



AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION

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Greg Boeger, Chair – Agricultural Processing Industry
David Bolster Vice-chair – Fruit and Nut Farming Industry
Chuck Bacchi – Livestock Industry
Bill Draper – Forestry Related Industries
Ron Mansfield – Fruit and Nut Farming Industry
Tim Neilsen, Livestock Industry
Lloyd Walker – Other Agricultural Industries

MINUTES

September 12, 2018

6:30 P.M.

Board of Supervisors Meeting Room
330 Fair Lane – Building A, Placerville

Members Present: Walker, Bacchi, Mansfield, Neilsen, Boeger, Bolster
Ex-Officio Members Present: Charlene Carveth, Agricultural Commissioner
Media Members Present: None
Staff Members Present: Myrna Tow, Clerk to the Agricultural Commission
LeeAnne Mila, Agriculture Department

I. CALL TO ORDER

- Chair, Greg Boeger, called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. and asked for a voice vote for approval of the Agenda of September 12, 2018.

Motion passed

AYES: Walker, Neilsen, Bacchi, Mansfield, Bolster, Boeger
NOES: None
ABSENT: Draper

ACTION ITEMS

II. Item # 18-1402 APPROVAL OF MINUTES of August 8, 2018

Chair Boeger called for a voice vote for approval to approve the Minutes of August 8, 2018 as submitted.

Motion passed

AYES: Walker, Boeger, Mansfield, Neilsen, Bacchi
NOES: None
ABSENT: Draper

III. PUBLIC FORUM – None

IV. Item #18-1403 ADM18-0210/James Robert Conrads Administrative Relief from Agricultural Setback Assessor's Parcel Number: 087-021-83

During the Agricultural Commission's regularly scheduled meeting held on September 12, 2018 the Commission reviewed the following request from Planning:

Planning Services is requesting review for administrative relief from the required 200 foot agricultural setback for the above referenced project. The applicant's request is for a single family dwelling to be located 150 feet from the north property line (APN 087-021-82) and 185 feet from the east property line (APN 087-021-82). Assessor's Parcel Number 087-021-82 is a 24.1 acre property zoned Planned Agricultural-20 acre (PA-20). The applicant's parcel, identified as APN 087-021-83, is 98.1 acres, zoned Planned Agricultural-20 acre (PA-20) and is located at 4835 Memory Lane (Supervisor District 2).

Parcel Description:

- Parcel Number and Acreage: 087-021-83, 98.1 Acres
- Agricultural District: No
- Land Use Designation: AL = Agricultural Lands
- Zoning: PA-20 (Planned Agriculture, 20 Acres).
- Soil Type:
 - Choice Soils:
 - SuC – Sobrante Silt Loam, 3 to 15 percent slopes

Discussion:

A site visit was conducted on August 29, 2018 to review the placement of the single family dwelling.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends APPROVAL of the James Conrads request for relief from the agricultural setback for the construction of a single family dwelling, no less than 150 feet from the north property line (APN 087-021-82) and 185 feet from the east property line (APN 087-021-82). as staff believes the findings that the Agricultural Commission is required to make by Resolution No. 079-2007 and adopted by the Board of Supervisors on April 17, 2007, can be made:

- a) *No suitable building site exists on the subject parcel except within the required setback due, but not limited to, compliance with other requirements of the General Plan or other County development regulations;*
 - a. ***The General Plan Agriculture and Forestry element, Goal 8. states: Long-term conservation and use of existing and potential agricultural lands within the County and limiting the intrusion of incompatible uses into agricultural lands.***

The parcel is bisected by memory lane, with the southern section of the parcel having approximately 77 acres and the north side 21 acres.

