South Whidbey Tilth Business Meeting  
September 19, 2019

Lynae Slinden, volunteer facilitator, called the meeting to order on Thursday, September 19, 2019 at 6 p.m. in the Trinity Lutheran Community Building Nursery. Present were council trustees Edward Hueneke, Kirstin Clauson, Anza Muenchow, Andréa Linton, Ida Gianopulos and President Prescott. Leah Claire was unable to attend due to family matters. Also attending was member J.C. May and a guest from the Whidbey Veterans’ Resource Center, Dana Sawyer.

**Agenda review:** Additions include Year of the Doe class series – Anza; Nominating committee appointment and annual internal audit – Prescott

**Approve minutes:** The minutes of the July 18, 2019 meeting were approved as written.

**Council actions proposed or approved by email:** review for inclusion in the September 19 meeting minutes.

1. **Honeybees at Tilth** — Initiated August 6 resulting from the question of what to do with Ziva’s hives. I believe we have come to the decision to let Whidbees remove the Warré hives so that the Tilth campus becomes a sanctuary for native bees. Beekeeper Linda Beaumont would like to help with the pollinator plantings. She seems to be accepting of Tilth’s policy to not have European honeybees at Tilth. This has been a highly educational internet discussion regarding the effect of native and managed honeybees coexisting. Ida has a wealth of information arguing against the coexistence. There may be a policy resolution in the June minutes about a decision.
   **Action Item:** Andréa offered to go through notes and the June meeting minutes and prepare a proposal for the next meeting. All agreed.

2. **Request for a letter in support of the Whidbey Island Conservation District’s proposal to renew and replace an existing Island County special assessment with a system of rates and charge.** Proposed July 25, responses received from Lynae, Andréa, Anza and Ida for which there were no strong objections.
   **Action taken:** Prescott composed a letter and sent it by July 25. A copy is available with the secretary.

3. **Notification of Application to Whidbey Telecom** — August 13, President Prescott informed the council she’d submitted a request for continued free internet and voice mail service. We are still awaiting a response and have already received a bill for the full amount including the website hosting for September. Prescott received a call from the Whidbey Telecom grants committee explaining the standard grant is usually $500 and due to higher fees recently weighed, they can’t provide a full year of funding. Prescott agreed we would be willing to close down our service for voice mail and internet from December to March. No action necessary.

4. **Excalibur Food Dehydrator** — Proposed August 21, approved August 23, Proposal to keep the dehydrator: 9-tray, 26hr timer, Solid Door, minimally used, donated by Tony and Deb Schiro, value $300 be kept by South Whidbey Tilth to be used to help people preserve their harvests. It can be used for classes and to preserve our own produce. Leah has said, “The old Women’s Institute model of the community coming together to preserve forage and harvest is very much something I’m interested in putting energy into.” The Schiros donated it for the annual meeting silent auction and no one bid on it. The Schiros were asked if we could keep it for another fundraiser or to be used for our own workshops and food preservation activities. Tony said he’d also been thinking if it wasn’t won by a bidder it would be nice for Tilth to have.”
   **Action item:** Anza will work with Leah to draft guidelines for using the dehydrator and send them out for review before the next meeting.
5. **Green trim on pavilion** — Proposed Sept. 1, confirmed Sept. 11 by Edward, Kirstin, Ida. Leah was on site Sept. 1 and agreed. Tom is giving the pavilion a fresh coat of paint. He’s proposing this forest green trim around the drip line so the Tilth colors are all together (barn red, light yellow and forest green). Lynae, Anza and Andréa agreed at the meeting.

6. **2020 Master Gardener Compost Class at Tilth** — September 7, 2019 email approval for Tom Vincent to teach a hot composting workshop for the Master Gardeners as a Field Trip experience to be held on Friday, March 13, 2020 at Tilth. The program is still being developed and Barbara Douglass of the MGs is offering some funding. Kirstin said, "Yes but only if Tilth gets to have that class too!! If that one can be opened to Tilth members /non-members as well, that would be cool too." Andréa said, "Love the idea, especially if we can subtly point them in the organic direction. With the majority approving the use of the Tilth campus, Prescott reported she has responded to Tom and Barbara, welcoming the Master Gardeners to use the Tilth campus and we will work with them to plan an effective program.

**Announcements:** A tiller and string trimmer was stolen from an incubator farm plot. Ida contacted all the gardeners to discover any unusual activity. Prescott walked the perimeter and has not found any area that has been disturbed by forcing the fence. Ida will follow up.

**Finance Report:** Edward pointed to the $403.39 of General funds available on the balance sheet as of August 31. These funds are separate from those tied up in dedicated fund accounts. Cash on hand as of today is about $553. Every category has improved this year except membership. The market manager is due payment for several weeks of her contract. Edward will clarify with the bookkeeper the record of dedicated funds for Farm Stand and Goosefoot 2018.

