

Minutes of the Tilth Council's Meeting of March 17th, 2016

Council Present: Edward Hueneke, Prescott, Michael Seraphinoff, Pete Little, Dorcas Young and Judy Kaplan. Tilth members J.C. May and Anza Muenchow. Guest Coyla Shepherd

Minute taker: Judy Kaplan agreed to take notes and Prescott announced she was audio recording the meeting.

Minutes: The minutes of the February 18th business meeting were approved.

Electrical work online/phone vote: The proposal to move ahead and contract the electrical work was unclear in the February meeting minutes. A council member urged an online discussion. Lance Moore provided an estimate of \$1,444 plus tax for Tilth's gas range receptacle in the kitchen, outdoor receptacle up high for outdoor light and two receptacles in classroom (1" conduit and ditching not included); Electrical permit included. He is able to do the work next Thursday, March 10.

After online discussion about the cost, Pete proposed \$1,172 to the job, removing the outdoor receptacle and an additional receptacle in the classroom. Email and telephone votes for approval were taken on March 7, resulting in 4 in approval and two abstentions. Motion carried.

New Business:

- a. Courtney Cooke has offered to serve as secretary. No action taken as she is unable to attend tonight.
- b. Coyla Shepard presented her request for a tiny house to be built and set up on Tilth's property, thinking it is a good location for promoting the need for housing. Discussion as to whether this was in keeping with our mission followed. A night watchman/care-taker renting a tiny house on our property is part of our long-range plan. She recommended not doing it through the South Whidbey Homeless Coalition, so that we have control of who lives in the house and what to charge. County Planning Dept. support is free for homeless projects. Coyla will offer first \$5,000 to be matched. Careful review of our site plan is in order to assure privacy as well as cost. Coyla wants visibility near the gardens. County has a list of people in need of a home. Alliance for Nonprofits via Gates Foundation offers lower insurance rates. Perhaps that insurance could supplement our insurance or move to our existing insurance to Alliance for Nonprofits. No one present is able to commit time to the project now, so the membership will be invited to weigh in. If energy and time is found, the council will form a task force. No decisions yet; county approval will take time and energy. Coyla will be gone through April and will check back when she returns.
- c. Anza proposed Tilth organize an agritourism-style Farm Tour this summer. The Conservation District will not be doing one this year, but they have funds available from the farm tour committee. The tour must be open to the public. There are challenges with an available date as many events happen in the summer. She suggested the first weekend in July, Pete pointed out that Monday is July 4 so a Sunday would work. Focus on off-island visitors. Sell 300 tickets at \$30. Use a Farm Tour as a ticket. Ticket entitles holder to Tilth membership, so

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we can get a wine/beer permit. We can borrow signs from the farm tour. The Slow Food group could be asked to help with a farm-to-table dinner and a raffle. Anza will talk with Kathy Floyd about this. The Farm Tour committee via the Conservation District has \$7,000 to loan various groups. A task force was formed to further this Tilth farm tour: Angie, Anza, Pete. Farmers can apply. Tickets will be sold and maps given out. Prescott will ask Chris W and Angie to meet at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, March 23 in the Tilth classroom. Committee will email proposal to be addressed at April meeting.

Announcements:

1. Pete attended the potluck with Angie to welcome her and the other 4 South Whidbey apprentices. He said it was well attended with 20 people from Good Cheer, Whidbey Institute, SW Schools.
2. Melissa's and Mark's film night on March 27th has been cancelled. The new date is April 3rd at 5:30 for the potluck at their house. The movie is "Beer".
3. Compost bin construction with 3-compartment bin will be used to educate the public and ourselves about composting and vole control. We submitted a grant proposal for \$822 to the Whidbey Garden Tour.
4. On March 24th, the Whidbey Eco-network will meet at the Pacific Rim from 9 to 11 AM. Prescott will represent us.
5. Pete & Prescott may checkout Whidbey Island Lending at Blooms on March 24th. Dorcas has already done so and can share material she collected.
6. Tilth work parties: March 19 from 10 to 2, April 3 from 1 to 4 (also garden plot orientation), April 17 from 1 to 3:30, April 24 from 10 to 2 (market clean-up) We need to get ready for the new season. Please help. There's work for all levels of energy and ability.
7. April 17: Cleveland Hall will give a workshop on Tilth's Forest Understory Recovery project as part of Earth and Ocean Month.

