



CLACKAMAS COUNTY

Soil and Water Conservation District

Approved March 18, 2014

Clackamas County SWCD Special Meeting Minutes for February 18, 2014

Present:

Directors: Roger Fantz, Don Guttridge, Jesse Nelson, Ron Oberg, Joan Zuber (Joan arrived at 11:00 a.m.)

Associate Directors: Jeff Becker, Robin Harrower, PK Melethil (PK arrived at 10:10 a.m.), Jim Toops (participated by phone)

Staff: Lisa Kilders, Clair Klock, Marlene Lloyd, Cathy McQueeney, Eann Rains, Tom Salzer

Guest: Amy Cleary

Chair Oberg called the special meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. for the purpose of board planning with facilitator Amy Cleary.

Manager Salzer noted that with some newer folks involved at the board level, it was a good time to discuss what sort of legacy the Board wants to leave. He shared a copy of the Master Plan with the Board, noting that it was beautifully made and filled with graphics. He observed, however, that it was a long range strategic visioning document rather than a long-range plan and that it seemed to be primarily a reflection of thoughts and ideas from the staff and the consultant. Subsequent to the creation of this plan, the Board created an Annual Plan that focused on the immediate future, District values, and the "W's." The annual plan is something easier to understand and digest. It is adopted yearly, but needs reflection and Board input.

Manager Salzer asked the Board to look back 50 years at what has happened in Clackamas County, then look forward 50 years to vision and plan. For example, the current transportation plan for the County suggests that development is aimed at prime farming land. Manager Salzer asked if it might be shortsighted to conserve soil, but lose our farms. There are many threats to natural resources in Clackamas County, as well as many opportunities. The staff delivers on direction the Board provides.

Amy Cleary: Would like to hear from each what expectations are for the day. CHARTED

Don: I would like to see us get over the “hump” on what we’ll do with the properties, explore the 50 year vision. Let’s examine the growth issue over the next 50 years – Clackamas County will be very different. Things have changed rapidly, but we can protect. We need to figure out as a District what we can do to protect our farmland from development. We can demonstrate and teach, but what are we going to do beyond that? What is our role in protecting/conserving land?

Robin: The Board is advisory (it has no regulatory authority). Do we want to be proactive or reactive? We can get out in front and target areas that are at risk over next 20-50 years. Attend city planning meetings, write letters, take a position. There is transfer of development rights legislation in the works at a State level – we might be able to use this to protect resources. What other tools? Easements, others?

Roger: I want to focus on the specific issue of properties and the long term vision for the District. Let’s look in stages: 5, 10, 15 years, but, beyond that, we can’t effectively manage. We can manage use of land that is currently within our sphere – other is beyond our ability. Growth is inevitable. Let’s focus on what we’re doing now, what is useful. THEN look to see how we can build on these things for the future. Rain gardens, green space, working with development.

Jesse: I’d like to see us focus on our long term plan and get over the “hump” with our two properties. We don’t have any direction. What sort of facility will we need for the future? What do we want to demonstrate? Do we want to host events? How do we want to interact with our customers? Growth is coming. How are we going to work with it? We’ll have to adapt and do more urban work.

Jeff: I hear about demonstration and tool rental a lot, but I don’t hear about what our goals for demonstration are so we can plan these resources. In the future, what do we want to offer? What are the resources the public can count on? How can we educate the public so they’ll make sound land use decisions when they go to vote? What will the impacts of our decisions be on staff time? What do we mean by protect? Conserve? Development will happen – we can’t stop it. How can we work in this changing environment in the future?

Don: I’d like to see us have a new, efficient, low maintenance, office building – whether on Pleasant Ave. or the farm, but let’s talk about our vision first.

Jim Toops: We need a new facility, we need to expand. We want to use best practices on the property. Training and classes will be constantly evolving, requirements will change over time, but we’ll have a base location from where to offer these resources. Twenty years from now, we’ll be able to offer workshops and demonstrations to support urban and rural properties. A new facility is a priority – let’s build on this moving into the future. I’m concerned about how much we’re paying for space now – gouging the taxpayers – and want to see us use our resources efficiently.

