

Date: Wednesday, March 8, 2023
Time: 12:30 PM
Location: Hybrid - In-Person: Lake Estes, 3rd Floor, 200 West Oak Street, Fort Collins or Virtual, Zoom Link: https://larimer-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_i8-Z_4qCSzGq6j2f_6y6eQ

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

The Larimer County Agricultural Advisory Board (AAB) met on Wednesday, March 8, 2023, at 12:30 p.m. in a hybrid setting in person and via Zoom.

The following Board members were present: Zach Thode (Chairperson), Amber Graves (Vice Chairperson), Frank Garry, Audrey Snyder, Brad Justice, Tim Clouse, George Wallace, Maureen McDonough, Beth Conrey, Kristin Ramey, and Travis Horton.

The following officials and staff were present: John Kefalas, County Commissioner; Lesli Ellis, CIPR Director; Matt Lafferty, Principal Planner; Eric Fried, Chief Building Official; Travis Rollins, Resource Specialist II; Daylan Figs, Natural Resource Director; Meegan Flenniken, Program Mgr. Land Conservation; Alyssa Martin, Planner II, Justin Currie Planner II; Jared Seay, Planner I; Shalana Lysaght, Business Operations Manager; and Christina Scrutchins, Recording Secretary.

Guests present: Abbey Staples, and Brian Erickson

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JANUARY 11, 2022

Tabled to May meeting till amendments are made.

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

Amended as follows:

Discussion Items

2. Natural Resources Master Plan Update – Daylan/Meegan (Originally 3)
3. Building Permitting – Eric Fried (Originally 2)

INTERACTION WITH COMMISSIONER KEFALAS ON AGRICULTURAL AND COMMUNITY RELATED ISSUES

Commissioner Kefalas wanted to remind everyone of the conservation tax return packets, the NISP project consultants will be giving an update regarding Chimney Hollow on March 5, 2023, and on March 1, 2023, was the Larimer County Extension showcase. A meeting took place with the CSU Extension Director, Kerry Rollins, regarding the Agg position and it will be moving forward and is expected to post by mid-April. Kefalas asked the Board to review the Bylaws to better understand the process and revisit the purpose for the Agricultural Advisory Board. There is a four-acre piece of land between the Public Health Department Building and the Family Health Clinic and is in support of the proposed project. The BLM has initiated the process to prepare a programmatic, environmental and resource management plan amendments for updated utility, scale, utility, scale, solar energy, planning on Federal public plans.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Kathleen Sands

- Concerns regarding the Restore Colorado 22 Aerial Spray Campaign and spraying for Cheatgrass.

- Cheatgrass is needed as vegetation for the elk and deer throughout the winter until May when other vegetation is favored.
- Cheatgrass is not a fire hazard and spraying to mitigate it is wasted resources.
- Dangerous chemicals are being sprayed and it is a major health concern to public health.

STAFF UPDATES

1. Town Hall meeting regarding general water issues – Commissioner Kefalas

- Looking at the first meetings to discuss water and how it will be framed, water storage, water conservation, and river help.

2. County Water Plan Project – Matt/Amber

- Readvertising the water plan to capture a different crowd.
- Member Graves will be an active member on the reviewing committee once the project starts.

3. Possible AG Position in Extension – Zach

- Members Graves and Thode have reviewed the job description and have given their feedback.
- The Larimer County will be hiring an AG Extension Director and they will be responsible for the acquisition and moving projects forward.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

NOCO Food Partnership – Audrey Snyder w/Rekaivery

- NOCO applied for and was approved a planning grant in the amount of \$350,000.00.
- The two-year planning grant will deploy NOCO's individual projects.
- NOCO's is in the process of applying for a 1.5-million-dollar implementation grant for Larimer County.
- NOCO has four work groups such as public policy producer support, community support and then marketed infrastructure support.
 - Each work group has 10 members and will complete surveying to create action plans that will be implemented with the 1.5-million-dollar grant.
- An El Americano event, with Kerry Rollins, was hosted on March 7, 2023, to collect data regarding what the community would like to see or sell other than a Farmer's Market.

Commissioner Kefalas mentioned that within the conversation he had with Carrie Rollins, they discussed the food system, the consumers, and the food system report.

- One of the working groups is to create a resource guide where the community can list active farmers in the region, produce they sell, restaurants, or for organizations can reach out to create organic connections.
- The resource guide would also include how to start a business, if one is registered or unregistered, and more information to help with the start up.

- NOCO is focusing on a policy that Northern Colorado mobile home park HOA's create a new rule that threatens Cottage Food Act.