The 21 acre section currently consists of the house site and a 12 acre vineyard. The placement of the single family dwelling in the footprint of the existing residential dwelling will limit intrusion into the largest portion of the parcel, preserving this area that has been historically used for grazing.

b) *The proposed non-compatible structure will be located on the property to reasonably minimize the potential negative impact on adjacent agriculturally zoned land;*

a. Locating the new construction in essentially the footprint of the current structure minimizes potential negative impacts to adjacent agriculture.

c) *Based on the site characteristics of the subject parcel and the adjacent agriculturally zoned land including, but not limited to, topography and location of agricultural improvements, etc., the Commission determines that the location of the proposed non-compatible structure would reasonably minimize potential negative impacts on agricultural or timber production use; and*

a. The new dwelling is located so that the developed area of the applicants parcel and the adjacent parcel are clustered in the same general area limiting potential negative impacts on agricultural use.

d) *There is currently no agricultural activity on the agriculturally zoned parcel adjacent to the subject parcel and the Commission determines that the conversion to a low or high intensive farming operation is not likely to take place due to the soil and/or topographic characteristics of the adjacent agriculturally zoned parcel or because the General Plan Land Use Designation of the surrounding or adjacent parcels is not agricultural (e.g. Light/Medium/High Density Residential).*

Staff also recommends that the applicant comply with Resolution No. 079-2007 Exhibit A of the Board of Supervisors pertaining to the adoption of the Criteria and Procedures for Administrative Relief from Agricultural Setbacks. Section B.5 requires the following action by the applicant: In all cases, if a reduction in the agricultural setback is granted for a non-compatible use/structure, prior to the issuance of a building permit, a Notice of Restriction must be recorded identifying that the non-compatible use/structure is constructed within an agricultural setback and that the owner of the parcel granted the reduction in the agricultural setback acknowledges and accepts responsibility for the risks associated with building a non-compatible use/structure within the setback.

If the Agricultural Commission cannot make the required findings in Resolution No. 079-2007, an application may be made to the Board of Supervisors for administrative relief. Such relief may be granted by the Board of Supervisors upon a determination by the

Board taking all relevant facts into consideration that the public interest is served by the granting of the relief. Such applications shall be made to the Development Services Department and a recommendation made to the Board of Supervisors.

Chair Boeger addressed the public for comment; the applicant was present and addressed the Commission.

It was moved by Commissioner Bolster and seconded by Commissioner Bacchi to recommend APPROVAL of Staff's request for administrative relief of an agricultural setback, allowing for a single family dwelling to be located 150 feet from the north property line (APN 087-021-82) and 185 feet from the east property line (APN 087-021-82). Assessor's Parcel Number 087-021-82. The applicant's parcel, identified as APN 087-021-83 is 98.1 acres, zoned Planned Agricultural-20 acre (PA-20)., as staff believes that three of the four findings that the Agricultural Commission is required to make by Resolution No. 079-2007 and adopted by the Board of Supervisors on April 17, 2007, can be made.

Motion passed:

AYES: Walker, Neilsen, Bacchi, Mansfield, Bolster, Boeger
NOES: None
ABSENT: Draper
ABSTAIN: None

V. Item # 18-1404 Farnham Rezone Project File No. Z18-0006

During the Agricultural Commission's regularly scheduled meeting held on September 12, 2018 the Commission reviewed the following request from Planning:

Planning Services is processing an application for a rezone for two parcels ranging in size from 80 acres to 174 acres, APNs 040-050-01 and 095-070-09. The parcels have a zoning designation of Rural Lands 160-Acres (RL-160) and a General Plan Designation of Natural Resource (NR). The proposed rezone would change the zoning designation of all parcels to Timber Production Zone (TPZ). The parcels are located in the South County/ Mt. Aukum area. Supervisor District II

Parcel Description:

- Parcel Number and Acreage: 095-070-09 = 80 acres, 040-050-01= 174 acres
- Agricultural District: No
- Land Use Designation: NR – Natural Resources
- Zoning: RL-160, Rural Land 160 Acres

Discussion:

A site visit was conducted on August 21, to assess compliance with all relevant policies in regard to the proposed zoning change. Findings are below.

Relevant Policies:

General Plan Policies:

General Plan Policy 2.2.1.2 – This project is consistent with this General Plan Policy regarding land use designations. Rezoning of these parcels to Timber Production Zone is consistent with the land use designation of Natural Resources.