Amy: We have two hours and 20 minutes left. We’ll schedule a break. Let’s go from expectations to what ability we have. “What can the Board do?”

Let’s identify which direction we can take. Be proactive or reactive, explore specific ideas for property, start conversation on a facility for the future, get specific about programs/resources to offer in the future. How

will growth of Oregon City affect the future of Clackamas County and land use and what tools can the District utilize to share development.

Roger: Can the group agree to take a specific amount of time to discuss a rough plan for next 5-10 years with an eye on the distant future and then spend a specific amount of time discussing the new facility: where it will be, general design, services it might provide?

Amy: I think Tom was hoping you'd look at the 50 year plan a bit more - examining the District beyond the properties we've already purchased. What's the purpose of the service district and based on that, how do we plan? The Board is setting the tone for the future, not just day to day. Let's imagine what it might look like – our vision will help us figure out where to place our priorities today.

Robin: What are our priorities as a District: conserving soil, maintaining water quality, preventing erosion, others?

Jeff: How do these priorities help a changing population base?

Don: How do we keep from becoming Multnomah County? Farmland is gone – it's all subdivisions.

Robin: How can we use outreach and education to inform our citizens?

Jeff: If landowners are successful, they won't want/need to develop their land.

Roger: Basic things we do now, and preservation of animal habitat along with agricultural production, should be our guidelines for next 50 years.

Jesse: Education! As older farmers die, the new generation is happy to take large sums of money for "dirt." How do we help maintain family connection to the land? We need younger people in production agriculture. This is an issue of generational land protection.

Robin: Can we go to landholders and ask how we can help them? Should we help save the farmland or watch it slip away?

Don: I think we should protect and preserve agricultural land and help with good development (in a way that helps the land and water systems). What we can't preserve, we can mitigate. Maybe we should get involved in making good development.

Robin: We could work with home builder's administration and commercial real estate groups. We could make presentations, with an emphasis on green building, and educate those who will be doing the development.

Amy: Stafford is trying to put together a plan to regulate responsible development in their area. Engage in conversation with the community. The community drives the planning.

Tom: What are the legal authorities of the District? Politically, we can provide leadership, provide positions, and lobby commissioners. We have a state association. We can create conditions to let us do things. Legislature gave us the power to have easements – they trump County zoning. We can buy and sell

property and accept gifts/bequests. We can do life-time leases on property. We can sue (and be sued) and challenge a land use action. We have statutory authority to do outreach and education. We CAN save prime agricultural land and wildlife habitat.

Robin: This is very powerful – we can use our legal authority to place easements, buy and sell property!

Ron: If we go too far out on these things, can we still do the things we're doing now? Is anyone else looking out 50 years? We're breaking new ground.

Tom: None of us will be here in 50 years, but what we do today will be in evidence 50 years from today. How will we be remembered by our grandkids?

Clair: I've been working for 20 years to figure out how to put an easement on my land to keep it in conservation in perpetuity: wood, farm, agriculture -- I've worked to limit the footprint on my property. Now I can do it with Columbia Land Trust in Multnomah County.

Don: We're spending money on individual farmers/cooperators now, who might sell their land in a few years versus using it to purchase land that we'll have moving forward.

Roger: There could be a gradual shift to use funds, ability to use easements, to acquire land and build staff expertise to work with agencies to ensure good development. Let's have a bigger voice on a broader scale.

Eann: Future properties with easements also provide opportunities to do demonstrations on those lands. These folks would most likely be interested in issues such as erosion, water use, etc. We can write into the easement document an annual tour, etc., to see how quality conservation programs work.

Jeff: When we're in a public space, don't we feel grateful that someone had the vision in the past to put this in place. I want to be remembered that way.

Jim: Tom made good points. We need to be stewards. I'm trying to lead by example. I have a 5 year old whom I'm trying to teach respect and care for the land.

Ron: I like that. We need new stewards. Could almost be a marketing concept.

Tom: Jan Lee asked that I share that she supports using easements and preserving farm land.

Ron: What kind of money would we need to do something on a large scale?

Tom: We'd need to research, but the cost could be from almost \$0 (an easement where landholder does maintenance) to going out and soliciting property identified as being prime habitat and buying it.

