

Date: Wednesday, May 14th, 2025
Time: 1:00 PM

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

Advisory Committee Members Attending: Amber Graves, Dylan Alsbach, Eric Umbreit, Ryan Peterson, Martha Sullins, Carmen Farmer, John Forrest, [Brad Justice](#), [Dennis Lacerte](#), [Forrest Carlson](#)

Commissioners' Office: Commissioner John Kefalas

Staff attending: Cary Weiner, Andy Weakland, Jessica Callen, Laura Walker, Matt Lafferty, Eric Fried

Other Members of the Community: Sabrina Torres, Rebecca Wasserman-Olin, Rebecca Hill

1:00-1:20

Call to Order and Roll Call

- Meeting called to order at 1:04 pm

Amendments to the Agenda

- No Amendments to agenda requested

Approval of the Minutes

- Mar 12, 2025
 - Minutes approved as-is.

Staff Updates

- Jess Callen
 - Two Demo day events coming up:
 - June 3rd: Soil Grazing and Growing
 - In conjunction with NREL, Agro Solar Consulting, and Jack's Solar Garden
 - Extension was reached out to as a trusted partner in information around Agrivoltaics.
 - June 17th: Soil Demo Day,
 - This is a free event because of a few sponsorships and we are working in conjunction with Citizens Science Soil Health Project
 - The event will be held at Todd Olanders Farm (Voted Best American Single Malt).
- Cary Weiner
 - Palmer Land Conservancy has resources to facilitate conversation with Larimer County Ag producers around water rights, transfers, water sales in agriculture
 - Lesli Ellis is our County contact with Palmer Land Trust. She has offered to provide more information at the July board meeting.
 - Lesli is looking to get some feedback on when the best time for this conversation to take place.
 - Possibly in the Fall, October was floated, and the best day of the week would be a Monday.

1:20-1:30

Commissioner Kefalas Updates

- In regards to Referendum 1A, this was a .15% sales tax increase devoted to transportation funding that failed during the last election cycle. The commissioner will be dispersing a flyer/handout to support an education awareness campaign in response to why the ballot measure failed initially. This education campaign is a product of working in tandem with a consultant. There is a link on the back of the flyer that will provide citizens with a way to give feedback. After collecting feedback, educating the citizens, and collecting feedback there is a possibility that this funding request will be going back on the ballot in November of 2025
- Met with Calandra Lindstadt, she works with the Colorado Behavioral Health Administration and is the statewide Ag liaison. She is interested in coming to speak to the board potentially in July. They're in the early stages of understanding the needs of the Ag community around behavioral health and who is active in the space developing a network. There was a bill legislation that became law in 2024 and that set up some of the funding for this and this kind of a program outreach.
- Farmers Market starts on Saturday, 5/17/25. On the north side of the parking lot, there is a big construction project going on Mountain Avenue. Hopefully this will be complete by Saturday but please be sure to attend and get the word out.
- At our 4/21/25 land use hearing, we did approve the Platte River Power Authority permit application. This allows them to move forward. This approval came with conditions, one of which was the building of five natural gas turbines as part of a non-carbon future initiative to become 80% non-carbon by 2030.

1:30-3:25

Discussion Items and Action Items

1:30-2:15

- Agricultural Economic Impact Study Scoping (Rebecca Hill, Rebecca Wasserman-Olin, Cary Weiner)
 - This is a funded summer Extension internship project
 - Please refer to PowerPoint Presentation: The Changing Economic Contribution of Agriculture and Food in Larimer County
 - The goal is to receive feedback from the board based on what we hear today to further refine how this study moves forward.
 - Board Feedback/Questions:
 - Will this study answer what percentage of food that is grown locally is actually consumed locally? This is a topic that is important to the community (Commissioner Kefalas).
 - Currently being reported at 1% of food produced locally is consumed locally, possibly updating that number.
 - Having the study address water usage in terms of how different crops use different amounts of water.
 - What is the level of effort being devoted to this per week?
 - 25 - 30 hours a week
 - The value-added portion of this study is something that can be really useful to the community (Brad Justice).
 - What are thoughts around taking more than just the Larimer County region into consideration during this study? (Commissioner Kefalas)
 - This is something that we can incorporate into the study if the board thinks it is important to expand.
 - Some conversation from the board on not expanding the region of study in order to get more direct data about Larimer County.
 - Topic discussion on tree consumption and increasing the value add proposition and studying this space a little (Dylan Alsbach).
 - The issue with farmers not having enough land and forcing land owners to lease more land in order to increase production. Studying what is the impact of this on Larimer County. Topic of land access in general in Larimer County and what does this look like in the future (Jess Callen).

2:15-2:45

- Boulder County Agricultural Codes Overview (Sabrina Torres)
 - Introduction of Sabrina Torres as an Ag Planner with Boulder County
 - Sabrina acts as a liaison between ag producers and the county to communicate, explain and advocate for land use codes.

- Board Feedback/Discussion:
 - How would this position look in Larimer County and what benefits would there be?
 - Could there be an Ag Planner position for Larimer County that is similar to Boulder County in order to be an advocate for producers and be a liaison between producers and the County. Current budget constraints need to be taken into consideration.
 - Advocating for cost transparency so that Ag producers have a realistic idea of cost of business (specifically farmstead costs were discussed).
 - How has the relationship between producers and County been since the Ag Planner for Boulder County has been around (4 years).
 - Ease of sensitivity around communication and growing relationships to have a liaison that is local for the producers has been very positive.
 - What kind of data points have been collected with this position.
 - No specifics to provide however, the Sustainability department of Boulder County supports the data that goes into the projects that they fund and is a great resource for the Ag producers.
 - Interaction with this position with the Boulder County building code and compliance department?
 - Not a lot of interaction with the building code for the city of Boulder because of the nature of the position being a county/federal level position but it is looked at as an opportunity to grow.

2:45-3:25

- Code Adjustments and Process Improvements for Agriculture (Eric Fried and Laura Walker)
 - Introduction of Laura Walker and her role as Director of Human and Economic Health. Broad overview of her role and her ability to connect the issues of the board to other departments that she oversees.
 - Eric Fried discussion of building code process and what changes can possibly be made to incorporate the Ag Community in the decision making process.
 - Discussion around the Farmstand example used in previous conversations, stemmed from Brad Justice's questions around this example.
 - Discussion of the possible flexibility built into the building code process and a want to work with the Ag producers so that they aren't burdened by building codes that weren't necessarily meant for an Ag specific purpose.
 - Discussion of specific codes that a few board members brought up to see if there is any flexibility in the way the code is written and if there is the ability to have cut-outs that would go in front of the Commissioners for approval.

3:25-3:30

Future Communication Items

Adjourn - Adjourned at 3:31pm

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