Natural Resource (NR): The purpose of the Natural Resource (NR) designation is to identify areas that contain economically viable natural resources and to protect the economic viability of those resources and those engaged in harvesting/processing of those resources including water resources development from interests that are in opposition to the managed conservation and economic, beneficial use of those resources. The important natural resources of the County include forested areas, mineral resources, important watershed, lakes and ponds, river corridors, grazing lands, and areas where the encroachment of development would compromise these natural resource values. Land under both public and private ownership that contain these resources, including wilderness areas and other lands managed for resource values and multiple use, are included in this category. This designation shall be applied to those lands which are 40 acres or larger in size and contain one or more important natural resource. Compatible uses on private land may include agriculture, rangeland, forestry, wildlife management, recreation, water resources development, and support single-family dwellings. The maximum allowable density for this designation is one dwelling unit per 160 acres or larger outside the National Forest Service lands and within “timber production” areas and one dwelling unit per 40 acres within river canyons outside of the “timber production” areas. This designation is considered appropriate only in the Rural Regions. Isolated parcels outside the National Forest Service lands and below 3,000 feet elevation may be exempt from the one dwelling unit per 160 acre parcel size. If it is determined that such lands are unsuitable for “timber production,” one dwelling unit per 40 acres maximum density can be considered. Any modifications of this land use designation shall require one of the following findings: (1) No important natural resource exists on the property; or (2) If a project is proposed, it will significantly enhance the long-term production and preservation of the on-site resources through the application of development strategies such as fuels management plans, timber management plans, self imposed setbacks buffers, and open space. *Land Use Element El Dorado County General Plan*

Page 18 (Amended December 2015)

General Plan Policy 8.3.1.3 – This project is consistent with this General Plan Policy The County Agricultural Commission shall assess lands to determine their suitability for timber production. Lands considered suitable for timber production shall be based on the following criteria:

A. Lands designated Natural Resource (NR) on the General Plan land use map or lands zoned Timber Production Zone (TPZ);

These parcels are designated Natural Resource (NR) on the General Plan land use map

B. Soils identified as El Dorado County “choice” timber production soils which shall consist of soils found on Timber Site Classifications I, II, or III as defined in the California Forest Handbook and the Soil Survey of El Dorado Area issued April 1974 by the USDA Soil Conservation Service and the U.S. Forest Service;

The majority of these lands have been designated as Class I timber lands. A small portion is classified as Class II and III.

C. Lands used for commercial forestry/timber production;

These lands are being used for commercial timber production

D. Lands that possess topographical and other features that make them suitable for timber production;

The lands possess topographical and other features well suited for timber production. The land has been in the family since the early 1860's. The project sites have a historic cutting cycle of about 20 to 30 years, with the last salvage harvest occurring in the 2017. A choose-and-cut Christmas tree operation was started in the 1960's and is still in operation at this time.

E. Low development densities in vicinity.

The parcels are surrounded on all sides by similarly sized parcels zoned TPZ.

Zoning Policies:

130.21 – This project is consistent with this chapter of the zoning ordinance.

The subject parcels are currently zoned Forest Resource 160-Acres (FR-160) and would be rezoned to Timber Production Zone (TPZ) with approval of the project. The project has been analyzed in accordance with Zoning Ordinance Section 130.21.030 (Development Standards) for minimum lot size, widths and building setbacks.

Properties zoned TPZ have a minimum lot size of 160 acres, with a minimum lot frontage of 200 feet. As such these parcels are being analyzed cumulatively. The project would conform with the development standards of the TPZ zoning designation.

Timber Production (TPZ). The TPZ, Timber Production Zone, is applied to identify and regulate lands subject to the Forest Taxation Reform Act of 1976 (California

Government Code Section 51110, et seq.). Criteria for establishing a TPZ is located in Section **130.40.350** (Timber Production Zone: Criteria, Regulations, and Zone Change Requirements).

