

Minutes of Tilth Council Business Meeting 2/21/19  
Trinity Lutheran Church Annex, Freeland

The meeting was called into order by Ida. Andréa put forward a motion to approve the minutes from the last two meetings (Jan 4/Jan 27) which had been previously sent out via email; the motion was approved with no one opposed.

Any announcements:

Prescott recapped the Whidbey Island Grown networking event she and Michael attended. They (WIG) contracted a facilitator for the event which was “really well attended,” “very dynamic,” “a lot of really good suggestions came up about how we want our farms and our markets and our restaurants promoted for Whidbey Island Grown.” WIG is still trying to form a board of trustees and become a 501c3 (although as a trade organization they may be a 501c6). Tilth is a member of Whidbey Island Grown, which has organized the Whidbey Island Farm map page in the (widely distributed) Tilth Alliance Farm Guide - the double page spread costs \$2,500.

Happy Birthdays to Edward and Prescott!

Finance:

Prescott introduced the Budget/Income/Expenses spreadsheets and emails sent by Edward in which he shows how our funds have gone down consistently over the last five years and in order to balance the 2019 budget, he suggests we “re-characterize \$1500 of the Foster dedicated fund as having been spent on land improvements, where we have been over budget for two years.”

Financial Report as of 1/31/19:

Edward ran down the budget status, balance sheet and bank accounts. He points out on the Balance Sheet the Laughing Cat Till and the Market Manager Till both show balances when they should be at zero [\*does someone need to follow up on this with Jeanne, I can't tell from the audio\*]. The Sustainability Account which shows \$14,023.00 is actually at \$13,604.96 and the total in checking account WIB 7620 as of today (2/21/19) is \$7,417.60 rather than \$6,804.63. Part of the sustainability fund is in a \$10,000 US Bank CD at 2% for 11 months. Beneficial Bank has \$3,475.91. The remainder \$129.05 of sustainability funds is in the savings account.

Edward went into detail about the discrepancy between the General Fund and the Dedicated Funds (the \$-2,782.49 figure at the top of the Balance Sheet. There was considerable discussion about General Funds and Dedicated Funds and the confusion surrounding where exactly we are overrunning costs on such a consistent basis. Because the Albert Foster fund is the most flexible of the dedicated funds it was proposed to reallocate retrospectively \$1,500 from the dedicated funds to the general funds. Andréa brought up a point from a previous meeting, that from here forward we should be even more cautious on what we're spending money on and ideally we need to be financing our projects as they come without borrowing from the general funds because the consistent drain of around \$2,000 a year is unsustainable. Prescott mentions the Quickbooks program we have available to find out in detail what the expenditures, etc., look like and offered to show any one how to navigate this.

Edward also went over his suggestions to bring the 2019 budget into balance.

Prescott went over the recent fundraising numbers: the \$1,585 raised from the annual letter (NB: is this in addition to or including the \$700 from patrons before the letter was sent out?) + \$920 raised since 12/31/19 + \$1,220 from Prescott's Facebook fundraiser (not yet deposited). Plus the holiday party fundraiser and the annual meeting auction and raffles.

A motion to make a journal entry to move \$1,500 of the Foster dedicated to the general checking account was passed with no one opposed.

A motion to adjust our budget as follows: add \$400 to the donations annual letter income line, subtract \$600 from the land maintenance/improvements expense line, and subtract \$300 from the utility expense line.

Ida asked about how using the Albert Foster fund would be reflected in the budget. Edward explains [and I may be mischaracterizing the answer, it is around the 42 minute mark if this needs clarification] that a land maintenance/improvement item that went beyond the \$500 allocated in the budget would be reviewed by the council and the funds taken from the Albert Foster fund if that was appropriate, until that particular dedicated fund had been depleted. Edward sums up that with these line item adjustments and the fundraising numbers from Prescott (assuming Facebook doesn't keep her money) we are looking in good shape for starting at square one, although bearing in mind that failing to stick to the budget is how Tilth has been consistently in the red by about \$2,000/year.

Ida made the point that dedicated funds should be treated as dedicated funds, not to put too fine a point on it, and used only for its specific purpose. There is more discussion on the point of, recharacterizing this money in retrospect is playing catch up on paperwork, and the money

should/would've been approved from the Albert Foster fund at the time it was spent. In future we resolve to have that earmarking of funds occur ahead of time.

Speaking of dedicated funds, Edward pointed out we have \$575 for irrigation.

Returning to the motion to adjust the budget, it is passed with no one opposed. Edward says he'll send out the adjusted budget and balance sheets.

Ida proposes we plan a Budget Workshop for the end of the year instead of trying to do these things at board meetings with other items on the agenda. A Budget Workshop is planned for mid/end of October.

Lynnae brought up the South Whidbey Acoustic Music Festival and how we could possibly fundraise around that. The Festival and the extended market hours bring more money in % of vendor sales, and Prescott says Angie ran a raffle at last year's SWAM that benefited both SWAM and Tilth. Lynnae knows someone who goes to clown school and might also come provide entertainment. This segues into the fundraising item.

## Membership Report

### Membership report

Andréa's membership report covers the membership renewal date being standardized as annually renewing in June, and the 2018 Membership renewal numbers. Andréa points out that our membership is 122 individuals in 81 separate households. She says that there are 61 lapsed memberships that we should address. Andréa proposed that she contact these lapsed members one more time and then remove them from the current fundraising list. Prescott opposed the proposal on the grounds that plenty of effort had been put into reaching people who had been lapsed for so long and that Andréa should save her energy. Ida proposed taking them off the membership list but keeping in touch with them and Prescott says they will be put on the donor list. Andréa and Prescott propose ceasing to send them physical newsletters but Ida makes the case for continuing to send them digital newsletters, as a way to continue outreach and hopefully reengage.

