

# LARIMER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

## Meeting Minutes

January 13, 2016

Present: Jennifer Bornhoft (liaison), Jason Brothers, Karen Crumbaker (liaison), Sarah Fox, Charles Gindler (liaison), Brenda Gimeson (liaison), Nic Koontz, Val Manning, Gail Meisner, Ted Swanson, Zach Thode, and George Wallace. Lew Gaiter called in. Guest: Seth Jansen.

Absent: Tim Clouse, Debra Herston, Minerva Lee, Greg Schreiner, Richard Seaworth, and Jon Slutsky.

- I. Gail Meisner called the meeting to order at 12:36 p.m.
- II. The November 19, 2015, AAB Meeting Minutes were approved.
- III. Nomination and election of 2016 officers. Because many board members were absent, the nomination and election of 2016 officers was tabled until the March 9, 2016 AAB meeting. George made a motion to table nominations until the next meeting and Val seconded.
- IV. Interaction with Lew Gaiter on Ag and Community related issues. Commissioner Gaiter reported that the Commissioners were pleased with the work done by the AAB Board in 2015. Board members will remain the same in 2016.

Two top concerns Commissioner Gaiter brought to the Board was immigration issues and the difficulty for rural areas to access broadband. Zach and Val stated that access to technology was very important in rural areas in Larimer County and with the income that agriculture brings into the county, it warrants consideration.

Commissioner Gaiter asked the Board to think about the following questions: “If we had fiber optics in the rural parts of the county, what is the benefit to rural populations?” Other questions to consider are, “What can I do with additional information from a tie to technology?” “What is the benefit to having good, reliable high speed internet?” “How does this help agriculture?”

George asked Commissioner Gaiter how county government influences what we receive. Commissioner Gaiter stressed the importance of building and maintaining relationships with internet providers to see what can be done to improve service in rural areas. The challenge, Commissioner Gaiter said, is providers want to make money, which limits government entities from entering this realm.

V. Nic Koontz and Seth Jansen - Poudre Valley Community Farms. Nic and Seth provided information to the Board about Poudre Valley Community Farms. In response to the increasing age of American farmers and the interest of young farmers wanting to get into agriculture, there is a need to bridge the gap between the increasing value of agricultural land, current farmers considering retirement and keeping agriculture land in production agriculture. The Poudre Valley Community Farms is a pilot program looking at a unique opportunity to keep ag. land in production, while providing long-term lease opportunities for a new generation of farmers. The benefit to producers is to provide affordable access to land, stable long-term leases and an opportunity to build equity in an agricultural business. The organization first project is to purchase 52 acres with water rights in Larimer County through member-owner investment, conservation easements and community partnerships. In return, member-owner investors will receive partial ownership in the land, voting rights, preferred access to products grown on the land, dividends, and community events. The first tenant will be Native Hill Farm. Sixty-seven percent of pledges necessary to purchase the land have been made to date. To learn more about Poudre Valley Community Farmer, visit <http://poudrevalleycommunityfarms.com/>

VI. Review Committee Membership for 2016. The members in the three AAB committees, Education, Legislation, and Water and Land will remain the same.

VII. Discuss AAB webpage revamp. Val led the discussion on possible changes to the Larimer County AAB webpage.

- It was decided the website will continue to include bios and a photo of each board member. Val will e-mail members asking them to update their bio (if necessary) or

create a new bio for members who do not have a bio and picture currently on the webpage.

- With permission from the author of any presentation given to the AAB Board, power point presentation will be attached to the webpage. The board felt it was an important tool to help educate the public about agriculture in Larimer County.
- The “News” section will be removed from the webpage since it needs to stay current to be relevant.
- Include what issues the County Commissioners are asking the AAB to provide feedback on.
- Include the current Work Plan.

VIII. Review and make additions to brainstorming topics for 2016 (see “Notes for AAB Brainstorming on 11/19/15”). The top three topic areas chosen by members are: (1) Housing/Immigration; (2) Evolution of Ag in Larimer County -- Transition, access, working together/possible collaborations, partnerships/availability? Who? Other programs? Connections? (3) Rural broadband concerns.

Zach suggested a member of the AAB serve as a liaison on the Larimer County Fair Board. “The word on the street is that Larimer County is not ag friendly”.

X. Announcements:

- CSU Extension Small Acreage Stewardship course will be held each Tuesday evening, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. January 19 to March 15, 2016 at the McKee Building at The Ranch, Loveland, CO
- Colorado Farm Show will be held on January 26-28, 2016 in Greeley, Colorado
- The Poudre River Forum will be held on February 5, 2016 at The Ranch, Loveland, CO
- Governor’s Forum on Colorado Agriculture will take place on February 18, 2016 at the Renaissance Hotel, Denver, CO

VIII. The next AAB meeting will be held on March 9, 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 2:55 p.m.