130.40.350 – D.1, D.2, D.3 and E. This project is consistent with this chapter of the zoning ordinance

Timber Production Zone: Criteria, Regulations, and Zone Change Requirements

D. TPZ Rezone Application Requirements. In addition to the requirements set forth in Chapter 130.63 (Amendments and Zone Changes), the following is required as part of any zone change to TPZ:

1. Timber Production Assessment. Based on General Plan Policy 8.3.1.3, the **Ag Commission** shall assess property to determine its suitability for timber production. Their decision as to suitability shall be based, in part, on the following findings:

a. Property is identified as meeting Timber Site Classifications I, II, or III, as defined in the *California Forest Handbook* and the *Soil Survey of El Dorado Area* issued April 1974 by the USDA Soil Conservation Service and the U.S. Forest Service;

The timberlands included in the rezone application have been identified as timber site Class I, II, and III in previous timber harvest plans. The properties are capable of growing an average annual volume of wood fiber of at least 15 cubic feet per acre as defined in California Government Code 51104(f)

b. Property is being used for commercial forestry/timber production;

The past and current management objective is the sustained yield of commercial forest products and other compatible uses (grazing – recreation). The landowner in the past has been assisted by Wetsel-Oviatt Lumber Company and now uses a forestry consultant to advise and write timber harvest plans.

c. Property possesses topographical and other features that make it suitable for timber production;

The topography, soil composition, and climate associated with these timberlands makes them well suited for commercial forest management.

d. No conflict exists with adjacent high density development.

No known compatible use conflicts currently exist. This is a forested area east of Mt. Aukum. All parcels surrounding the applicants lands are zoned TPZ.

2. Forest Management Plan. A forest management plan for the property shall be submitted that has been prepared or approved by a Registered Professional Forester, as defined in Article 8 (Glossary: See "Qualified Professional: Registered Professional Forester"). Prior to approval of the zone change application, the forest management plan shall be reviewed and approved by the Ag Commission. The forest management plan shall include, at a minimum, a discussion and recommendation on each of the following:
a. Commercial harvesting, a history of past operations, and recommendations for the future;

These timberlands have been under the ownership of the Farnham Family for more than 100 years. The first Farnham came to California in the 1850's and a short time later entered into the sawmill business in Fiddletown, California. Lumber from the Applicants lands supplied their lumber yard in Plymouth, California. During this period housing was constructed and families lived on the eastern parcel until the late 1940's. No permanent housing is located on the parcels at this time. A choose and cut Christmas tree operation was started in the 1960's and is still in operation at this time.

Since the late 1970's three timber harvest plans and one salvage harvest plan (2017) were written by the Farnham's family forester. Inventory of standing timber, growth rate, and stocking level was conducted in the spring of 2018 in conjunction with preparing another timber harvest plan.

Future harvest cycles should continue at 20 to 30 year periods to encourage optimum growth rates in residual timber stands. Harvesting will scarify the ground to facilitate adequate regeneration.

b. Provisions for legal and physical access to the property so commercial operations can be carried out;

There are no legal or physical access issues associated with these properties. They are accessed at the end of Farnham Ridge Road (El Dorado County Road). Farnham Ridge Road has a long history of commercial timber hauling.

c. A reasonable attempt to locate the boundaries of the property and attempts to protect the property against trespass;

The property corners have been set by licensed land surveyors and most of the property lines have been fenced. Prior to timber harvest operations, cutting boundaries are established and adjacent

landowners are contacted to review boundary lines. The owner has posted “No Trespassing” signs and inspects their property many times during the year for trespassing. There are locked gates at access points to the property.

d. Disease or insect control work;

The owner and/or his forester periodically checks the properties for insect activities and/or disease problems. If significant problems are detected, salvage operations are implemented (insect salvage 2017). Generally, insect and disease problems can be reduced by conducting periodic harvest which provides stocking control and improves forest health.

e. Thinning slash disposal, pruning, and other appropriate silvicultural work;

Silvicultural treatments are evaluated during harvest plan preparation. Proper spacing of trees is achieved by designating harvest trees. Priority for harvest are damaged, diseased, and other poorly growing trees. Removing these trees reduces the fuel loading and fire danger. Concentrations of slash are burned.

f. A fire protection plan including a fuels management program;

No fire protection plan has been developed for these properties or is known to be required by the California Forest Practice Rules or other government regulations. The properties are accessed by private gated roads that are in good condition. The owner has developed ponds (water holes) for dust abatement on roads and potential use during wildland fire fighting. Only authorized fire wood cutting, camping, Christmas tree cutting, and other recreational activities are permitted which reduces the level of risk normally associated with human caused wildland fires.