**Veterans’ Garden:** Lynae introduced Dana Sawyer of the South Whidbey Veterans’ Resource Center (VRC) who she had invited to the meeting to address a former member’s request to create a respite area in the current Veterans’ Garden at Tilth that J.C. has been overseeing. Dana explained she’s been working with the South Whidbey Veterans’ Resource Center, which was established in 2009 by former members of Tilth who no longer live on the island. She continues to have a good working relationship with them and sees them when they visit the island. The Resource Center doesn’t have a lot going on with the north end veteran organizations. She sees some potential for getting some of the older, retired Veterans involved. She’ll share it with the board, perhaps during the winter. She spoke of an October 13 Veterans’ Picnic at Greta Cammermeyer’s where Greta may be presenting ideas and impressions from her recent trip to Viet Nam. Dana described some of the services she helps facilitate and may be able to inspire some to work with the garden. Creating some raised beds for easier access. Dana will take the pictures. Perhaps a subcommittee will be established to partner with the VRC to develop the garden.

Dana also explained her other job with the upcoming Census. She’s recruiting people to get involved in the next couple of months. There will be an online option. Domiciles can be agencies. However there are a lot of post office box users in Island County. She encourages volunteers to get involved. Dana left the meeting about 6:45 p.m. with the intention to keep in touch.

**TechSoup Growth Capital Campaign:** Prescott proposed Tilth invest $50 for a two-percent return over five years. The goal is to raise $11 million. TechSoup is a nonprofit that makes software to nonprofits available. After discussion the motion was made to invest $50.

**Action Item:** The motion was amended to invest $300, with all approving. Prescott will work with Edward to set it up before the September 29 deadline.

**Grant proposals:** Prescott reported on the workshop she’d attended September 14 about how to find appropriate grants. She learned of about six foundations to apply to for the farm stand and
some larger grants for future staffing of Tilth. Anza agreed to work with Prescott on grants. Ida noted we need a system for deciding what grants and for what purpose we are applying for. All council members will be informed by email or at a meeting when a funding prospect arises. It will be proposed with a strategy. She reminded the council of the goal to fund the farm stand and we need to apply to funders she found to fill in the gaps of inadequate funds received so far. She will report as she prepares further.

Whole systems review: Andréa explained the idea arose when she noticed a television in the pump house. She would like to assess what we have and what is being used. Ida noted the kitchen is another facility that needs review for improvements and integration. Andréa volunteered to lead the task. The topic is tabled until the October meeting.

Membership and Development: Andréa noted there are about 70 or 80 active members (not households) and some of those memberships are not up to date. The committee is weeding out inactive names.

Casual summer evening potlucks: Anza has ideas for the next season. The potlucks were held every other Wednesday during the good weather. Some good ideas were exchanged and members got to know one another better.

Gratitude Dinner Debrief: Andréa compiled email feedback that came in for the August 15 event. They are attached to the agenda for this meeting. She proposed discussion be postponed until next April when planning for next summer’s party begins. All agreed.

Recruitment and fundraising for possible gala event: Tabled until next year.

Communications Committee: Janet Richards offered to head the committee to establish guidelines and address the scope of the committee. She will report to Andréa, chair of the Membership, Community relations and Development committee. Ida, Leah and Edward volunteered to serve on the committee. Prescott as president will attend as needed. Any committee proposals are presented to the council as a whole for approval. Prescott added she has been careful to share communications with membership that she prepares with at least two others for typos and inaccuracies. Anza suggested we each reach out to other Tilth members to join the committee.

Action item: The committee’s formation is approved with one abstention. Prescott will inform Janet of this action so that it can begin to take shape. All were reminded to review the July minutes where the discussion about why such a committee is needed was covered at both the beginning and the end of that meeting.

Market: Report on market finances, as of September 15 shows gross sales at over $38,000. Kirstin noted the need for more help with setup and cleanup. She and Prescott will begin developing a proposal for contracting a market manager for next year. Edward noted over $500 more in sales commissions this season over last. SNAP customers less.

Harvest celebration: Kirstin is racking her brain to come up with games for Sunday, September as well as help for apple pressing and dessert raffle. An email blast has been composed soliciting help. The weather is forecast to be rainy and windy. Several people made suggestions. Wild Crow Pie Co. is donating five pies. Tickets for the raffle are $5 or two for $8. Names of potential volunteers was drawn up. Fliers have been posted on the website and social media.

Laughing Cat and kitchen-licensing, legality: Leah put this on the agenda. It is tabled until she can be present.

Land Stewardship: Camping options on Tilth land was addressed at the May meeting. Edward read that section of the minutes for review. At this time there is no one besides Michael who is interested in running this activity and he will not do it alone. Ida asked that Michael draw up a list
of rules for proposal, i.e. no open fires, etc. It was proposed some council members do a campout for experience what might arise. All agreed to table topic until there is momentum.

