

Agricultural Meeting #6
March 10th, 2010
County Fair Grounds Meeting Room

Next Steps

Given you are all extremely busy, we want to utilize your time effectively. Thus our next steps are:

1. Complete the agricultural strategy review and rating and send to Tracie Hughes.
2. Attend a Strategy Workshop for all the comp plan strategies March 25/26th or March 30/31st.
3. Ag Subcommittee meet on April 14th 5:30-7:30 to achieve the following:
 - a. Review strategies review and gain agreement on recommendations
 - b. Prepare strategy recommendations for the working group for inclusion into draft comp plan (completion of phase 1)
 - c. Identify how to engage in Future Land Use Plan (next phase 2)
 - d. Identify how to work with County on Land Use Code reforms (final phase 3)

Participants:

Christina Tate, Denise Bohemier, J. Paul Brown, Jennifer Burbey, Katie Roseberry, , Matt Isgar, Jim Dyer, Roy Horvath, Ned Jefferies, Tom Talley, Brady Paulek, Dick Norton, Bruce Baizel, Caryl Helmin-Schmid

Staff: Tracie Hughes, Marjo Curgus, Courtney Krueger,Carolynn Pakeltis, Erick Aune, Jason Meininger, Shawn Nau

Meeting Summary

Discussion About Property Rights

We had a relatively significant discussion about the different values the agricultural committee members have, their reasons for being at the table, and what the committee focus should be going forward. This discussion was prompted by a question about a quote Jason had been attributed to in the Pine River Times about zoning in the county.

The majority of the evening's discussion focused around the personal value of property rights and what it means for different individuals. Some resent the fact they have to develop specific policies that grant them rights they feel they are already entitled to and the government ought to not have a say over. Others agreed that while these should be their rights the role of the committee is to ensure the language and policies are included in the plan and land use policies. People expressed that the group needed to not get caught up in language where their principles might prevent them from achieving their goals for agriculture.

There was also discussion about the differing values of committee members about the role of development incentives in maintaining agriculture. Some feel development incentives are necessary while others feel that agricultural incentives are necessary, but once a landowners subdivides land they are a developer and ought to follow the same rules as other developers.

By the end of the meeting there was agreement by the majority of members to continue working on refining the recommendations from the agricultural subcommittee and ideas forum and to clarify specifically in county policies what will benefit agriculture.

Agricultural Strategy Recommendations

Marjo provided an overview of where we are to date. She first reported back the TYPES of recommendations that are being made by the agricultural subcommittee: Land Use Policies, County Policies and Structure, and Promoting Community Collaboration. She reported that these get implemented in different ways and at different times. For the comp plan recommendations the Community Collaboration should state WHO works together and possibly the lead agency. The County Land Use Policies recommendations as is are mostly good for the comp plan strategies, but the specifics will be developed and incorporated into the Future Land Use Plan and Land Use Code. The County Policy and Structure recommendations are mostly good for the comp plan and are policy changes that occur within the County government administration.

Types of Recommended Strategies to Date		
County land Use	County Policy/ Structure	Community Collaboration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Density Bonus and Clustering • Uses By Right <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Code • Energy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Renewable ○ Conventional • Statutory Cluster Incentive • Small Parcel Incentive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Productive vs. nonproductive lands • Expedited • Family Clusters/ exemption • Seasonal Worker Housing • Simple/ clear • Building permit Process (height/process) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Center/ site design help • Planning assistance • Tax policy • County advocacy • RTR • Agricultural Advisory Board • Grants • Zoning? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Districts? ○ Self? • Subdivision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Site design Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic • Stewardship • Coordination • education

She also explained how the agricultural strategies will become more and more specific

as we proceed through the entire planning process. The agricultural committee is a bit ahead of the planning process (great work!).

Comp Plan Policies	Future Land Use Plan	Land Use Code
Broad Goals and strategies	Specifics about land use [scenario modeling] Recommendations for Code Changes	Subdivision and Zoning Regulations

Recommended Strategies Review Process

We then discussed the strategies and what role the county has in achieving many of the recommendations. Based on that discussion, our agreed upon next steps were to review a unified set of agricultural strategies and to rate them based on the following criteria:

- A rating of 1 should be given for strategies that are directly related to land use policy.
- A rating of 2 should be given for strategies where the County has influence or can promote collaboration.
- A rating of 3 should be given for strategies where the individual does not approve or feel the county has no influence.

