



Waverly Community Group
Meeting Minutes for Thursday, March 30, 2006; 7:00pm
Turning Point at Waverly School, 10431 NCR 15

Present: W.A.C. members: Jane Clark; Sue Foster; Andy Hatch; Cate Meyer; Jack Sipes; Amy Wagner; George Wallace; Karl Zeller. Absent: Helen Boggs, Ron Splittgerber, Bob Zimdahl.
Quadrant II Rep & 1 At-Large position vacant.

Community residents: 15 +/-

In Bob Zimdahl's absence, and having a quorum present, acting chair Jane Clark called the meeting to order at 7:06. She introduced guest speakers Kathay Rennels, Larimer County Commissioner and Geniphyr Ponce-Pore, Larimer County Workforce Office. Ms Rennels topic: *Sustainable Rural Agricultural Development*.

Ms Rennels described the County's effort to undertake an 18-month study concerning entrepreneurial activities appropriate to smaller acreages. Currently, the Land Use Code technically does not have a provision to recognize so-called "business" activity on rural properties. Options for landowners are agricultural/residential uses or development (under pressures to sell). Larimer County is seeking a possible "middle ground" through reviewing what other areas across the U.S. are doing and by seeking input from the county's rural residents.

Questions: "What do residents think would be potential business activities that are reasonable, practical for themselves and within their neighborhood areas? What can people do to make a living or augment income? How would such business activity impact surrounding neighbors?"

Ms Rennels emphasized the County's desire to hear from residents about "what possibilities might work and how revisions to Land Use Code eventually could be incorporated."

Ms Rennels described the efforts of Ms Ponce-Pore, formerly w/ County Planning, to act as a consultant with the Larimer County Workforce office (Lew Weimeisner; Joni Friedman; Andy Smith) to explore how making a living on smaller acreages might become viable. She described a fact-finding trip she and Jim Reidhead, Rural Land Use Center, took to Michigan to study what rural communities there are trying to support entrepreneurial efforts. Among examples, she noted the development of a central processing kitchen for small producers; a mobile unit for on-farm butcher-processing; agri-tourism; wineries.

Ms Rennels spoke of working with municipalities to create a "tool box" for rural residents to explore development of small enterprise—parallel to concepts such as "business incubators." The City of Fort Collins might assist with such incubators in specified areas—perhaps the E. Mulberry corridor—providing points of sale for farm-generated products.

She noted options such as voluntary agriculture districts wherein neighbors might cluster properties to enhance their business options and activities. If an ag zone were set up, how would its formation be guided and for what length of time? What effect would such a district have on development rights? How could such districts be incorporated into the County Master Plan? What effect would such districts have on property taxes; property valuations? With regard to a rural business, the question arises: 'How much is too much?' before neighbors feel negative impacts. These are questions / issues the County Commissioners and Planners want to explore with rural residents throughout Larimer County. They are just beginning the study and tonight's visit with Waverly Group is among initial efforts.

Comments/ Questions from meeting attendees:

If ag zone created, can owners opt out in say, 20 years? --Bob Mayer

Waverly represents one of last viable integrated ag areas in Larimer County. Some rural property owners have experienced adverse effects on real property tax when County has changed designation from ag to residential category. Prefer to keep more properties as agricultural and reward good land management. – Jane Clark

(Ms Rennels responded that the status changes are tied to state requirements.)

The importance of encouraging farmers' markets so that people can obtain local produce. Avoid over regulation. -- Nan Zimmerman

Eggs – how many hens can a producer have?

Fruits/ Jams - How to certify a production kitchen?

Ms Clark suggested a quick round-table survey of those present to learn their current ag endeavors as well as business ventures they would like to pursue.

1. Pastures & hay 2. Fruit trees 3. Herbs & Produce 4. Llamas, cattle and other livestock 5. Tree farms 6. Horses and Training Facilities 7. Art studios.

Ms Rennels reminded that initial inquiry will result in a "broad-brush" response. As residents meet to give input and explore, possibilities will expand. People will review what is already working for a community and what activities people would like to add. Along with review the potential for "incubator co-ops" within a city, the County Extension office will be a resource.

George Wallace described agricultural districts used in California whereby landowners are given tax incentives and other rural enterprise incentives and right-to-farm protection from lawsuits and landowners agree not to develop for a ten-year period. He also asked if WCG would have an opportunity to review the Land Use Code for obstacles to rural enterprise.

Jane Clark noted the W.A.C. is drafting a general Waverly community survey into which could be incorporated a section about rural economic activities.

Ms Ponce-Pore suggested a means to learn more about options via website searches: "*Entrepreneurial Agriculture*."

With thanks to Ms. Rennels and Ms Ponce-Pore, Committee meeting proceeded with request for approval of Feb. 23 minutes provided to all members via e-mail.

Motion for approval: Jack Sipes; seconded: Karl Zeller. Minutes approved.

Sue Foster reported a contribution of \$20 to general fund. Treasury has \$156.

Old business items: 1. Replacement of 3-yr Quadrant 2 Representative

2. Replacement of 1-yr At-Large Quadrant 3 Representative.

Having no volunteers or recommendations offered, Jane proposed these items be tabled till April meeting. Members concurred.

New Business:

Jane Clark spoke about the process and progress of the Waverly Community Group, noting that while some community members may sometimes view efforts as "chaotic," the distinction must be made between 1) *Process* – how subject matter is chosen and refined and 2) *Content*, which, as all people contribute, may appear chaotic. For the record, she noted the W.A.C. process is quite orderly. While the content may seem chaotic at times, it is healthy discussion and the primary way to achieve a synthesis of community ideas.

George Wallace and Tom McMillen reported work on gathering data about irrigation ditch laterals. Along with Jack Sipes, they have begun to map the laterals and irrigation wells on an aerial of the Waverly area. As fewer landowners irrigate parcels, concerns about "imperiled laterals" arise; North Poudre Irrigation Co. may stop serving ditches that have declining use levels or a lack of maintenance and organization among members. Such ditches keep Waverly green, serve as wildlife habitat and greenways and recharge groundwater to name a few benefits. We hope to have a reasonably accurate data base, map and then to encourage more active participation in the operation and maintenance of these laterals. Once inventory is improved by contacting lateral members, information to help w/ laterals can be placed on Waverly website. The topic might be discussed at a meeting in the near future with invited guests from North Poudre and other entities like the City of Ft. Collins since they now control much of the rental water available.

Nan Zimmerman announced her initiation of a new Farmers Market to be held from May to October at the former Steele's Market shopping area 802 W. Drake Rd. Her website: drakeroadfarmersmarket.com. Or 568.7783.

Respectfully submitted, Sue Foster – Acting for Helen Boggs / Secretary