Proposal for Farm-to-Market Floral Workspace at Tilth:

I am presenting a proposal for a mutually beneficial opportunity that will generate some revenue for Tilth while helping me start a new farm-to-market venture. This winter I will be breaking ground on a new 2,000 square foot plot on which I will primarily grow flowers for fresh cut flower sales at the farmers’ market and to dry for use in everlasting wreaths, which I will also sell at the market.

I would like to have a workspace on the Tilth campus in which to arrange fresh flowers, hang flowers for drying, and to create the everlasting wreaths, and I am proposing that I rent the old booth next to the classroom (for a monthly fee paid to Tilth) to serve this purpose.

The plan will be to fully enclose, insulate, and rodent-proof the space. Windows will be installed, along with a new roof. All improvements will be at my own time and expense, and when I eventually move on and no longer need to rent the space, the improvements I have made will stay with the building.

I am asking the council to discuss and approve/disapprove this at the September 19, 2019 business meeting. If approved, I would like to begin renting the space on October 1, however, I will not begin any work until after the market season ends.

Thank you for considering my proposal, Ida Gianopulos

All received proposal from Ida in advance of the meeting. She will be expanding her gardening area to the field beyond the orchard to grow flowers. Currently the booth in question is used for storage, but the heart building could be better organized for market storage as well as using the closets on the pavilion porch.

A question was raised about the expansion of more gardening plots alright without Council approval. Is expansion of the gardens a land steward committee decision or does it need to come to the council? Ida and Prescott looked over the parcel and determined there are no utility lines or plans for that area. Community gardeners pay per square foot ($35/approximately 20’x20’), but the incubator farmers pay less per square foot. This could be reviewed in the future. Ida intends to pay a fair price. One incubator farmer is paying only $225 this year as her business plan is being reevaluated with Northwest Agriculture Business Center. Ida proposed she pay $200 next year for the larger plot and the two smaller plots she’s been cultivating for several years. She’d be fencing it too. After much discussion Ida proposed she pay $30/month, which would include electricity. J.C. suggested it be an account she could draw from. Ida will keep a record of expenses of what goes into the upgrade of the structure.

Action item: Motion to accept Ida’s proposal to lease the empty market booth at $30/month starting October 1, 2019 was accepted unanimously.

Chipper donation and use: Jim Cowperthwaite donated a chipper that works better than the one we have. It is in the equipment shed. Guidelines for use and maintenance need to be developed as for the food dehydrator and the backpack sprayer. Prescott will draft something for the sprayer and work with Tom for the chipper.

Education report: Anza reported Farmer’s Shadow attendance is way down, but probably because of conflicting activities. She expects it to return to the usual nine to 10 attenders. Goosefoot has agreed to let her use the Bayview classroom with a white board available in January. She had intended to share the teaching role with others and will encourage it in the future. Group discussion helps. The class has made money and she would like to see the instructors receive an honorarium in the future.
Tilth is participating in the Whidbey Island Harvest Festival at the Langley Fairgrounds as part of Whidbey Island Grown Week. Anza is teaching five classes and Tom Vincent is teaching one October 3 and 4. Each class is $10 or six for $50. The instructors will keep the fees. Payment is through the Langley Chamber of Commerce website so it’s unclear how payment to us will happen. Tilth will also have an information booth with an educational display on the weekend.

**Year of the Doe class:** a cooperative of dairy goat keepers who will be covering every aspect of goat husbandry from breeding to milking and more. It will take place on the first Sunday of each month, 2:30 to 4:30 starting October 6. She would like Tilth’s support and help with publicity. Participants may be invited to donate, but mostly the leaders want to gain helpers with their own herds.  

**Action item:** All agreed Tilth will sponsor the series and help promote it.

**Solicitation Policy Revisions aka “free speech”:** Prescott proposed the establishment of a sub-committee per bylaws to revise the current policy published in the vendor policy to more directly align with our mission. Tabled until the next meeting.

**Nominating committee for Council next year:** it is the time of year to establish a committee to seek nominations for positions 1, 2, 4 and 6. Prescott, Lynae, Kirstin and Ida will have completed their two-year terms, except Lynae who was elected to for a one-year term. The business item was postponed until the October meeting for lack of time.

**Internal Audit of finances:** Prescott noted the need for the internal audit of finances after the first half of the year. She reported that Janet Richards has volunteered to assume that task. No one objected.

**Internship status:** As noted in the July minutes, it was decided to not solicit another intern (apprentice) until we have funds to hire staff to oversee one. Anza would like to revisit that decision at the next meeting.

**Facilitator for the next meeting:** Ida volunteered to facilitate the next meeting on Thursday, October 17, 2019. Location for meeting will be Trinity. [We haven’t decided to stay in the nursery or accept the offer to use Grigware Hall.]

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at about 8:20 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Prescott from a recording*