Andréa points out the 23 no-revenue memberships under Complimentary/Donor/and Partnership memberships - which will be consolidated under Partnership memberships in the future. The point being, actively engaged memberships are consolidated in 81 households.

## Fundraising Workshop Notes and Strategy

Andréa proposes three more fundraising letters for 2019. She suggests we consider doing a letter around the start of the market, around the sustainability dinner and the annual end of year fundraising letter and use these events to personalize and drive interest and engagement around the fundraising drives.

The annual renewal in June is discussed.

Importantly, Andréa stresses that after these pledge drives the donors are sent personalized thank you's from the President of the board. Ida agrees that donors like the figurehead to thank them personally. Andréa points out that in addition to major donors, donors of all levels should be reached out to at times in between fundraising drives to try to increase their engagement at Tilth - invite them to join us. She would like to start compiling artistic photos of Tilth to create cards and calendars both as thank you gifts to large donors and to sell to generate Tilth revenue. She stresses the continual contact and update of our ties to our donors, tying the fundraising to the ongoing events and projects to sustain and create interest.

Ida brings up membership renewal and garden plot contract renewals; although all the memberships are renewing in June, plot fees are paid in March and many people renew their Tilth memberships then. Andréa summarized the conclusion of this discussion in an email later on 2/21: "it was decided that the Membership fee would be seen as a renewal until the following years' annual renewal date, i.e. a Membership payment in March 2019 means the Member's renewal date would be June 2020."

A fair amount of discussion as to member's renewing habits and the switch to an annual renewal date ensued. Again to quote from a later email to summarize the points made, Ida sent on February 25: "I decided to go online and look for advice for nonprofits who choose to have an annual membership renewal date [...] It appears to be pretty common practice to prorate membership fees for new members who join outside of the renewal period. SO I will have to take back what I said at the meeting, and agree with Ed. Brand new memberships probably should be prorated. But any *existing* member who renews outside of the member renewal date should not be prorated (they would just be considered to be paying early or late, since they should be aware of the annual renewal date)"

Ida suggests we think of this as an annual membership drive and that many people are likely to renew when they want to and we should expect that. In her experience at another nonprofit subscribers were decidedly negative about the switch to a standardized renewal schedule.

We are all resolved to review the calendar in order to discuss it next time.

The fruit tree pruning will be organized in between meetings; it is suggested we need a work party or to contact Gary to have a class. [NB this has been scheduled and is happening on March 16]

Janet made clear that the next three months of calendar events need to be submitted at the same time as the rest of the newsletter submissions, March 15. A general call for submissions, ideas or articles for this and future newsletters is made.

Prescott touches briefly on the review of the December 8 workshop - the notes that were made on the posters, the points highlighted by the members at the annual meeting, we should all review the notes about the workshop.

Ida asked for approval of the contract she had previously sent out via email, including the revisions suggested. It is approved without opposition.

Ida will send around an email detailing her proposal to form a community garden committee.

Market:

The minutes show that the Council approved via email vote on January 13, 2019 the market committee's proposal to have a weekly Sunday market, 11am - 2pm April 28 - October 13 2019.

Kirstin updated the policy, rules and agreement which will be emailed out for review and approval.

Kirstin proposed raising the musicians payment (from \$25 to \$35).

Prescott spoke about the WSFMA conference in Walla Walla and the apprenticeship possibly including that conference. Prescott said she was following up about the possibilities of a scholarship. She asked for consideration of \$200 budgeted towards sending the potential apprentice to this conference. Since the apprenticeship was not currently filled, the information on the scholarship unavailable, and the potential intern's enthusiasm for the trip to Walla Walla unknown, the motion was tentatively approved to possibly spend \$200 on an enthusiastic intern to go to the conference. No one was opposed.

Leah briefly covered the Farm Stand proposal, which includes the current proposed site, a change in building material from conventional to ecologically sustainable, and the proposal to treat the project as part of the larger entrance remodel. She also touched on the Market Entertainment and Educational Programs changes, including focusing on our educational mission with a weekly talk or demo being given center stage at noon. There will also be a weekly Kid's Activity at 1pm during the market. Leah called for ideas for ecologically messaged kids activities. She proposed starting the bramble patch reclamation,

thinking about where the tool sheds could be moved to, moving the May Pole and the cinderblock firepit to make room for the revamp of the Tilth Market layout, and rearranging the area in front of the kids hut in order to open it up for the Kids Activity. This was approved with no one opposed.

Prescott updated us briefly on the internship. The Washington State Farm Internship project had been approved, the job posting was put up on Drewslist, the website and Good Food jobs site. One candidate has been waiting to be interviewed. Edward asks where the money is coming from and Prescott says some money may come in from grants and we can continue to fundraise. The money currently available (\$2,459) would cover around half the season. Given the tenor of the earlier finance discussion, there was concern around offering an internship that we don't have fully covered. To summarize, it was resolved to offer an internship that we can fully cover from our available funds, whatever that length is. Prescott will continue trying to find funding for the full March - October season.

Prescott made sure we all were aware that one of the items in the packets is the Tilth Procedures, which contains all of the important information on South Whidbey Tilth in one place.

Edward spoke briefly about an article regarding eating organic, and Andréa sent an email out with a link to the article.

The meeting was adjourned. Leah will be facilitating the next one.