Natural Resources Master Plan Update – Daylan/Meegan

- Larimer County is recreating the “Our Lands Our Future” survey
- The Natural Resource department is reaching out to various boards in the community to request participation, or at least feedback during that process.
- The Natural Resource department has having a consultant partner with all the municipalities to look at the allowable uses of the open space sales tax.
- When the previous “Our Lands Our Future” survey was completed in 2013, the answers were similar in many cases. The Natural Resource department is looking into asking more questions regarding equity issues.
- The survey is anticipated to be initiated in the mid-summer of 2024.
- Members and staff discussed that there could be the opportunity for the AAB to review and give feedback and input on Money and what occurs in the open space lands.
- Members and staff discussed requested feedback such as how the department spends the open space sales, tax dollars to acquire additional lands or conservation basements, and the balance across the county, and across types of land that looks like.
- Members and staff discussed that the Natural Resource department receives both positive and negative feedback but are making sure that the front of the conversation with key information of the project.

Staff mentioned that one member from ESAB and AAB member Conrey will be utilizing one member from each of those words to talk about all in a resolution that will be presented later in the year 2023.

Building Permitting – Eric Fried

- Staff presented the Building Use and requirements for ag buildings. The presentation included Risk Category, bathroom required in building, Accessibility required, HVAC and insulation required, parking and drainage, and Sprinkler (depending on size of the building).
- Members and Staff discussed if farm stands should be in their own category. Farmers will need to keep in mind how they accept the community to distinguish if they are required to have specific building requirements. There isn't a fine line when a farm stand becomes a farmers' market.
- Members and Staff discussed if there could be a farm zone and to have a speed limit zone similar to school zones. Having some flexibility and for the farms to continue their business. It was mentioned that farm stands might be open all day and there is an off-road parking standard for farm stands etc. Parking and speed limit issues would be concerns that fall under the Land Use Code.

- Staff will review and revise then send it to the AAB for review and feedback before completed. Staff would like to clean up confusion with what is required within a building and what use is allowed within buildings.

Farm Stands/Markets Policy

- Staff passed out a resolution declaring seasonal allowance for certain special events related to local food and farm stand. The document included how a special event is distinguished. An example of when a farm stand would be distinguished as a special event would be if there is a band playing music or food trucks. The staff is asking the AAB to review and to give feedback regarding the types of activities and if it wouldn't be appropriate to require the applicant to go through the special event process. Currently the special event application fee is \$100, and the process includes referral agencies to verify there aren't any concerns.
- Members would like to request the title be changed to "Special Event Farmers Market Application" to eliminate confusion and to have a proper location on the website for the application.
- Staff stated that the next steps would be for the Resolution to be presented and reviewed by the Board of County Commissioners at the March 20, 2023, Work Session. Once any revisions are completed after the review then the Resolution will be presented at Admin Matters to be approved and applicant can apply.

Motion

Member Wallace made a motion to renew the continuation of the Farm Stand/Market Policy Resolution for another year.

Member Graves seconded.

Motion carried (12-0)

RECESS

Start – 2:33 / End – 2:45

Climate Plan Update

- Many projects are moving forward, and they have consultants on board trying to get the messaging issues addressed for a better way of communication.
- The March meetings will include discussion regarding specific subject area focus groups and drilling down the strategies that relates to the AAB as well as what potential actions could be going along with those strategies, so that we can start to narrow down what's going to go in this plan versus any other plans that so that there won't be reposition.
- The website will be live at the end of March 2023. It will provide more opportunity to weigh in on the work that's being done and to offer suggestions regarding the work that should be considered.

Voluntary AG Update

- The next steps will be to bring together Stakeholders and receive feedback.
- Commissioner Kefalas stated that there will be additional help to facilitate the process.

Work Plan and Task Groups

Livestock Guardian Dogs/Right to Farm Policy

- Members discussed wanting to figure out who owns the current language and if the right to farm language to include it does explicitly call out livestock guarding dogs or farm dogs.
- Staff will reach out to the County Attorney to research what is needed to make any revisions to the language.
- Members suggested reviewing the CVW policy to help with the language that would be beneficial within the Larimer County policy.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Thode and Commissioner Kefalas gave an update regarding solid waste. Larimer County is still in contract negotiations with the Public Services regarding the Tier one project phase.

Staff presented a list of public meetings regarding the opportunity to learn about proposed ideas and policies impacting the East Mulberry Plan Area.

ADJOURN

With there being no further business, the hearing adjourned at 3:14 p.m.