Clair: My easement won't cost East Multnomah anything but staff time.

Robin: Our tax base will grow over time.

Tom: It currently grows about \$100K per year.

Robin: When the tax base was granted, what was promised to the taxpayers in return?

Don: Primarily weed control.

Tom: The tax was passed by our urban constituents, not our rural land owners.

PK: BPA and ODFW also have financial resources to help support easements. We could partner with others.

Jeff: What benefits are there to a landowner?

Tom: If you want an easement to protect it, you get satisfaction. Is there a tax benefit? You can reduce taxes because the easement is perceived as reducing the value of the land by reducing land rights.

Jeff: Do other agencies offer easements? Why would a land owner choose to work with us?

Tom: We have more farms than any County in the state and the smallest farms. Land owners with big parcels have some choices, but small farmers have fewer choices when working with trusts – they want big parcels because it's easier and more efficient to manage. We have a niche in Clackamas County. We're ignored because we have small parcels.

Amy: What did it look like 50 years ago? Were properties bigger? The trend is to fracture properties.

Tom: We still have a lot of farmland in Oregon. EFU land use laws ARE working, but they will not keep us from needing to protect farm land from urban growth.

Robin: Could multiple land owners come together to form an easement? Could they create something that could help protect a long stretch of riparian area?

PK: Maybe this ties in with the Districts' mission of education. We could have landowners come together to save protected space. Bring people together to do this work.

Don: We could offer workshops on conservation easements.

Ron: If we don't market it, it won't happen. We need to have our ducks lined up in advance so we don't have to say no to people.

Clair: The most valuable aspect of our SWCD is that we do on-site site visits. We're one of the last agencies who go out on people's land.

Jeff: Are there partners/agencies with whom we can start to develop /nurture relationships now to have a larger package to offer landholders for land trusts/easements?

Tom: BPA, ODF&W, other state agencies. Yes.

Roger: I think there's a consensus on easements being part of our long range plan.

Tom: Easements are a tool. We have more tools. Do we want to be proactive about saving farm land or not. It's a major change for us. If that was a goal, staff would adapt and bring you farm land.

Roger: I want another goal to be an emphasis on organics and the limited use of pesticides.

Ron: I'm hearing that: **We protect and preserve farmland and we support good development.**

Clair: **Add wildlife** – people care deeply about wildlife.

Ron: Development is going to happen, so we have to help it develop in the right way and we need to protect what we can.

Amy: Let's take a 10 minute break.

Amy: Jim Toops may have dropped off of the phone. **Recap of Goals:**

1. Protecting and preserving land ag, habitat, water quality, soil erosion, wildlife, weed control
2. Talking w/landholder regarding options to protect/preserve land
3. Legislative options
4. Urban growth, Metro
5. Working with Land developers – appropriate practices
6. Relationships with youth – future land holders
7. Education – preservation and protection
8. Continue current conservation practices/projects
9. Can we secure additional legislative powers to increase our efficiency in the future
10. We should be our own landlord, not subject to whims of landlord

Robin: When are we going to decide if we're going to build on the farm or Pleasant Avenue property? This year? Today?

Amy: What are our priorities for the next hour? Where will the office be? Think specifically about properties. How will we zero in on this to start now?

Roger: Let's see if people have proposals for the properties and how the properties fit in with our goals for the future.

Jeff: I agree with Don. In the long run, I would like to see the farm site be everything, concentrate our resources there. Sell the Pleasant Ave. property.

Ron: I thought before that I wanted the office at the farm, but I started thinking about how we tell people not to develop farm land and we'd be developing farm land. I like the idea of having everything in one place. I'm still out, but leaning towards having everything at the farm.

PK: I favor the farm having practices, but keep it as it is for educational land. We can keep it as an option for the future, but keep the office in town at Pleasant Ave. property – there is potential for parking, etc. if designed properly. We should keep an urban face and keep options open for the future, providing equity for our constituents.

Roger: I prefer the idea of having one location and the farm is the best fit for having the most diverse amount of experiences. I think we should remove the house from the property – it's not structurally sound or efficient. I think the farm is/will be close enough in to represent our urban constituents. I think Jan believes it is too far out, but I think people would go there more than we expect people would walk into the office.

