

LARIMER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2016

Present: Jason Brothers, Tim Clouse, Karen Crumbaker (liaison), Lew Gaiter, Brenda Gimeson (liaison), Charles Gindler (liaison), Debra Herston, Nic Koontz, Minerva Lee, Gail Meisner, Greg Schreiner, Jon Slutsky, Bill Spencer (liaison), Zach Thode, and George Wallace. Guest: James Thompson.

Absent: Jennifer Bornhoft (liaison), Sarah Fox, Val Manning, Richard Seaworth and Ted Swanson.

I. Gail Meisner called the meeting to order at 12:37 p.m. Introductions were made.

II. The January 13, 2016, AAB Meeting Minutes were approved.

III. Interaction with Lew Gaiter on Ag and Community related issues. Commissioner Gaiter thanked the Board for their service and stated he had nothing new to report back to the Board. He provided an opportunity for the Board to ask him questions.

- Gail asked Commissioner Gaiter to update the Board on the Day Farm and Boxelder project. The Commissioner informed the Board that Larimer County proposed an agreeable price and reached a final settlement with the landowners.
- George asked Commissioner Gaiter to look into the purchase of a ¼ a section by Poudre R1 School District for a new high school in Wellington. The concerns are the proposed site is near an agricultural operation, LaLuna Dairy, and development continues to encroach on agricultural lands. Lew said he would look into this at the next school board meeting.

- Bill asked for an update on the clean-up or screening of Lynn Parker's property in Wellington. The Commissioner said that Mr. Parker met the letter of the law in terms of screening the debris on his property from the street.

IV. Nomination and election of 2016 officers. Greg Schreiner was nominated Chair. Zach Thode was nominated Vice Chair. Minerva Lee was nominated secretary.

Gail thanked the Board for allowing her to be chair the past two years and stated she was proud to serve on this Board.

V. Presentation on immigration by Greg Schreiner. Greg was not able to find a speaker to present to the board on the issue of immigration in agriculture. Greg commented on the H-2A Temporary Agricultural Program. This program establishes a means for agricultural employers who anticipate a shortage of domestic workers to bring nonimmigrant foreign workers to the U.S. to perform agricultural labor or services of a temporary or seasonal nature.

- Greg mentioned it was becoming more and more difficult to find labor for vegetable operations.
- The Board asked how they, as a Board or as an individual, can help farmers in Larimer County with labor issues.
- There was a comment that housing for temporary workers is an issue, as well as the need for year-round employment.
- Deb asked the Board how to involve American kids in agriculture, specifically labor. She felt the root of the problem is to offer incentives by way of tuition reduction, scholarships, learning where our food comes from, etc.

VI. Set-up Task Force working groups and chairman; divide into groups to create a work plan.

Housing/Immigration -- Jon, George, Greg, Bill, and Tim (as a resource).

Evolution of Agriculture -- Gail, Zach, Tim, Nic, Deb, Minerva, and Richard

Rural Broadband -- Val, Ted, Jason, and Sarah

Tim mentioned the National Ag. Law Center may be a resource for legal background information. That link is <http://nationalaglawcenter.org/>

Greg asked each task force to create a work plan on what they would like to accomplish and have it ready at the next meeting on May 11, 2016. He also asked each task force to consider who will be the chair for their task force.

VII. Announcements:

- Gail announced an Ag Safety Workshop will take place at Centennial Livestock in Fort Collins, on Saturday, April 23, 2016, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The educate programs for both adults and youth will be on tractor safety, fire extinguisher operation, ATV safety, lawn mower, weed eater and chain saw safety, animal safety, firearm safety, and electrical safety. Sponsors will provide a free lunch. George thought it would be fun to compile a handout to give to Gail for the workshop on “the dumbest thing you have ever done in agriculture (around safety)”. George asked AAB members to write something and get it to him by March 31.

VIII. The next AAB meeting will be held on May 11, 2016, at 12:30 p.m. at the CSU Larimer County Extension Office, 1525 Blue Spruce Drive, Fort Collins, CO.

IX. The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.