

# South Whidbey Tilth Business Meeting

Thursday, February 15 at 6 p.m.

Trinity Lutheran Annex, Nursery, Freeland

## Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m. by Vice President FRed Rouge. Other council members present were President Prescott, Edward Hueneke, Ida Gianopulos, Kirstin Clauson and Angie Hart. Andréa Linton was unable to attend. Other members present were Pete Little, J.C. May and Michael Seraphinoff.

The minutes of the January 18 regular business meeting were approved as written. The minutes of the Annual Meeting held on January 20 were also approved as presented.

### 1. Announcements

- a. Seed Swap: **February 17, Saturday**, 2 to 4 p.m. at Coupeville Library. Tilth will have a presence at both, with fliers and handouts.
  - b. Film night in February 25 will be *Rotten*
  - c. South Whidbey Garden Club awarded us \$500 for the apprenticeship. FRed and Prescott will attend the meeting February 16, 9:30 a.m.
2. **Finance Report** – Edward reviewed the budget versus actual report. He noted available funds, not tied to dedicated funds, are very low. Prescott worked with our bookkeeper to assess the dedicated funds. The changes will be on the February report.
3. **Apprenticeship status** – Prescott reported no new applicants. A discussion followed about what need the apprentice is expected to fill. Some needs are farmers' market tasks, developing and supporting education programs and work parties, starting their own garden and an optional special project. Whoever is engaged must understand the scope of work and be ready to take initiative. The interview committee does not believe the one candidate interviewed is prepared to do so. It was noted that it takes a great deal of time for a volunteer to mentor the apprentice. Concern was raised about funding, but neither Good Cheer nor the School Farms have raised all the funding needed and are committed to fundraising for all five apprentices. The Tulalip Nation grant is still pending and worth as much as \$10,000.

Prescott suggested we start a new search for the apprentice. The suggestion was not opposed. The editor of the *Whidbey News-Times* has inquired about doing a story.

Tilth will be the fiscal sponsor of one of the School Farm apprentices, Tran Hoang. Our bookkeeper is prepared to incorporate the apprentice into our system. Funding from the Grow Whidbey collaborative will be transferred to Tilth for Tran's stipend, homestay and extras.

### 4. Market Committee report – Kirstin

Market Survey report: The survey produced 104 responses. Produce is the strongest reason to attend. There was not a lot of interest in changing the day, but receptive to a Wednesday or Thursday. If we decide to have a Wednesday evening market, it should be designed to complement the Bayview Street Dance. Publications listing market schedules are being published now through March, but updates can be posted on web forums and social media. There was some harsh feedback about the appearance of the market and some concern about safety.

The Market policy, rules and agreement were reviewed. Proposed changes include extending market hours during the summer months, capping the 10 percent sales commission at \$500 rather than \$300, summer hours may be extended and changing the Early Bird signup for regular vendors to April 7. The proposals were approved. Kirstin asked Michael to write something about the Community Produce/Crafts booth. The council approved the policy, agreement and rules for the 2018 season with the understanding that the missing section will be added.

The proposed Market Vendor Orientation date is Saturday, March 31 at 4 p.m. in Grigware Hall in Trinity Lutheran Church's annex next to the highway in Freeland. The council approved.

Nettle Festival update: since the nettle harvest season will be ending before April 29, plans are underway to harvest and dry or freeze a supply of nettles. A brochure will be prepared about the value and preparations of nettles. Nettle foods will be the first of the weekly "Taste of the Week" features. Kirstin and Michael have already drafted a list of potential weekly tastes. J.C. will invite Kumudini Shoba to present a nettle program. Julie Charette Nunn will present a workshop. Linda Good has created a nettle-themed verse to the May pole song. J.C. will work with Kirstin to organize this event.

### 9. Education Committee report— Angie

Angie reported the following classes have been scheduled: Seed Starting March 11, Hot Composting June 3, 2:15 p.m. Perhaps June can be compost month and invite Bugabay to teach vermiculture and raffle a worm bin. The Garden Guide Discussion group is February 27 and March 27 at 6:30 p.m. in the Old Bayview School Classroom.

