

August 16, 1995

Introduced By:

LARRY PHILLIPS
Ron Sims

farmlands.VN:tg

Proposed No.:

95 - 575

MOTION NO. **9652**

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A MOTION relating to Economic Development, requesting the King County executive to submit an ordinance that appropriates \$50,000 to the Institute for Washington Future for the purpose of creating agricultural jobs.

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WHEREAS, in 1979, King County voters expressed their strong public commitment to preserve farmlands by approving a measure to buy farmland development rights, and

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WHEREAS, this program preserved 12,600 acres of farmland by purchasing the development rights, and

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WHEREAS, during the 1980's King County established Agriculture Production Districts with large lot zoning requirements and specified agriculture as the preferred use in these areas, and

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WHEREAS, in 1994, King County adopted a new Comprehensive Plan, which addresses the decline of King County's farmlands, both in vitality and acreage, and

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WHEREAS, in 1995 the county council funded a new initiative to implement the Plan's goals and ensure a sustainable future for working farms, and

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WHEREAS, this initiative is just beginning, to gather information about the challenges of today's farmers, and

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WHEREAS, the King County Farm Advisory Committee will make recommendations of incentives which will encourage the retention of working farms to the Council's Utilities and Natural Resources Committee in 1995, and

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WHEREAS, the King County Organizing Project (KCOP), a democratically governed organization of churches and institutions in conjunction with Cascadia Revolving Fund and the Institute for Washington Future are proposing a project which will create jobs and efficiently use agricultural land in King County for farming by low-income residents, and

1 WHEREAS, this project proposes that prime agricultural land be used to create
2 agricultural jobs through the development of orchards, dairy farms, and vegetable crops
3 and the development of enterprises run by individuals to market and sell their products, and

4 WHEREAS, the project calls for the development of training programs and the
5 securing of rights to use land for farming from current landowners, and

6 WHEREAS, funding the proposed project will provide the incentive for people to
7 continue to use their farming expertise, and

8 WHEREAS, the proposal is consisted with the mission of the King County
9 Agriculture Commission to maintain and further enhance commercial agriculture;

10 NOW, THEREFORE BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

11 The King County executive is requested to review the joint proposal of the King
12 County Organizing Project, Institute for Washington Future and the Cascadia Revolving
13 Fund to determine if the proposal is consistent with King County's Comprehensive Plan
14 and the mission of the Agriculture Commission.

15 BE IT FURTHER MOVED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

16 If the county executive determines the proposal is consistent with King County's
17 Comprehensive Plan, the King County council hereby requests the executive to transmit an
18 ordinance appropriating \$50,000 to the Institute for Washington Future to assist it in the
19 creation of agricultural jobs and the preservation of agriculture lands within King County.
20 The council's preference is that the \$50,000 come from non current expense sources, if
21 possible.

22 PASSED by a vote of 12 to 0 this 11th day of

23 September, 1995.

24 KING COUNTY COUNCIL
25 KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

26 Kent Pullen
27 Chair

28 ATTEST:

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30 Gerald A. Peterson
31 Clerk of the Council
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33 Attachments: Tasks, Timeline and Organization Responsible for Each Task
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Maintaining King County Farmlands for Commercial Farming Summary

The purpose of this project is to efficiently use agricultural land in King County for farming by low-income residents. There are significant parcels of existing or potential agricultural land in the County--for which the County holds development rights--which could be maintained for agricultural use. In the past decade, existing agricultural land has been used for commercial or residential development, rather than farming, in spite of the region's rich soil and climate. In addition there are large numbers of low-income individuals or groups who have interest in farming--in order supplement their incomes--but who have no access to land or tools to do so. Many of these individuals belong to immigrant groups who have had experience with farming in their home countries (particularly S.E. Asians, South Pacific Islanders and Latinos).

The results of this project will be that prime agricultural County land will be used to supplement the income of County residents through the development of orchards, dairy farms, and vegetable crops and the development of enterprises run by these individuals to market and sell their products.

Three organizations have joined together to coordinate the project. The King County Organizing Project, with a broad low-income constituency, will identify and organize potential farmers. The Institute for Washington's Future, with research, policy development, and educational expertise, will gather information on available land and agricultural products that will generate the most commercial success, and will develop and provide appropriate training. The Cascadia Revolving Fund, which provides business loans low-income entrepreneurs, will provide financial and business development training and on-going technical assistance to farmers and entrepreneurs.

