noting that they had over one-thousand responses. She said there was a lot of convergence from people and some of the common themes from folks were that they wanted to maintain the farm as an asset; that they do value it and want to learn more about it. She said people wanted more outreach and marketing for the farm so they would know how to respond and participate there, that people supported the master plan’s priorities, and that people were open to considering funding options.

Katie discussed the various methods they have used to collect feedback, including community leader interviews, public comments and the public comments received from the public meeting held on December 14, 2022. Ila, Katie and Rocky discussed the community survey questions, indicating a need for specification by someone’s geographic location(s) or zip code(s) on future questions. Zorah, Katie, and Lynde discussed the format of the questions and answers, and the number of people that submitted responses.

1:50 PM Plan Development Process – Lynde Wallick

Lynde reviewed the timeline for the sustainability plan, indicating the estimated dates for the following: the alternative development, when the County will write the plan, when the committee will review the plan, when the next public meeting will occur, when the plan will be reviewed by the Parks Advisory Board and with Council, when the committee will score the alternative analysis, when the final review by the Parks Advisory Board will be, and when the County plans to have Council adopt the plan. If at any point in this process the committee needs more time, then staff will re-evaluate the timeline.

1:56 PM Break. Recording and online meeting stopped.

2:09 PM Small Group Exercises – Katie Wilson/Clark Worth/Lynde Wallick/David Stipe

Lynde reviewed the agenda for the small group exercise and what the County hopes to achieve from this; the purpose is to form some alternatives – ideas that combine both the programmatic elements and cost recovery options to develop the sustainability plan. David further explained that the idea is to narrow down the list of options to a few of them and that if something is removed, it will no longer need to be discussed. Lynde listed the instructions for the “Build the Farm Exercise Worksheet” and explained the various handouts regarding the programmatic element menu items (the list of elements that have been discussed in prior meetings), the cost

recovery options menu, the performance indicators or scoring criteria (the symbols listed on the sheets) and that additional definitions, options, or corrections to the sheet may be added or removed. Lynde also noted that WSU still must be included and considered – that WSU is not being removed from the plan. David showed an example he drafted. He then told everyone to break into groups to discuss this, then we will come back into a bigger group for presentation and conversation. David and Lynde explained that once everyone is done with the sheets, to turn them in for scoring, noting that scoring has to do with considering all the options opposed to deciding a “winner.”

2:42 PM Breakout sessions

People separated into five groups to work on the “Build the Farm Exercise Worksheet”.

3:26 PM Break

3:44 PM Alternative Presentations Discussion

Katie explained that the worksheets will be briefly reviewed, and a broader discussion will be had after.

Mark explained his alternative, “Agri-Park 2.0”, listing off an idea for the farm to host cross country meets to help introduce the farm to new groups of people. He also supports having high school students teach elementary children the benefits of the farm to help aid in the AG educational program elements.

Bill, Rocky, Mark, and Ila discussed the idea of having high school students teach elementary children indicating that there were programs in existence already that this could be patterned from.

Teresa, Bill, and Tanika explained their alternative, “TBT Unlimited”, listing off a few pros and cons. A couple of the ideas they support are programs with an educational aspect, whether it be in job skills or farming development, and being able to provide food to various groups, people, or donations. A few of the ideas they don’t support and why are having a farmer’s market on site – they would want only farm-related vendors; no to having a children’s playground on site – there is a playground in the nearby park; and no to having live animals on site – there’s too much liability.

Ila explained her alternative, “The Right Stuff”, listing off a few ideas she supports – having animals like chickens and goats at the farm and having a manager pay rent to live in a model farmhouse, having a community supported agricultural (CSA) garden, having incubator farms, having a farmer’s market, having a composter program that people could bring their materials to and that the farm could teach people about, and having green energy elements at the farm like solar panels or wind turbines.

Kristine, Rocky, Zorah, and Lynde discussed the idea of the composter program realizing that a cost analysis would need to be done. This program would potentially require more acreage, commercial equipment and vehicles, and more people on the site. Ila, Rocky and David also discussed the entryway access point for this, noting that frontage improvements would need to be made. There also might be concerns from neighboring residents as well.

Matt explained his alternative, “The Batman”, listing off a few ideas he supports – increasing the awareness of the farm to different regions of the County, having historic farm tours, having a

homestead attraction or a community outdoor classroom, having children involved, having equitable lease adjustments for users, and keeping the farm as a natural space. Matt also explained ideas he supports but has concerns about – having a playground on the farm, building items at the farm but worried about the processes it will take, having a farmer’s market but it’s specifically a grower’s market, having trails on the property but understanding the risk of the farm being open to the public, and the lack of enforceability at the site. David and Matt also discussed a few funding options.

Rob, Zorah, and Kristine explained their alternative, “Practical Ag”, listing off a few pros and cons. A couple of ideas they support are incubator farms – if they go to full fruition, they are a potential for community supported agriculture (CSA). There could even be a farmer’s market through that program where the site could bring in new farmers, possibly on a rotational schedule. They also support having multi-purpose classrooms for food production or food-system based educational opportunities, for adults and children alike, having a community trail on the farm to help enhance their exposure to the public, having a children’s interactive garden instead of a playground, having equitable lease adjustments for users, and having corporate sponsors that have a connection to local produce. An idea that they do not support are the parking fees. They feel this would be tough with the number of volunteers they have at the farm.

Lynde, Kristine, and Rob discussed the non-governmental organization (NGO) cost recovery option. Kristine said it felt redundant because they already have the Friends of the Farm on site.

Zorah, Lynde, and David discussed the options that no one chose, like having an equine program, having horticulture education programs, or having a green energy demonstration.

Zorah was concerned about the options they all chose, noting that they are at a higher expense than the revenue; that they are great options for performance and exposure but require people to do the work. Rocky indicated that the County would review the options and see if any of the programs match other funding streams. Rocky explained that this meeting is an exercise to help prove why the farm is valuable.

5:04 PM Next Steering Committee Meeting

The next meeting still needs to be determined; Lynde anticipates it will be sometime in May 2023.

5:05 PM Adjourn

Submitted by Amy Arnold, Secretary