Jesse: I thought farm was the best choice, but now I'm thinking we should keep farm land farm land. If we build there, we'd have to have a government exclusion and no one could ever buy it. Keep the farm a working farm. I don't see a building and parking lot on one side. Maybe we should sell the Pleasant Ave. property and look for another office space. It's not a good use of financial resources to build on the farm.

Don: While Pleasant Ave. has potential, in order to get our square footage, we'd need a 2 story building with parking underneath – we're limited by city code. Farm zoning change is just outside our boundaries – in 20 years it gives us the most flexibility. The farm provides us with the opportunity to provide a one stop shop. There is room at the farm for a truck with a trailer and room for office and parking on the west side of the property will not interfere with operations of a farm. The Pleasant Avenue property could be demonstration site, pocket park or we could sell it if we need to for cash flow. Don't fragment the team.

Jim: I agree with Don. We need to keep the staff together. I'd like to see the office on the farm property. We have lots of buildings on site to use as training facilities. Our office could look like a pole barn or farm house, looking like it belongs on the farm. It would be better off to have everything on one site. We could sell the Pleasant Ave. property in future for cash flow.

Robin: We could use the existing pole barn as an office building. The property has great resources for farmers, students/schools, parents and children. We could sell the Pleasant Ave. property to finance farm development.

Joan: We should keep the Pleasant Ave. property until it appreciates, then sell it and use the funds to finance work on the farm. The house on the farm is a historic structure and is usable. I'd hate to see it torn down. What if we put up a modular office? If it didn't suit our needs ultimately, it could be moved off/sold. The Pleasant Ave. property would be fine if it was just us, but we also need to think about FSA, NRCS.

Tom: Does it make sense to espouse saving farmland and then build offices on the farm? Beaver Creek is already a mass of subdivisions around us. In 50 years, Beaver Creek will be all urban. I now think we should build at the farm, keep it looking like a farm as much as possible. We can stay in Oregon City until we're ready to move and sell the Pleasant Ave. property when we're ready to sell it. Jan is in support of a 2 story building at Pleasant Ave. The Beaver Creek Hamlet is looking forward and is very aware of how future development is pointed right at the Beaver Creek area. They keep voting against annexation by Oregon City.

Joan: Clackamas County is a large county! Beaver Creek is closer for many of us than the Molalla office would be.

Clair: We need to also consider transportation ecology – transportation corridors and how they impact wildlife.

Don: I want our office to be screened, not visible to the community, but made with new construction, very efficient and comfortable for employees. We could keep the farm house as 3-season meeting space – a casual, relaxed experience.

Tom: Would it be helpful if staff created some pros and cons for the Board to digest?

Robin: A cost benefit analysis on development of both properties would be helpful.

PK: Looking at a 50 year horizon -- what would staffing look like? We'd need to build an office to house expected staff levels for the future. This would guide the size of the new building.

Tom: Our highest cost is staff and benefits. I don't expect that will change.

Jeff: How do we increase the vitality of the land, the Farm? It needs to be useful, not just preserved. The land has a lot to offer on an everyday basis.

Joan: The land is resting now – allowing wildlife to return, we're getting rid of invasive species.

Amy: Let's take a vote on which Board members think that "demonstration" is a valuable goal for the farm: All members vote yes.

Roger: We could partner with Clackamas Community College, not only for demonstration, but also to establish agriculture involvement of partners.

PK: Staff's inputs on financials would be helpful. We should look through the economy lens first. I haven't seen any numbers yet except for those provided by Redside.

Roger: I believe in the financial responsibility of the District. There are also environmental/social costs we need to include in our evaluation.

Tom: Staff can bring semi-quantitative data to the Board, but there's more that goes into decision making than just numbers.

Don: Commercial buildings run close to \$200/ sq. ft. I don't have a high end building in mind.

Joan: We need to balance building with staff and conservation projects. We need to re-work our strategic plan, add and subtract from our old document. It is time to revisit.

PK: Staff could also bring the Board some information regarding climate change, weather patterns, or other factors that haven't been factored into future agricultural development. What can we expect over the next 20 years? What will be happening with weeds, water movement, weather, rainfall, other and what will be the effects on water quality?