Tilth displayed at Sound Waters and Tom Vincent reported a lot of interest in Tilth and biochar. Displays were also at the February 4 seed swap and will be at the Coupeville Library Seed Swap, on February 17, as well as for the Gardening Workshop, Saturday March 3 at Oak Harbor High School. Kirstin and Tom Vincent will staff the table and Prescott will be available if needed. Gary Ingram's pruning class raised \$161 in class fees and Gary donated his time.

10. **Land Stewardship committee** — Ida

Changes to the Community Garden agreement include a flat fee for all plots regardless of whether or not there is a greenhouse and the rates are \$35 for Tilth member and \$55 for nonmembers. The agreement had been distributed prior to the meeting but not many responses had come in. Ida will distribute a final version for council approval by email. She intends to hold regular monthly work parties and keep track of the hours gardeners have committed to by signing the agreement. Tasks will be listed inside the garden storage shed. The shredder has been repaired, but debris needs to stay outside the fenced area until ready to be shredded.

Mowing strategy: Ida will develop a mowing schedule. FRed has a large machine with a big blade he will bring. The market committee is responsible for maintaining the market area and parking. The large fields are done in late June after the ground-nesting birds have fledged and before the Acoustic Music Festival, in order to control invasive weeds. FRed will ask Marc about the status of the riding mower, since it wouldn't start after being serviced. Tom Vincent can give an orientation on the tractor. Pete expressed concern about safety risks. A machinery orientation with a safety-precaution checklist will be scheduled. Pete and Tom Grant continue to put the new garden shed together when the weather is favorable.

Pete presented a proposal to extend power for a caretaker facility before the market begins and the kitchen is needed more for Tilth activities. The bid from Lance Moore Electrical to install a 30-amp RV electrical outlet, with permit, about 150 feet to the area where the vardo is now parked is \$1,000 plus tax. Tilth will do the trenching. This avoids the hazard of an extension cord across the driveway. Pete and Moki will consider splitting the cost with Tilth. Discussion followed. Perhaps another RV outlet could be installed near the present market booth used for storage. But the draw may be greater. Pete will explore a larger conduit. Power to the restroom is 200 amps and to the kitchen 100. The \$150 from the South Whidbey Garden Club 2017 grant could be used and perhaps some of the Foster funds. If the farmstand is set up by the entrance, an electric line for refrigeration would be nice. It could be solar or grid. The Council members generally agreed to the proposal and will review it at the March business meeting.

Ida, Pete and Prescott met with neighbor and architect Steve Badanes who is willing to offer advice on the future buildings and, in two years, have his students design and build a structure. He recommended clustering the main facilities to the north of the market area where the temporary classroom, the vardo and unused market booth are. Ida suggested the future caretaker site remain where the vardo, but could become a tiny house or a trailer.

Pete presented a drawing of a redesign of Tilth entrance, suggesting the fencing along the entrance be removed except for a section to angle in. Use the fence to mark the market parking instead of T-posts and blue twine. Removing the fence along the entrance will allow parking on both sides of the entrance for access to the farm stand and for a kiosk describing campus features. The gate will be restored but remain where it is. Perhaps a wheel to more easily open and close it. The sign would move back so it doesn't obstruct traffic visibility. It is a hazard now. Ida would like a new sign at the entrance in the Pat McVay style. Some of the Foster fund could be used for parking fencing and landscaping. She also hopes to have the buildings repainted this season and will apply for funding to the Whidbey Island Garden Tour too. Pete and Moki are researching low VOC paint (volatile organic compounds). Kirstin expressed concern about parked cars at the entrance may not be inviting. Signage about times the campus is open might help.

11. **Earth and Ocean Month:** Prescott reported her representation for Tilth on the Earth and Ocean month committee. The main festival is noon to 4 p.m. on Saturday, April 21 at the Bayview Corner. Tilth should have a display encouraging activism. We'll offer two trays of seedlings to raffle and engage visitors in the "Guess the Seedling" activity. Soliciting volunteers for specific projects would be a good opportunity. Prescott hoped to organize an Oak Meadow workshop and work party. No one objected to a presence on April 21. Next Earth and Ocean Month meeting is February 23.

12. Kirstin volunteered to chair the March 15 meeting at 6 p.m. at Trinity.

13. A motion to adjourn the meeting was approved by all at 8:28 p.m.