During the development of a timber harvest plan fuels are evaluated and prescriptions are prepared. Licensed timber operators and other contractors participating in timber harvesting or other forest management activities are required to comply with all governmental regulations related to fire prevention and safety. The nearest fulltime fire department is 13.1 miles from the properties and is Pioneer Fire Station #38 on Road E-16. A volunteer department station is located at the intersection of E-16 and Omo Ranch Road (Pioneer Fire Station #30, located in Amador County at River Pines. All of the timberlands are located within Cal Fire state responsibility area.

g. Erosion control on existing roads and skid trails along with maintenance of existing roads

The owner’s property has a well-maintained road system that is a

mix of native soil and rock. The culverts have handled all major storms and roads are well drained. Roads on the properties receive relatively little vehicle traffic except during harvest operations. Skid trails and logging road erosion control is mostly accomplished at the time of harvesting which are in compliance with the standards established by the California Forest Practice Rules. The owner performs additional road maintenance each year in conjunction with the choose-and-cut Christmas tree sales operation.

h. Planting of a significant portion of the understocked areas of the land.

There are currently several small openings in the northeast portion of the properties that are understocked after a salvage operation in 2017. These openings shall be monitored to see if natural seeding will restock these areas. Areas not restocked by natural regeneration within 3 years will be planted. Planting shall meet the stocking standards of the California Forest Practice Rules.

3. The property shall currently meet the timber stocking standards as set forth in the California Public Resources Code Section 4561 and the forest practice rules adopted by the State Board of Forestry for the district in which the property is located. As an alternative, the owner shall sign an agreement with the Board to meet the timber stocking standards and forest practice rules by the fifth anniversary of the signing of said agreement. After the zone change to TPZ is approved, failure to meet the state's timber stocking standards and forest practice rules within the five year time period will provide the Board grounds for rescinding the zone change of the property.

These timberlands currently meet the stocking standards established by the California Forest Practice Rules and California Public Resources Code 4561.

E. Continued Eligibility. The property owner shall continuously comply with at least six of the criteria in the forest management plan required under Subsection D.2 (Forest Management Plan) above, in order to continue to be eligible for the TPZ classification.
Specific Use Regulations Title 130 - Article 4 El Dorado County Zoning Ordinance (Adopted 12/15/2015) Page 239

Staff Recommendation:

The proposed rezone would change current zoning of the properties from Forest Resource 160-Acres (FR-160) to Timber Production Zone (TPZ), which is consistent with the Natural Resource General Plan Land Use Designation. No physical change or impacts would be associated with the rezone. Staff has determined that the proposed project is consistent with the TPZ zone, as well as other applicable El Dorado County Zoning Ordinance requirements and General Plan policies and recommends support of the rezone.

Chair Boeger addressed the public for comment; the applicant was present and addressed the Commission.

It was moved by Commissioner Neilsen and seconded by Commissioner Bolster to recommend APPROVAL of Staff's request for the proposed rezone changing current zoning of the properties from Forest Resource 160-Acres (FR-160) to Timber Production Zone (TPZ), which is consistent with General Plan Policy 8.3.1.3.

Motion passed:

AYES: Walker, Neilsen, Bacchi, Mansfield, Bolster, Boeger
NOES: None
ABSENT: Draper
ABSTAIN: None

**VI. ADM18-0183/James and Amy Fox
Administrative Relief from Agricultural Setback
Assessor's Parcel Number: 087-021-32**

During the Agricultural Commission's regularly scheduled meeting held on September 12, 2018 a request from Planning Services to review for the construction of a single family dwelling unit (Building Permit Application Nos. 300123, & 300126). According to the applicant, the proposed building site is approximately seventy-nine feet, four inches (79'4") from the property line of the adjacent Limited Agriculture-40 acre zoned parcel (LA-40) to the north (APN: 087-021-35). The applicant's parcel, identified by APN 087-021-32 consists of 20.609 acres and is located at 2990 White Thorn Road. (Supervisor District: 2).

