South Whidbey Tilth Business Meeting
July 18, 2019

The meeting was called to order by volunteer facilitator Andréa Linton on Thursday, July 18, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. on the South Whidbey Tilth Sustainability Campus. Trustees attending were Leah Claire, Prescott, Edward Huencke, Ida Gianopoulos and Lynae Slinden. Anza Muenchow and Kirstin Clauson were unable to attend. Tilth member J.C. May also attended.

Minutes: Approval of the June 20 minutes was postponed until they are transcribed from the recording.

Announcements:
1. Prescott announced the death of the Tilth member who managed the Warré honeybee hives, Ziva Naphtali. A memorial is planned, possibly at Tilth. A card of condolences was signed to her son, Justin. Dan and Kathy Maxwell of the Whidbees, walked through the orchard making the traditional knock to share with the bees that their keeper had moved on.
2. Free Range News editor Chris Williams has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Prescott and Judy Kaplan have prepared a Caring Bridge site for her at her request; caringbridge.org, look for Christine Williams.
3. Goosefoot, LLC granted Tilth another $2,500.

Finance Report: Edward reported that the balance sheet is positive as of June 30, showing $5,256 net after capital payments and depreciation.

Apprentice plan: Prescott reported reaching out to Judy Feldman of the Organic Farm School to see if any of their Farmer 101 students would be interested our apprenticeship program. Anza spoke to several, one-to-one. No responses at this time.

A discussion proceeded about why Ben didn’t stay and what we might do to keep the next apprentice. Prescott described the jobs that would not be done or not done as well without the apprentice. Ben was good with the accounting of sales commissions, managing press releases and promotion. He enjoyed heavy manual work. He wasn’t here long enough to organize work parties and was understandably uncomfortable because he didn’t know the membership. He met with the education committee and did some research toward the native bee display for the Fair. When asked his impressions of our organization, he felt having two separate Facebook pages was confusing and did research as to how to blend them into one. Prescott proposed the appointment of a subcommittee to review Ben’s suggestion and present a proposal.

Ida suggested the need for a communications committee to not only address Facebook, but also any communication so appears professional without errors. She explained it would be a process of oversight and standards for content of emails, social media, website, official letters and the newsletter. Not a micromanagement of each item, but more than one eye on the content to avoid misspellings and misinformation.

As for an apprentice, Prescott said she had no more energy for finding someone this season, but asked to start looking by October this year instead of waiting until mid winter. The current job description of duties was discussed. Having someone to engage volunteers to get some of the bigger jobs done such as forest path, orchard cultivation, grounds maintenance and market operation.

Several suggested we not have an apprentice at this time due lack of staff to manage an apprentice. Ida proposed we have a capital campaign to raise funds for full or part time staff. Lynae suggested some members with experience in some areas train other members to join in.

Andréa noted there were two elements to address. What do we need to make it through the current season without an apprentice and what can be done for the future. Offering such low pay could be a factor.

Prescott and Kirstin feel the planning has been done for the market and we can probably roll with what we have. Ida felt the land stewardship duties were in hand. Leah noted Anza is a reader for applicants who have applied for the Federal or State Farmers’ Market promotion grants and may offer insight for our successful application.

It was decided to address grants for staff at the next business meeting.
Membership, Community relations and Development: Andréea reported there are 35 current members who have not renewed and will be gently approached to renew. There are 52 members who have not renewed in several years and she recommends they be dropped, as they've been contacted many times. Lynae requested a handout she can present in her role at the hospitality table at the market in order to define our work and our purpose to recruit new members. Andréea will develop a document.

Andréa was assured the Wednesday evening potlucks were not specifically her responsibility, but they have been fun and help build community among our members and supporters. They are scheduled on alternative Wednesdays to the Bayview Street Dances.

Report on 4th of July events: no one showed enough interest in participating in the Oak Harbor parade or in the Maxwelton Parade.

Sustainability banquet: Andréea agreed to be the lead for the planning committee of the August 15 event. Committee volunteers include Prescott, Anza, Kirstin, Lynae and Andréea. Themes suggested at the June meeting were “Celebration of Members” and “Fruitful Feast.” Others like Field to Table and celebrate our farmers.

Prescott reported that Slow Food Whidbey Island had been invited to help plan the dinner, but only as our guest, not as a cosponsor. Unfortunately the Slow Food program planner could not schedule an event on any other day but August 15. However Barbara Graham will represent Slow Food and help plan for those members not attending their competing event. Prescott reviewed feedback and list of tasks. She will call a meeting to start the process.

The next aspect for council discussion concerned the entrée, as a member questioned the “sustainability” of serving salmon. Andréea had already begun a conversation with a salmon provider. Leah noted the event is more of a sustenance of Tilth, than an example of sustainable farming. She pointed out that the word has become overused to the extent to have lost it’s meaning. It was proposed we not use the word “sustainability.” All agreed. The theme most liked was “Field to Table Membership Celebration.”

After more discussion, it was decided to serve salmon. It was noted an element of consideration is the fact the local economy is sustained by local residents who work in the fishing industry. Also much of the salmon are now raised in hatcheries. Investing in oysters and mussels was explored. Some abstained from voting for salmon, but the majority ruled in favor.

Leah offered an idea for a fundraising pizza dinner as one of the silent auction items. Doing it after market could be a problem with weather. Prescott explained how the raffle/auction form works so donors get thanked with the appropriate tax information.

Recruitment and fundraising event: tabled until another meeting.

Market: Kirstin was unable to attend. It was observed income from the market as of July 14 is $500 above last season. We are averaging 14 vendors and customer attendance has increased. Lynae was praised for welcoming customers effectively, as well as recruiting members and processing SNAP cards at the hospitality table.

After market clean up concerns: we need more volunteers to show up and help with set up and clean up on the grounds and in the kitchen. All will strive to focus on all the tasks that can happen. Leah offered some suggestions for streamlining the “front of the house,” such as using a single till. David and Leah are investing in a used iPad. Perhaps an electrical water kettle can reduce the water boiling time. The kitchen needs more electrical outlets. Leah will ask her father to explore it with an electrician. There is $800 not in dedicated funds that could be used for electrical work. Edward suggested funds could be used for an electrical kettle. Leah noted that Prescott’s tracking system of sales are so entrenched that she appears unable to accept changes. Prescott expressed willingness to try something new.

Lynae needed to leave about 7:30.

Tilth’s email announcement: how to keep more folks informed in a professional manner. Ida described her frustration and embarrassment at being involved in so many editing sessions, and yet the messages have gone out with misspellings as if no one had edited them. She suggesting that there be a regular schedule of when notices go out so that they go out in a timely manner. Suggestions for a communications committee be set up as well as a
The audio recording linked to Dropbox is https://www.dropbox.com/s/zi406l2r7724lex/2019-07-18%20Tilth%20Council.m4a?dl=0