

Minutes from August 23rd, 2007 Quality Growth Commission Meeting.
Held at Utah Farm Bureau offices 9685 South State Street in Sandy, Utah.

Commission Members

Dan Lofgren, Chair
Carlton Christensen, Vice Chair
Jaren Davis, Vice Chair
Carol Page
Lewis Billings
Darrell Smith
Mike Kohler
Flint Richards
Mike Styler
Leonard Blackham
David Allen

Visitors

Suzanne Winters

Sterling , Utah Farm Bureau
Rory Reynolds, DNR
Amanda Smith, TNC
Nicol Gagstetter, TNC
Paul Larsen, Brigham City
Ann Price, FFSL

Attendees:

Staff

John Bennett
Laura Ault
Kevin Daniels
Kim Hood

Information Items

Nancy Neilson and Brian Carver have taken new jobs.
Kevin Daniels has been hired to replace Brian Carver.
Kim Hood is new State Planning Coordinator.
Laura got married.

Welcome and Introductions

Commission members and visitors introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes

Carol Page moved to approve the minutes from the June meeting, they were seconded, and approved unanimously.

Mike Styler presentation on Watershed initiative.

Mike Styler and Leonard Blackham addressed the commission about the Watershed initiative. Mike introduced Rory Reynolds, the Initiative Coordinator from DNR who showed a video and shared additional information about the watershed initiative.

Mike and Rory described the Partnership for Conservation and Development. Partners work together to improve watersheds around the state. Work is done on federal, state and local lands. Initiative has been very successful. Has improved quality and quantity of water in treated watersheds.

They offered assistance to the commission and others to make the work we do with watersheds more effective.

The Commission explored ways that they could cooperate with the partners and the watershed initiative.

Leonard discussed the Grazing Improvement Program which is a sister program to the watershed program.

Mike indicated that all the projects that are done, are science-based. This is a critical part of the process.

Discussion of Legislative Strategy

Dan Lofgren reviewed the commission strategy of working through the Governors budget process to increase our base budget.

Leonard proposed pushing the legislature to create a “three legged stool” of conservation programs. He and Mike Styler are working on a proposal to push for \$3 million in ongoing money into each of these pots. The three legs are watershed, agricultural profitability, and conservation easements and planning. Leonard stated that all three programs are essential, and a coalition to push for all three would touch nearly every legislator.

The Commission discussed the wisdom of participating in this coalition. Generally, the Commission was supportive of participating in this coalition to push for new money in each of these pots.

Leonard and Mike agreed to continue pursuing this strategy, and the Commission appointed Dan Lofgren and Lewis Billings to consult with Mike and Leonard on these issues as needed.

Presentation by the Farm Bureau

Sterling

Sterling described the role, missions and positions of the Utah Farm Bureau. 28 County Farm Bureaus federate to form Utah Farm Bureau Federation. He described the economic value of farming and ranching. He said the value of agriculture to the Utah economy is \$1 billion annually. He emphasized the need to do preservation on a willing buyer/willing seller basis. We should use voluntary and incentive based opportunities first. Then later turn to government assistance later. Farm Bureau supports Conservation Easements as long as they are voluntary in nature and no force is applied.

Critical Lands Subcommittee Report

Dave Allen discussed the critical lands subcommittee recommendation. Subcommittee recommended this process. First staff reviews all applications and completes readiness checklist. Staff puts the proposals on the internet so committee members can review them all, and do a preliminary review and scoring. Applicants will be invited to attend the meeting where preliminary scoring is reviewed to help answer any questions that the subcommittee may have. Reviewers will do a preliminary scoresheet, and a preliminary ranking. All will be available online.

Hope is that we can reduce the number of applications that we visit, and reduce the number of projects in the final round.

Commission agreed to the subcommittee's recommendation.

Jaren Davis moved to approve the recommendation, and it was seconded by Mike Kohler. The commission approved the subcommittee's recommendation unanimously.

Planning Grants

Subcommittee Chair Carol Page presented the subcommittee planning grant recommendations (see attached spreadsheet). Staff suggested some changes to that recommendation. The commission chose to adopt the subcommittee recommendation with the following changes: Cut Brigham City/Perry to \$18,000, cut Town of Trenton to \$4,000, and increase Wasatch County to \$18,000. This recommendation was moved by Dave Allen, it was seconded by Leonard Blackham and approved unanimously.

Funding Requests

The Commission was asked to sponsor the Trails Conference for \$1000 and the UIR Summit for \$500. Jaren Davis moved to support this recommendation. Carol Page seconded it. The Commission approved this motion unanimously.

Next meeting of the Commission September 27, 2007 at Utah House in Kaysville.