Committee Reports:

Financial report: Ed gave the financial report. We will offer \$100/mo to Jeanie, the bookkeeper (She is currently receiving \$90/month). Jeanne is filing our intern's benefits per Farm Intern Pilot Project. Budget shows as same as last year, but purchase and fundraising for Native Plant Facility is an irregularity.

Land Stewardship:

- Pete reported that the electrical work has been done, inspected and approved by the county inspector. The work was completed under budget due to Pete's working on the ditch to bury the wires. Way to go, Pete! Thank you.
- The septic inspection was postponed due to heavy rain. Pete and Ed are working on this. Pete has been working hard on ditches to control water flow. Dorcas's garden has been impacted.
- Calyx kids will be at Tilth every Thursday beginning March 24 (for 10 weeks) from 9-3. This is the spring term. They will return in the fall term, also for 10 weeks. They have a double garden plot for \$60. They use the

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kitchen, classroom, the field and the playground, so we are charging them \$30 per semester for the facility use. The garden fee and facility use total \$120. All agree to these terms. No heavy machinery can be used on Thursdays. Also Lisa approached Dorcas to be involved the children in her garden.

- Peapatch garden contracts: the contracts were sent out in the 2nd week of March. So far, only 4 have renewed. Still waiting to hear from the others.
- Work parties: March 18th was blown away by impossible winds and potential rain. Angie, Prescott and Judy met in the classroom to discuss updates to the Farmers' Market policies, agreements and rules.
- Field and lawn mowing: on April 3, Bob will come to see if the mower will work for the field. Ed is also involved. Pete got an estimate from Double R Rental for eight hours at about \$800+. That seemed too expensive, raising the question of purchasing our own mower. Prescott has potential tractor owner with mowing attachment to check with.

Education:

- The seed starting class with Anza is Mar 27th, a Sunday, at 1:00. Angie and Michael will promote it. Other apprentices are invited at no charge. The February 28 pruning class netted us \$178, Gary donated his \$30 honorarium.
- Earth Day Celebration is Saturday, April 23, noon to 4 at Bayview Corner.
- The Annual Swarm Against Monsanto will be May 21st. The Tilth teach-in will be May 22nd by beekeepers. Michael agreed to work on it.

Market:

- Judy reported the market policy was updated, except for the issue of percentage, Vendors will be asked for preference 1) 10% sales commission for earnings over \$50 up to \$300, 2) \$10% sales commission on all sales. Discussion followed about how to attract vendors, more one-to-one soliciting of vendors and what to charge. Bayview charges 5% sales fee for farmers, Langley charges \$20 each week. First time free is an incentive.
- Judy will duplicate policies, rules and agreement for Vendor orientation March 19.
- Prescott reported market promotion strategies. She believes we had to post our market listings at \$235. She's also doing a map for all farms and markets. Other advertising on Ferry, Heart ad, Whidbey Green guide and Islander.

Other Business:

- **Parking use at Tilth, June 1.** Linda Beaumont is having a party for elder prestigious beekeeper. It is a Saturday she asks for permission to park in the Tilth Lot for the day into night of June 11, knowing that cars will need

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to disappear mostly Saturday night, and all by early Sunday morning, before 10:00 am. All agreed to her request.

- **Conflict of interest policy**— Bylaws require signatures for Conflict of Interest policy. Prescott distributed them asking to have them back and signed by the next regular meeting Thursday, April 21.

Adjournment about 8:30 p.m.