

South Whidbey Tilth Business Meeting Minutes – June 16, 2016

The meeting was called to order by President Prescott at 6:43 p.m. in the classroom on the South Whidbey Tilth Sustainability Campus. Other council trustees present were Michael Seraphinoff, Edward Hueneke (who did not stay), Fred Rouge, Pete Little, Judy Kaplan; other members present were J.C. May, Tom Vincent and intern Angie Hart. For lack of a minute taker the meeting was recorded. Prescott will write them up.

1. Minutes:

- a. The minutes of the May 19 business meeting were accepted as written. Angie moved to accept, Pete seconded, all approved.

2. Committee reports

a. Market – Judy and Angie

- 1) State of the market: Prescott distributed the comparison of market sales and vendor/customer statistics for the past three years. Sales are down about \$1,400 over last year. Angie says we could use more vendors, especially more farm vendors. Prescott and Angie hope to visit Oak Harbor market. Judy visited Bayview and encouraged a couple vendors to come. She didn't get specific names. Carla Walsh is doing crafts every other week. Crow's Daughter, Julie Charette Nunn will do an herbal workshop July 24 at no charge.
- 2) This Sunday, June 19 at noon we'll have a decorated birthday cake via Sally Nelson's Payless discount. It will also recognize Father's Day. We'll invite some founders including: Marianne Edain, Steve Erickson, Stevie Linton, Jerry Hill, Vivian Stembridge and Lance Porter. Angie will donate four delicata squash plants and Fred has extra tomato plants to be given to the founders as gifts.
- 3) Judy announced she cannot be present at the market June 26 or July 3.
- 4) Planning for Acoustic Music Festival on June 26 from 11 to 5 p.m. includes parking arrangements. Angie has asked vendors to plan to stay later and bring ice chests so customers can keep produce cold. Donation stations need to be set up. Russell will be consulted. Next Tuesday's work party (2 to 6) will work on parking directions. Angie is doing a flier. Pete noted he used one of the four sheets of plywood for the stage. He will contact Russell.
- 5) Judy has been trained by Angie on how to submit information to the local Calendar of Events, i.e. newspapers, tourist bureau calendar, etc. She will take over that task.

b. Education – Michael

- 1) There is a Seed Saving class with Eric Conn, Sunday, July 3, 1 p.m. which needs to be promoted
- 2) Tom Vincent has prepared a compost display and will offer a workshop, "Live Composting," July 10 or 17 as part of his Master Gardener training volunteer hours he is required to give to community service. Tilth will help promote both workshops, including Free Range News. Todd and Teresa Spratt want to do a vermiculture workshop and will donate a residential size worm bin to raffle as a benefit to Tilth. Michael will contact them and ask which date they prefer and Tom will take the alternate. [Vermiculture workshop was confirmed the next day as July 17, so the compost workshop is July 10.] A suggested donation for the compost class is \$10, Tilth members cost is \$8, but it is will be made clear that Master Gardeners may attend free (as do interns/apprentices). The vermiculture workshop will be a suggested donation of \$8 for Tilth members and \$15 as the general fee. Prescott will try to have raffle tickets ready by June 26. The drawing will be during the Sustainability Banquet on August 18.
- 3) Whidbey Area Fair is August 4 to 7. Michael reports that Pam Nodus will coordinate with the Grange to steward and judge the agriculture department. We decided Tilth's education display will be about composting with a side panel about the native plant salvage facility prospect and how to contribute. Sign will include contact information. Angie will help with the native plant board.

- 4) Tilth Garden Tour— Michael asked Deep Cycle and Foxtail Farm if we could visit on a weekday. It will be late July. Michael will work with Pete to coordinate as it's a shared Membership and Education committee event. Perhaps we can include Twelve Birches, Anna Petersons place and perhaps we could hold the potluck afterward at Petersons. Otherwise it would be at Tilth.