Note: Applicant's request stated a relief request of a total of approximately 121-feet (Required 200 foot setback minus the proposed 79.34-foot building setback from the property line).

Parcel Description:

- Parcel Number and Acreage: 087-021-32, 20.609 acres
- Agricultural District: No
- Land Use Designation: RR = Rural Residential
- Zoning: LA-40 (Limited Agriculture, 40 Acres).
- No Choice Soils

Discussion:

A site visit was conducted on August 21, 2018 to review the placement of the single family dwelling.

Staff Findings:

- e) *No suitable building site exists on the subject parcel except within the required setback due, but not limited to, compliance with other requirements of the General Plan or other County development regulations;*

a. *There are other building sites.*

- f) *The proposed non-compatible structure will be located on the property to reasonably minimize the potential negative impact on adjacent agriculturally zoned land;*

a. *The proposed structure is located to reasonably minimize the potential negative impacts on the adjacent agriculturally zoned land.*

- g) *Based on the site characteristics of the subject parcel and the adjacent agriculturally zoned land including, but not limited to, topography and location of agricultural improvements, etc., the Commission determines that the location of the proposed non-compatible structure would reasonably minimize potential negative impacts on agricultural or timber production use; and*

a. *The topography of the applicants property provides a buffer from the adjacent agriculturally zoned parcel, as the building site is on a upslope. The applicants property also has a vegetative buffer in the form of trees and shrubs downslope from the building site, adjacent to the agriculturally zoned property.*

- h) *There is currently no agricultural activity on the agriculturally zoned parcel adjacent to the subject parcel and the Commission determines that the conversion to a low or high intensive farming operation is not likely to take place due to the soil and/or topographic characteristics of the adjacent agriculturally zoned parcel or because the General Plan Land Use Designation of the surrounding or adjacent parcels is not agricultural (e.g. Light/Medium/High Density Residential).*

a. *The adjacent agriculturally zoned parcel (APN: 046-21-35) is 9.86 acres and 270 feet wide. There is approximately 5.00 acres that is undeveloped, with only 0.3 acres of choice soils. Due to the above facts, it is unlikely that a commercial low or high intensive farming operation will occur.*

If the Agricultural Commission approves the Fox's request for relief from the agricultural setback for the construction of a single family dwelling, no less than 79.4 feet from the north property line (APN 046-021-35)

Staff also recommends that the applicant comply with Resolution No. 079-2007 Exhibit A

of the Board of Supervisors pertaining to the adoption of the Criteria and Procedures for Administrative Relief from Agricultural Setbacks. Section B.5 requires the following action by the applicant: In all cases, if a reduction in the agricultural setback is granted for a non-compatible use/structure, prior to the issuance of a building permit, a Notice of Restriction must be recorded identifying that the non-compatible use/structure is constructed within an agricultural setback and that the owner of the parcel granted the reduction in the agricultural setback acknowledges and accepts responsibility for the risks associated with building a non-compatible use/structure within the setback.

If the Agricultural Commission cannot make the required findings in Resolution No. 079-2007, an application may be made to the Board of Supervisors for administrative relief. Such relief may be granted by the Board of Supervisors upon a determination by the Board taking all relevant facts into consideration that the public interest is served by the granting of the relief. Such applications shall be made to the Development Services Department and a recommendation made to the Board of Supervisors.

Chair Boeger addressed the audience and Mr. Fox thanked staff for their review of the project and expressed his plans for the land. One other member from the audience spoke in favor of the project. Planning Department had no comment.

It was moved by Commissioner Walker and seconded by Commissioner Bolster to recommend APPROVAL of Staff's above recommendation request for administrative relief of an agricultural setback, allowing for construction of a single family dwelling unit (Building Permit Application Nos. 300123, & 300126, as staff believes that three of the four findings that the Agricultural Commission is required to make by Resolution No. 079-2007 and adopted by the Board of Supervisors on April 17, 2007, can be made, noting that finding (a) is being met to preserve agricultural land as required by the general plan.