These strategies will be a compilation of both the ag community strategy recommendations and the ideas forum. Marjo will send out the strategy review form via email. The facilitators will try to get out the summary compilation of all the subcommittees ratings in advance of the meeting where we will review the results.

Recommendations for Uses

Please feel free to send additions and/or comments on Uses to Marjo.

Strategy: Review La Plata County agricultural uses in current zoning and develop uses by right that supports agricultural production and provide agriculture an opportunity to incorporate alternative enterprises into agricultural operations.

- Pack/Riding animals
- Outfitting
- Agriculture Harvesting
- Sale of Agriculture Products
- Hunting and Fishing
- Recreational Lodges
- Livestock
- Wildlife/Exotic Animal Raising
- Bed and Breakfast
- Festivals
- Weddings
- Recreation Facilities (ATV courses, Campgrounds, etc.)
- Horse/Livestock arenas
- Horse Boarding
- Agriculture Education Facilities
- Mining and drilling (energy extraction)
- Sawmills
- Performing Arts Center
- Produce Stands
- Storage units
- Rifle ranges
- All residential including mobile home parks
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Fiber production/sale
- Right to Market
 - Value added opportunities

- Greenhouses and nurseries
- Distribution centers for agriculture produce
- Worker housing (permanent and temporary)
- Renewable energy production (site)
- Feedlots
- Equipment repair shops (neighborhood garage)
- Apiaries
- Birding/Bird hunting
- Dairies
- Commercial kitchens
- Processing
- Orchards
- Agriculture production
- Pet Kennels
- Vet clinics
- Small scale commercial that doesn't impact water/infrastructure
- Wineries
- Brewery
- Biofuel production plant
- Spreading of Biosolids for fertilizer
- Truck Farming
- Home office
- Home business
- Agriculture Office
- Small airstrips
- Dude ranches

Additional STRATEGIES

Denise provided via email some suggestions for strategies that did not get distributed at the last meeting. Great detail on the ag advisory board. They are posted below:

1 – Firstly, La Plata County needs a Right to Farm Ordinance with teeth to protect farmers from development pressure and nuisance complaints/suits that result from development around their farms. A copy should be required to be given to would-be purchasers of rural properties as part of real estate disclosure so that people know what they are getting into before they purchase a piece of property.

2 – A farm and ranch advisory board that is ELECTED (not appointed by the BOCC) so that it is less likely to reflect the political whims of the BOCC. It would be comprised of the following: 1 or 2 members from each ag district (east, west, north), a member from Cattleman's, a member from wool growers, a member from sustainable alliance, and advisory members from FLC ag dept, and from extension and from NRCS. Elected for staggered 3 yr terms. In addition a member of Planning would sit on the Board and be advisory as well as the county liason for all issues ag.

a- This Board would publish a monthly or quarterly newsletter sent to farmers and ranchers who register their farms with the county.

b- the Board would provide grant writing assistance along with Region 9 development and Planning for USDA type grants that must be administered by a government entity

c- the board would review applications that farmers make for monetary assistance with projects

3 – A fund to assist farmers and ranchers (or open space) provides money for appraisals and conservation easements. Perhaps funded by county and city sales tax on food. La Plata County is one of a few counties that tax food.

4 - The ability to develop small scale commercial operations, without going through Class II or Class I permitting processes, that have only little impact on the community and do not require county investments in infrastructure or generate lots of waste and pollution. Requirements for such permits exclude most people from the ability to diversify their farms and/or increase their income through value-added products. Examples of uses would include farm markets, brief seminars and workshops, farm stays (B&B) and or small scale dude ranches, dairies, commercial kitchens, small-scale biodiesel production, temporary shelter for farm help and interns and hunters.

5 – Change County Health dept regs that make it difficult to install grey water recycling or constructed wetlands for on farm water useage. The requirement for engineering is essentially requiring each person interested in grey water recycling to “reinvent the wheel”.

6 – I don’t believe that development or raising houses is agriculture and don’t feel that ag operations should get any preferential treatment in this regard. All large property could be given density bonus for clustered development.

7 – A land use code that recognizes the differences in use and characteristics of the individual communities rather than a one size fits all code that imposes city values on rural areas.

8 – County could perhaps purchase S. Ute water that is available and restore the ag water that was deleted from the Animas La Plata project.