The length of this project will be one year, from July, 1995-June, 1996 and will begin with land and farmer identification, training in farming and business development, and conclude with the planting and harvesting of the first crops. The total funds requested are \$50,000 to be divided among the organizations, with the Institute for Washington's Future acting as the fiscal agent. This funding will provide the basis for future funding in subsequent years.

Maintaining King County Farmlands for Commercial Farming

Collaboration between the King County Organizing Project,
the Institute for Washington's Future, and the Cascadia Revolving Fund

July 20, 1995

Within the boundaries of King County are significant land parcels which are zoned for agricultural use and which could be developed into productive commercial farms. At the same time, there are County residents who have an interest in, and in some instances experience in, farming who have not had access to the necessary land and tools to farm. (These include immigrant groups especially from Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, and Latin America). This project aims to match potential farmers and farming groups with available farmland and capital resources, and to lay the groundwork for these efforts so that future farming activities will have the best possibility for commercial success.

The King County Organizing Project (KCOP), the Institute for Washington's Future (IWF), and the Cascadia Revolving Fund will collaborate as partners in this project. KCOP will identify and organize potential individuals and groups that wish to farm. IWF will provide the technical expertise to identify favorable economic opportunities in metropolitan farming in King County, and will develop and coordinate training opportunities. Cascadia will provide necessary business and finance technical assistance services.

The climate and fertile soils of the Puget Sound and King County in particular make it one of the richest food producing areas in the world. Primary food products are dairy, vegetables, small fruits, and specialty crops including tree fruit and nuts. As in many regions of the country, urban and suburban development has demanded converting farmland for housing and commercial uses, threatening the future of this region as a significant food producer. Suburban sprawl--particularly in the last ten years-- has destroyed productive tillable and orchard land in the Kent Valley, Duwamish Basin, and elsewhere and has aggravated conflicts between farmers and suburban residents and businesses. Policies which favor housing and commercial development prevent families from supplementing their incomes through farming and gardening. Despite favorable conditions for year-round gardening, hunger, malnutrition, and substandard diets are a reality for many Puget Sound households. Local government-sponsored community gardens ("P-Patches") which encourage household vegetable gardening prevent commercial farming which could subsidize family income.

Widespread development coupled with underutilization of farmlands has required that we import food from outside the region. However, the existing system for food production and distribution poses serious environmental and resource problems. Food imported over great distances consumes vast quantities of fuel and other resources. Chemicals used to preserve food for long transport affects its quality as well as consumer's health. In addition, there are disturbing indications that the wages associated with food production and distribution activities in this region are dropping significantly. The decline of a local base for food production has created an opening for mass food merchandisers whose sources are producers, located far from the Puget Sound, who pay subsistence wages. These predatory merchandisers in turn employ non-union workers in local communities driving down wages and displacing local businesses.

In order to create a productive, sustainable, and equitable food system meeting the basic needs for all families and employing agricultural and food industry workers at "family" wages, we need to fully utilize existing agricultural resources within King County. This project aims to maintain existing farmlands for commercial farming by identifying both resources within the County and individuals and groups who wish to utilize these resources.

In order for this to take place, the following tasks must be implemented:

Tasks, Timeline and Organization Responsible for Each Task

July - September, 1995

IWF 80 hours

1. Inventory existing agricultural land.

An accurate, current, and detailed (existing and potential) agricultural resource inventory / map needs to be developed which would include:

- Current farmland: Develop an inventory of current farm activity by location and by product categories including farmers and part-time growers, serious hobbyists, urban and suburban gardeners, and orchardists.
- Potential growing acreage: Develop an inventory of potential farm land identified by location and by production potential for various agricultural uses.

IWF 50 hours

2. Determine the best agricultural use of each parcel.

- Analyze what is grown today and its value based on direct sales, restaurants, co-ops, wholesalers, and community service agriculture. (explain)
- Develop estimates for production/acreage/profitability (by crop).
- Determine what products do/will have a competitive advantage in this region.

IWF 20 hours

Cascadia 10 hours

KCOP 10 hours

3. Develop participatory evaluation plan for project.

- Evaluate using both quantitative and qualitative measures of land identification, product and enterprise identification, leadership development, training, business plan development, financing identified, food grown.