Amy: **Priorities Identified from this Discussion:**

- The Board wants to keep the farm
- Demonstrations at farm are a priority
- Cost benefit analysis of properties/development - who will do this and when can we expect this by?
- Revise strategic plan
- Decide if District will build on farm or not
- Research climate patterns for NW over next 20+ years – make farm as climate friendly as possible for building efficiency as well as farming/conservation practices

Tom: My current “loose” plan is a 10,000 sq. ft. office with two big meeting rooms at \$250/ sq. ft. which would come to approximately \$2.5 million. This cost would be twice what we're now paying monthly for space at 221 Molalla Avenue, but then most of that expense will end in 30 years.

PK: Tom – if we have farm as a demonstration space, we'd need at least 1-2 more staff to manage, correct?

Tom: We could get by over the next couple of years at current staff levels, but as soon as we add livestock, we'll need a live, on-site caretaker 24 hours/day. They'd be paid staff. Until we have livestock, however, we can get away with normal staffing.

Joan: We may decide to not have livestock. Weather trends are not a high priority – they can't predict weather from one week to the next. We're fairly protected here. In the short term, it will ebb and flow.

Robin: Can we make a decision about WHEN we're going to decide if we're going to build on the farm? Let's set a deadline to really make the decision with what we're doing with the Pleasant Ave. property and if we're going to build on farm. Let's have a deadline.

Joan: This should be worked into our budgeting process which is coming up now.

Tom: I can explain the existing parameters for our current lease. Our lease expires in Feb. 2019 with an early out of summer 2017 (we can pull out with no financial penalty). That's 3 ½ years from now – best scenario. We'd have to renegotiate our lease in Feb. 2018.

Joan: I'd like to see us out by summer 2017.

Don: I have a conceptual plan for a new office building already. This is what I do for fun. It takes about a year to build the building I envision.

Ron: Can we set a date?

Joan: We have a building fund. We need to look at the budget to see if we have what we need to do what we want to do.

Jim: I think we should set the deadline for the June Board meeting. I'd like to see us meet the 3 ½ year deadline.

Tom: We're building the budget for the next fiscal year now. We're going to pitch the assumption that we're going to build the office and we're going to build some costs into the budget. There's about \$50K in building fund now. Design development would come out of building fund. We're planning on adding \$100,000 before June so we'd be going into 2014-15 fiscal year with \$150,000 in budget.

Jim: If we sell the Pleasant Avenue property, that money would go into building fund? Tom: YES

Amy: Wrap up:

How often do you want to meet between now and June?

Who meets? The entire Board, Building Committee, other?

Should we create subgroups?

Should we have another meeting like this?

Could we set the next meeting for March 18th before next board meeting?

Ron: Are you saying we'd have another meeting like this to focus just on vision or properties or both?

Amy: I'd like to see more a more specific action plan on how you're going to move forward as an organization.

Joan: Should it just be a meeting of the building committee? Jess, Erik Tom, Don, Joan, Jim

Amy: I'd rather see a consensus decision of the whole Board, not just the building committee. First decide if and where the building will be, then what it will look like, etc .

PK: What will fate of the Pleasant Ave. property be? That will help direct staff's actions. Should we invest any resources in developing it – short term or long term?

Tom: We now know some of the topics on agenda for March 18th meeting. Let's take 30 minutes to develop long term Legacy plan and then dive into action steps to get there.

Ron: Can we get the notes to review before hand?

Amy: Cathy and I will work on getting notes together and out to Board.

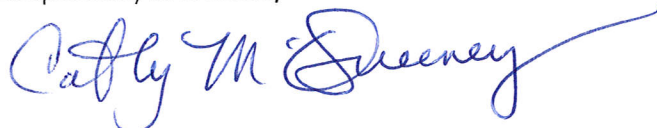
ADJOURN and NEXT MEETING

The next board planning meeting will be a special meeting held on Tuesday, March 18, 2014 from 10:00 a.m. to noon at the District office.

The next regular board meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 18, 2014 at 1:00 p.m. at the District office.

There being no further business, Chair Oberg adjourned the meeting at 11:58 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cathy M. McQueeney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the "y".

Cathy McQueeney