c. Land Stewardship –

- 1) J.C. reported he is salvaging some conifers from a private party and hopes to salvage some of the big leaf maple from across the highway to hold in the Native Plant Salvage facility. He spoke with the highway department and learned a tree on the highway shoulder cannot be greater than four inches diameter and must be 25 feet from the road. He says the root mass is too large making some of them difficult to salvage. J.C. will see if Albert can help with his tractor.
- 2) Compost structure revision — Pete presented a compost facility redesign for the compost grant through the Whidbey Island Garden Tour for a “Soil Building and Vole Control” has been refigured based on a member suggestion to pour a concrete foundation approximately 12 feet by 4 feet rather than elevate it on cinder blocks. The price for about 50 bags of concrete at \$150 is not much difference in earlier price for cinder blocks. The model design is approved by the Whidbey Conservation District. Pete will design the opening of the three bins to be tractor-bucket size wide. He plans to make this his focus when he is able. Logistics were explored. Fred offered to help. Perhaps it can be included in a Tuesday work party. Prescott will clarify with Albert where the compost facility should be located and report within 10 days.
- 3) Mowing update: Bruce Fallon has completed the annual field mowing using his antique tractor, his charge as of yesterday was \$250. Prescott will get his figure for the small piece he finished today.
- 4) Work parties are every Tuesday from 2 to 6 p.m. each week. The Thistles in the wood chips above and in the orchard are heading so harvesting a truckload next Tuesday is critical. J.C. suggests not pulling the roots on the woodchips, which would encourage root spreading. He advises heading the thistle to weaken the root. The fruit tree fruit is too heavy, the branches are breaking so thinning is needed.
- 5) Fence update – Albert was not able to attend and sent a message, (attachment available on request). It essentially summarizes his proposal of April 21 to fence the food growing areas and giving a down payment of \$6,000. April 17 he offered a proposal to enclose all the gardens in a simpler 1,000 foot enclosure (1.5 acres) allowing the interior fencing to be removed in time for debris along the interior of the fence immediately. He estimates three rolls of fencing 330 feet long and 110 heavy cedar posts (\$17.60 each, \$1,742 for bundle of 110) and 110 light 10' split cedar rails (bundle of 155, \$2,078). All materials totaling \$5,500 plus gates. As an aside, he says, “...I think we need to enlist artist carpenters in the community to donate their time and materials and have a gate building competition...”

He has since purchased a tractor with tool attachments including a mower, buckets and post-hole drill. He proposes to trench the perimeter and install hardware cloth to better discourage rodents. The plan includes several vehicle and wheelbarrow gates and minimizes the need for more than about four corner braces. It extends the food growing area to the south and east.

This proposal raised concerns at the May meeting that the extension may creep into the tax-free land. Prescott reported a conversation with a former land steward who produced documentation showing this to not be a concern.

She had redrawn Albert's map with more rounded edges and showing access to the children's garden, the Lesedi Farm Stand, which also preserves the Serviceberry Boulevard and the jog around the orchard. At that point Albert pointed out that too many angles requires too many cross braces, which would be extra labor and expense. He urged her to press the council for a decision

to move ahead.

Judy raised concerns about the ongoing \$2,000 deficit in the overall Tilth budget. From the discussion it is hoped the improvements will help the capacity of the organization.

During the discussion, it was suggested he move ahead preparing the boundaries to the north, east and south boundaries from the east edge of the children's garden. Prescott asked for permission to negotiate logistics with Albert including some refinements for the area to the north and west boundaries from the children's garden and Lesedi Farm. She hopes to meet with Albert early next week with Calyx and Lesedi. All approved.

- 6) Hot water in the bathrooms – Pete reported a conversation with plumber member who has changed his recommendation to simply install a hot water tank which would not require a extra electrical work, but it would be a continual draw to keep the water hot. Judy argued why hot water is needed since the friction of scrubbing with cold water is adequate. She was overruled. Pete says the tank being recommended can only be purchased from three other places. He'd invited the plumber to come to the meeting. He will continue to work with him to get hot water to the restrooms.
- 7) Electrical estimate of \$600 for line to Farm Stand – The original estimate was for on demand hot water fixtures in the restrooms and a line to the farm stand. However when the plumber had changed his recommendation she passed that on to the electrician. His estimate for a dedicated line to the refrigerator in the farm stand would be at the most, \$600. Pete believes it would be more like \$400. Dorcas is willing to have others in Tilth use her farm stand and split the cost of the line. She is very short of cash and would need to negotiate a payment schedule. It was approved to move ahead.
- 8) Septic inspection – Albert arranged for Prescott to met Jerry Stonebridge of Stonebridge Environmental Services at Tilth this Thursday afternoon. Jerry and his assistant, Brian, checked the distribution point in the orchard and adjusted the east running pipe higher. They cleaned the screen by the restroom and suggested cleaning it late summer every year, as well as checking the distribution point. He said we still don't need to pump it and the construction is sound, except the tubes with covers are cheap and warped indicating heavy equipment may have run over them. [Suggestion: put saw horses over the two tubes to keep them clear and still be able to mow and weed-eat around them.]
- 9) Tilth produce policy – As the time is late, Prescott asked everyone to think about a produce policy. There is the promise of heavy fruit and walnut production on our campus this year. In the past “grazing” and gleaning for visitors and members has been casual. Prescott recommended a policy to welcome tasting but prohibit taking quantities of produce. The original reason for purchasing the land was to raise produce to sell and pay for the land. It was agreed Prescott will draft a policy and procedure to include:
 - a) Offer visitors option to taste, but if quantities are picked, leave a donation
 - b) Develop a harvest schedule and process
 - c) Prepare for sale in the Lesedi Farm Stand and at the market

d. Membership, Development, Community relations

- 1) Sustainability Banquet, August 18, Thursday. Slow Food Whidbey Island is collaborating. Need a committee to organize and to prepare the raffle. It will be in the newsletter. Pete will work on getting volunteers and look for raffle items.

e. Meeting Adjourned was at about 8:30 p.m. The next regular meeting is on the Tilth campus on Thursday, July 21

Other business tabled: Wag n Walk is Sunday, August 21, registration is by July 29

Respectfully submitted by Prescott