



Minutes

Village of Los Ranchos

Agriculture Committee Meeting

Agri-Nature Center located at 4920 Rio Grande Blvd NW

DATE- 16th of March 2022 - 3:00 pm – 4.00pm

Zoom Digital Meeting

Minutes

Attendees: Henry Shonerd, Bill Shen, Joshua O'Halloran, Sabrina Apodaca, Sarah Cobb, Joe Craig, Sue Brawley, Dan Gerry, John Edward, and Ann Simon.

1. Overview of Notes and Rules of Meeting – Meeting was called to order by Joshua O'Halloran at 3:04 pm. Sabrina Apodaca read previous meeting minutes.
2. Agri Nature Center Report – Joshua O'Halloran
 - a. AgriFutures continues to meet and plan their projects. AgriFutures met March 7th and will have one more meeting before finalizing their projects.
 - b. The community farm has installed irrigation and planted seed starts in the greenhouse as well as outside in the ground.
 - c. The Master Gardeners have begun meeting again at the Agri-Nature Center and they are also helping to support the efforts of the community farm.
 - d. Nature's Niños classes continue to attend the farm three days every month and are learning about soils and seeds. They are helping us plant the farm as well.
 - e. The Matanza was a success. We sold out of tickets well before the event and everyone had a good time. We are looking to make in an annual event and possibly grow the size of the event.
 - f. We held the Ag Committee Meeting on February 16th where we discussed water issues in the area and the need to build resiliency. Additionally, we discussed the viability of putting in a rainwater catchment system at the Agri-Nature Center.
 - g. The Schulte house has been moved. We moved it to the North of where it was to a site that could become a permanent location for it. This makes room for the new roadway to come in.
 - h. We held three workshops this past month with presenter from Los Poblanos, Mater Composters, and NMSU. We had workshop on improving desert soils and interest in the programs seems to be growing.
 - i. We held our second farmer incubator class in collaboration with Rio Grande Community Farm. We had 20 young farmer in attendance and the class covered a variety of topics that went all day on February 26th.
 - j. We are planning our grand opening for the soils lab on March 26th at the Agri-Nature Center.
 - k. The Agri-Nature Center hosted congresswoman Melanie Stansbury for a visit on February 25th to talk about water issues and the soils lab.

3. AgriFutures Report

- a. The teams are working on projects to complete in April.
- b. Dan is spending time with the Soil Labs team to help prepare for the Grand Opening.
- c. The Regenerative Agriculture team is up and running for their project.
- d. The Community Garden is on its way. The seeds are planted and some have already come up.
- e. The Economic Development Team is working on a proposal after the listening session at the Matanza.

4. Soil Lab Opening

- a. Please spread the word about the Grand Opening of the Soil Lab. It's on March 26th at 11 am with leadership from Los Ranchos and MRGCD. There will be a soil blessing, Chones planting, piñatas, food, and a tour of the new soil lab.
- b. The lab still needs funding for some of the equipment. There will be a fundraising auction with Rachel Britten in October. We'll need nice auction items, so we need to start soliciting.

5. Earth Day April 23

- a. For the Earth Day celebration we plan to have John Garlisch is teaching a spring gardening workshop, the seeds in the hoop house are being grown for the seed and plant swap. Start getting the word out to the garden clubs.
 - i. Sue: If you get me the info for the event, I can spread the word to people who have leftover starts.
 - ii. Bill: The garden center's swap is after the 23rd so not many people are willing to bring their plant materials.

6. Future of the Agriculture Committee and AgriFutures

- a. The two groups share a lot of interests and all if not most Ag Committee members are involved. We can also make tables that align with the Ag Committee members interests like water.
- b. Dan: A water table will work well with the Soil Lab.
- c. Let's combine the 2 groups and share ideas in a venue with a tangible project at the end of the year.
- d. Sue: I don't participate in AgriFutures and I find the Ag Committee beneficial because I can hear a wide variety of topics that affects growers instead of being stuck in one topic group.
- e. Ann: I like AgriFutures because of the project-oriented nature of it. When there aren't outcomes from a project it's hard to justify spending staff time on it. There is a little overlap with the Economic Team as there is another committee, but they are different enough to have them separated and keep a tale in the AgriFutures project.
- f. Joshua: We can keep information flowing through the reports at the end of the AgriFutures meeting. Maybe we can include the 1-pagers on the newsletter and the website.
- g. Bill: The Ag Committee has more flexibility on the topics that don't fit into the narrowly focused AF topics.
- h. Dan: AgriFutures doesn't meet in the summer because it's so busy, but would the Ag Committee
- i. Ann: Is this committee possible without Village staff because it takes 4 staff members. Can you meet at the Ag Center and keep up to date and have coffee without the staff?
- j. Joe: We need to clarify the vision. Let's take this to the Trustees.

- k. Sarah: I agree we need to clarify the vision, and can we achieve that through the AgriFutures model?
- l. Joshua: Clarifying the vision is the next step. Do we take out staff and not meet monthly?
- m. Sarah: I don't think we need to meet monthly.
- n. Dan: AgriFutures doesn't fill the role of an advisory council. We need clearer roles and responsibilities. Quarterly meetings could help us prepare topics and we can have special meetings if the matter is pressing.
- o. Sarah: We need to be more action oriented as a group.
- p. Ann: Can we have one committee member that reports to the BOT every quarter.
- q. Dan: Can trustees come; they can take turns. One per meeting, and with four trustees each would only attend one committee meeting per year.
- r. Joshua: Going forward can the committee members submit agenda items?
- s. Joe: There's not currently a good way to voice concerns of the ag committee member to the Board. This is a good voice for the community.
- t. Bill: This is a good way for the Village to show that we are prioritizing Agriculture. If trustees want to show their commitment to ag they should rotate and participate in quarterly meetings. This is one of the big 3 meetings: BOT, P&Z, and Ag Committee.
- u. Joshua: It's good to hear the value you see in this committee. When I first started only a few people attended. I hear the value that you see in this committee. We need to restructure, and we need to report to the trustees either quarterly or yearly. Let's continue this next time.

Meeting was adjourned by Joshua at 4:00 PM
Next meeting is scheduled on April 20th at 3pm
Respectively submitted by Sabrina Apodaca

The Village of Los Ranchos Agriculture Committee is an advisory committee and does not have the authority to make decisions on behalf of the Board of Trustees or Planning and Zoning Commission. Any recommendations made by the Agriculture Committee are non-binding. All members of the public are invited to attend. Summary notes of meetings will be available upon request.

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