

Agricultural Committee Meeting #2
Tuesday, January 12, 2010
La Plata County Courthouse

Next Meeting:

- February 2, 2010 @ Durango Public Library

MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting Participants:

Staff: Jason Meininger, Courtney Krueger

Subcommittee Members: Barbara Jefferies, Christina Tate, Michelina Nyberg, Lonnie & Dena Malouff, Denise Bohemier, J. Pat Greer, Matt Isgar, Katie Roseberry, Mae Morley, George Morley, Bruce Basil, Brady Paulek, J. Paul Brown, J. B. Sittner

Welcome and Introductions

Jason Meininger welcomed everyone and thanked them for their willingness to participate.

Discussion of Barriers and Strategies Continued from January 12, 2010 Discussion

Land Use

1. *Administrative or Process*

Barriers

- i. Expense of obtaining permits
- ii. Time of getting permits
- iii. Selling within city limits = food tax (ability to influence)
- iv. County decisions appear subjective; with downturn in the economy will the County be revenue hunting.
 1. Need to promote objectivity in the planning department.
 2. Decisions should be related to a permitted land use, not just up to the planning department/County staff.

Strategies

- Less regulation
- Increased private property protections
- Allow for ag producers to subdivide small parcels that can be developed as residential, for revenue.

Comments/Concerns (General)

1. Ag. Exempt uses, reduce regulations on agriculture related projects.

2. Why would the County regulate when a use is already regulated by the Feds or the State? Pre-emption issues? If the County will require more stringent regulations, then the County needs to own up that.
3. Agriculture taxes – if a producer/operator is able to file a schedule F they should be ag exempt.
4. Attempting to create a second income/business (e.g. gravel pits) that would help support the agriculture operation, can be difficult.
5. Private property rights. Ultimately if you own land you should be able to do what you want with it.
6. Right to farm ordinances, water rights, etc. Many new residents don't understand agriculture, and their actions can have negative impact on agriculture. Potential opportunity for conflict management
7. There has/is a shift from agriculture land to open space. Land is difficult to manage if it is not managed properly (grazing, haying, weed control). Agriculture helps manages these problems.
8. The agriculture community needs to be able to integrate other businesses into their land/operations in order to make a living.
9. Current regulations pit neighbor against neighbor. Neighbors have the ability to really impact the planning/permitting process, and influence denial/approval of projects.
10. How is the County going to designate what should be preserved? What is the criteria that will be used for choosing "preservation areas".
11. What is the point of the permit. If it costs too much to operate in the County, people will just leave. If people don't want to deal with the regulations they'll leave, along with revenue that comes from their spending.
12. Legacy of people in the county. Increased regulation on the ag community tends to drive people out of the county that have been here for multiple generations.
13. Need to think about how having no regulations can hurt agriculture. Asking for everything, makes you run the risk of people exploiting loopholes. ** There should be some stipulations with who gets the exemption. Could include risk to others, safety regulations, etc.
14. Take a look at Landowner Initiated Zoning (LIZ), allow individuals and neighbors to zone themselves, they could compromise on what uses are allowed.
15. SUIT conflicts: They have the ability to have a huge impact on the way that ag can operate. SUIT has private property rights that supersede everyone else's property rights.