

Wayne County Ag Success Team Minutes – 11/23/2010

In attendance: Brian Gwin, Gil Graham, Fred Myers, Maryanna Biggio, Tom Stocksedale, Dave Benchoff, Ann Obrecht, Katie Myers-Griffith, Wes Greene, Leah Miller, Ron Becker, Duane Wood, John Fitzpatrick, Karl Kanehl, and Chris Finney.

Press: Bobby Warren

Minutes from the last meeting were motioned to approve by Leah Miller, seconded by Tom Stocksedale

WEDC Presentation: Brian wanted to give credit to all at the table for engaging in the economic development of Wayne County. He stated that WEDC is concentrating on four keys areas in the agriculture eco-development.

1. Ag-bioresource
2. Ag Production, land use
3. Value Added Processing
4. Ag-Bioenergy

He gave a detailed “flyover” of Wayne County in relationship to key factor number 4. He mentioned many projects on the ground, under construction or in the planning phase. Some projects include;

- Quasar Digester on the OARDC campus – they are sourcing locally
- Cedar Land Farms – \$6 million dollar grant for Algae Growth project
- Shoup Farms- working with Jump Start to convert swine manure into a bio-resin product
- Scots Compost Plant – example of viable adaptive reuse of a facility
- Smuckers- anaerobic digester project
- Orrville Waste Water Treatment Plant – close proximity to AMP Ohio and Ag Community
- Overall Orrville area- significant Ag/Industrial support
- Nuamoff Farm –possible energy project
- Opportunities all over the county with the existing gas lines
- Large livestock operations = large energy potential
- County wide others are experimenting with innovative cropping techniques, cover crops, touring opportunities, and getting ‘out of production’ farms up and running again
- Brian challenged the team with taking hold of the opportunities that exist and continuing to make agriculture viable in the county

Brian also mentioned the changing structure of the WEDC board. Current Board members (Ann O., Fred M., and John F.) also discussed the change in structure. Brian opened by passing out the Purpose and Powers of the Board of Directors and stated that the board will be changing in size. Ann O. noted that

the board will move from 33 members to a 12-15 member structure and there will be a committee structure as well, and that the committees will be more active. John F. noted that he voted no to the change because currently AG is guaranteed 2 seats at the table and with the new structure there is no guaranteed seat for AG. He added that the AST needs to look at the new structure and think of people in the community that are willing to invest in the community. Katie MG asked if there was an opportunity to incorporate ag into the purpose and powers, and John F. answered yes. Leah M. stated that all of the committees need agricultural representation and farmers are first entrepreneurs that simply chose agriculture as their venture. Fred M. added that it is very different for a farmer to serve on a board than an executive. It takes a lot of time; time that many small farmers don't have. Maryanna B. agreed that ag should be incorporated in the purpose and powers. Tom S. showed opposition to the WEDC's recent move and believe we as the AST need to act now. John F. stated that the Commissioners still have a lot of leverage with WEDC – based on the amount of funding given. He stated that the AST should sit down with WEDC and think of structure for farmers to become members-affordably and discuss the committee structures. Ann o. stated that structural change was needed. Leah M. challenged the AST to not rest on our Laurels, after all it was our urgency that landed Brian G.'s position. Constant messaging needs to be re-iterated. Gill G. noted that these committees are set up assuming the WEDC will go on forever- not unlike many businesses, but eventually this becomes top heavy and needs shifting. Maryanna B. wondered if anyone was going to discuss our conversation with the board before it "hits" the press, and John F. agreed to have that conversation. Duane W. asked if the agricultural support services like equipment dealers and such would be willing to serve on the board? Fred M. said probably not they don't have the time either. Karl K. asked if they would financially be involved, and Fred M. said, maybe. Katie MG asked what the action steps may be? And John F. stated that we needed to encourage the ag community to become involved fiscally.

ROUNDTABLE

Ann Obrecht: Jim Zerringer was announced as new Director of Ag for Ohio. She has already sent an invitation, and asked Brian Gwin to set up a tour. She also invited Jim Renacci. The County Commissioners have issued an RFP for the Change for Chance horse operation- please spread the word. In addition he County needs new Park Commissioners.

Katie Myers-Griffith: Very important to fill Bob Gibbs Ohio senate seat with someone invested in agriculture. Do your homework and send letters of support.

Wes Greene: 3 new programs will be starting at ATI; Alternative Energy Management, Sustainable Agriculture, and Ag Assistance. Would also love newly elected officials to visit ATI on their tour of Wayne County.

Leah Miller: Dairy Sheep Symposium was very successful 80+ people in attendance. Great opportunity to showcase ATI. There is a huge opportunity for producers and processors. The Ohio Sheep Dairy (Lucky Penny) will be up and running in March 2011. Sheep dairy suits smaller scale properties and is a high scale cheese.

Ron Becker: Programs for winter include – Buckeye Shepherd Symposium Dec. 11, 2010 tax webinar Dec. 2 and Dec. 14 High Tunnel program in Bellville. In the near future: Pesticide Recertification and Maple Syrup School in Fredericksburg- check the website for details.

Duane Wood: Annual meeting went well. SWCD gets to walk the Ag Security Areas and Ray Rummel does a great deal of that work as well as the AEPP annual inspections. Working on fire pond volume calculations, this helps townships get a lower insurance rate. The Muskingum Watershed Nutrient Trading, technical committee met recently – things are moving along.

Chris Finney: Treasurers Report for the third quarter beginning balance- \$3,574.66 ending balance- \$3,853.91 (a bit of a gain)

John Fitzpatrick- Several counties are working on a joint CAUV program at the University of Akron Medina Campus. In Jan will be hosting the traditional Safety program and in March the Green Energy Program.

Karl Kanehl- asked if Strickland's ban on exotic animals will go through? John Fitzpatrick believes that is very unlikely.

Brian Gwin: Dec. 7 planning the Specialty Crop Working group with Ron Becker. Might work with ACDC to get it opened up for a tour. Still working with OBEC on a biomass to value case studies. Report based on current and available opportunities may need local funds.

Gil Graham: New class this spring- Learning About Accounting

Fred Myers: Has general concerns about the 22 farms that he currently rents – 8 are for sale (to be split up) just concerned about the land base in Wayne County.

Maryanna Biggio: "Brian's report was beautiful", Wondering why Baughman Township is the only township doing something?

Tom Stocksdale: Interest rates are good, plenty of money out there. Land values are up 310%- they are building and buying land. Dairy industry is still worrisome. Dairy sounding board being put together. The Ag tour was postponed Early-Late Spring. Fair price is going up to \$3, you can still buy a membership at the \$2 a day rate.

Dave Benchoff- Local Roots numbers were up for November. Going to break the \$30,000. Director Boggs at the ODA channeled more money for display coolers and Jessica Eickelberry was named the 2010 Local Food Hero.

Meeting Adjourned.