IWF 10 hours

Cascadia 10 hours

4. Identify sources of financing for agricultural enterprises.

* Sources may include revolving loan funds, private foundations, public funds.

KCOP 100 hours

5. Identify individuals and groups who might wish to farm available lands, or work in farm jobs.

These groups may include immigrants with a farming traditions (S.E. Asian, Pacific Islanders, Latinos). Once identified, gather individuals and groups for initial discussion of project and opportunities.

October - December, 1995

IWF 40 hours

6. **Analyze policies and regulations in the three county region (including land use and environmental regulations) which impact the viability of farming and gardening.**
- Inventory legislative tools present in the County and elsewhere to preserve farmland including "Right to Farm" laws, "agricultural reserves", tradable development rights, etc.

IWF 180 hours
 Cascadia 40 hours

7. **Determine the types(s) of agricultural enterprises to be developed.** Types include cooperative, commercial, or community supported agriculture, or a combination. Factors for consideration include the:

- type of product,
- earning potential for persons or groups,
- potential for adding value to the product. Examples include wine and cider production, integrated woodlot management featuring nut trees for nuts and woods, integrated tree fruit/mushroom enterprises, truck farms, and cooperative canneries or drying operations,
- opportunity for bringing individual producers together as cooperators. Cooperation maximizes access to information, capital, infrastructure, and maximizes the market position of small farmers, thereby potentially increasing earnings from farm activities.

KCOP 20 hours
 IWF 180 hours
 Cascadia 20 hours

8. **Develop training for farmers.** Training will be based on the type of enterprise selected, and the type of product chosen. Training includes information on farming for sustainable yield, as well as the basics of business development.

KCOP 40 hours

9. **Secure rights to use land for farming from current landowners.**
- Initiate meetings with current land-owners and adjoining property owners to ensure receptivity to farming enterprises.

KCOP 10 hours

10. **Identify and send two Farming/Leadership Project Leaders to 10 day training.**

January - March, 1996

IWF 60 hours
Cascadia 20 hours

11. Research and plan first crops to be planted.

IWF 40 hours

12. Research existing infrastructure and needs including water, transportation, storage and processing.

KCOP 40 hours
IWF 80 hours
Cascadia 40 hours

13. Hold training for farmers.

* Link them with technical assistance providers for business and farming-related development.

April - June, 1996

KCOP	10 hours
IWF	40 hours
Cascadia	10 hours

14. Finalize and review evaluation of project as a whole.

* Identify upcoming information gathering, training and policy needs.

KCOP	20 hours
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15. Organize first plantings.

Cascadia	40 hours
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16. Provide business technical assistance.

Timeline July 1995 - June 1996

	July-Sept. 1995	Oct.-Dec. 1995	Jan.-March 1996	April-June 1996
IWF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Inventory agricultural land * Determine best agricultural use of each parcel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Analyze regulatory policies which affect farming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Research first crops to be planted * Research infrastructure needs 	
Cascadia				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Provide technical assistance
IWF/Cascadia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Identify financing sources for agricultural enterprises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Determine types of agricultural enterprises to develop 		
IWF/Cascadia/ KCOP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Develop evaluation plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Develop training for farmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Train farmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Evaluate and plan future
KCOP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Identify farmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Secure development rights * Train farming project leaders 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Organize first plantings

Budget for Information Gathering, Organizing and Training

		1	2	3	4	Total	Rate per hour	Total
		QTR.	QTR.	QTR.	QTR.	hrs.		
IWF	Info. Gathering	140	220	100		460	\$40	\$18,400
	Training		180	80	20	280		\$11,200
	Evaluation	20			40	60		\$2,400
	IWF subtotal							
KCOP	Organizing	100	50	20	20	190	\$40	\$7,600
	Training		20	20		40		\$1,600
	Evaluation	10			10	20		\$800
	KCOP subtotal							
Cascadia	Info. Gathering	10	40	20		70	\$40	\$2,800
	Training		20	40	10	70		\$2,800
	Technical Assistance				40	40		\$1,600
	Evaluation	10			10	20		\$800
Cascadia subtotal								\$8,000
Total								\$50,000