Motion passed:

AYES: Walker, Neilsen, Bacchi, Mansfield, Bolster, Boeger

NOES: None

ABSENT: Draper

ABSTAIN: None

VII. Agricultural Conservation Easements Presentation-Charlene Carveth

The Department of Agriculture will be recommending this project to the Board of Supervisors on November 20, 2018:

1. Develop an Agricultural Conservation Easement program utilizing outside private organizations to hold funds, set up agricultural conservation easements and monitor and enforce the easements to minimize County staff costs.
2. Direct staff to prepare a program and resolution to bring back to the Board.

FUNDING: Voluntary easement donations by property owners requesting General Plan

amendments or rezones from agricultural to non-agricultural zones, voluntary donations, grants.

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND

The General Plan lists multiple objectives for the conservation and protection of grazing lands and other agricultural lands. Policy 8.2.4.1 states “Programs shall be developed that provide tax benefits and enhance competitive capabilities of farms and ranches thereby ensuring long-term conservation, enhancement, and expansion of viable agricultural lands. Examples of programs include but are not limited to, the following”:

- A. Support and allow private organizations to utilize conservation easements or other appropriate techniques to voluntarily restrict land to agricultural uses only.
- B. Continued use of Williamson Act Contracts (agricultural preserves).
- C. Formation of land trusts to preserve agricultural lands.
- D. Make available voluntary purchase or transfer of development rights from agricultural areas to appropriate non-agricultural areas.

El Dorado County has established various protections for agricultural lands such as; the General Plan Agricultural District overlay with minimum parcel sizes, the Agricultural Zones, Right to Farm, Ranch Marketing, Wineries, and Agricultural Preserves (Williamson Act) sections of the Zoning Ordinance. Even with these protections the California Department of Conservation’s Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program continues to show conversions of farm and grazing lands to urban uses in the county.

Urban development next to agricultural lands indirectly reduces the agricultural potential of remaining farms by increasing the potential for urban and agricultural conflicts. These conflicts can also reduce the current and future uses of the surrounding land for agricultural purposes.

The County’s agricultural lands are currently facing two key development pressures. One is the pending retirements of many of the existing farmers and how the farm land will be handed down to family members and secondly, the subdivision of former grazing lands next to existing ranches.

Agricultural Conservation Easements

An Agricultural Conservation Easement program is another tool that can protect farm and grazing lands. The program involves the voluntary purchase or donation of development rights from willing landowners to public agencies or nonprofit organizations such as a land trust. The easement can be tailored to meet conservation objectives and allows farming/ranching to continue. It is a deed restriction that runs with the land in perpetuity. Easement prices are established by an appraiser with the expertise to segregate the value of the development rights. Voluntary funds collected from property owners or developers requesting General Plan Amendments can be held in a trust by the public agency or transferred to a nonprofit like the Community Foundation. The funds would be held until a willing seller with property that meets the County’s conservation

objectives (number of acres, adequate water supply, soils, etc.) is available. The public agency or land trust would monitor and enforce the restrictions set forth in the easement agreement.

Agricultural Conservation Easement benefits include:

- Keeping families on their farms by easing the intergenerational transfer of property,
- Keeping land in farming or ranching uses
- Increased access to capital for agricultural uses by property owners
- Undeveloped grazing lands cost less in public services
- Can contribute to watershed or oak woodland protections

David Zelinsky commented and answered questions regarding the Conservation Easements and stated that Yolo County is already practicing mitigation on Conservation Easements.

The Commission members made the decision to have this item brought back to the Agricultural Commission for further review after direction is given from the Board of Supervisors meeting on November 20, 2018.

VIII. UPDATE on LEGISLATION and REGULATORY REQUEST – Charlene Carveth

IX. Correspondence and Other Business – None

X. ADJOURNMENT 8:00 pm

APPROVED: _____ DATE: 11/14/18
Greg Boeger, Chair