

Minutes
Nevada Organic Advisory Council Meeting
20 November 2008

Nevada Department of Agriculture
350 Capitol Hill Avenue
Reno, NV 89502

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order 1:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Council Members Present: J. Smith, M. Litsinger, S. Davidson, B. Quinlan, D. Hall (via telephone)

Members of the Public: Ray Johnson, Steve Litsinger, Rick Lattin, Steve Slusser, Mark O'Farrell, Jana Vanderhaar.

NDOA staff: Steve Marty, Tony Lesperance.

3. Introductions

4. Approval of Agenda

The agenda for the November 20, 2008 OAC meeting was approved as offered.

5. Minutes from Previous Meeting

Bruce Quinlan made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 11, 2008 OAC meeting. Jim Smith seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 5-0.

6. Public Participation

Jonathon Mueller and Josie Glassberg of the Sierra Nevada Journeys nonprofit group provided a brief presentation regarding the Seeds of Change program. The goal of Seeds of Change is to provide schools with the knowledge, skills, and resources to start and maintain a school garden. Seeds of Change builds upon the success of school gardens across the country to promote academic achievement, healthy lifestyles, environmental stewardship, and community development. Although the program appeared to meet the Council's expectations, it was noted that the Seeds of Change program seemed to lack a connection to Nevada agriculture, and it was suggested that the OAC could perhaps aid in establishing that connection.

7. Old Business

A) Correspondence and Announcements

Nevada Department of Agriculture Director Tony Lesperance presented the OAC with a budget report concerning both the OAC as well as the Department in general. Director Lesperance stated that current and projected budget shortfalls required that \$40,000 of the remaining funds allotted to the Nevada Organic Advisory Council were to be reverted back to Legislature. Director Lesperance also stated that the OAC would be allotted an office, computer, and phone in the new Department of Agriculture building for the purpose of facilitating council functions in the future. The council raised the question of the status of the NDOA Organic Certification Program, and it was made clear that the program would continue to function as designed and that the certification program and the OAC operate out of separate budgets. Upon request from the council, Director Lesperance stated that \$6,000 of the \$40,000 proposed cut would be held for an OAC function, provided that a proposal for the function be approved by Wednesday, November 26.

B) Post-Southern Nevada OAC Workshop discussion and concerns or actions to be taken for future workshops **(Action)**

It was noted that Western Nevada College (WNC) has received a specialty crop grant intended to be used for a series of workshops focusing on specialty crops in Nevada. One of these workshops is intended to focus on organic crop production. It was suggested that the OAC collaborate with WNC to host the organic workshop. A motion was made by Jim Smith for the OAC to collaborate with WNC, Nevada Grown, and the Nevada Certified Farmer's Markets Association to host an organic workshop in conjunction with the WNC specialty crop workshop series. The motion was seconded by Bruce Quinlan and passed by a vote of 5-0. It was noted that this function is intended to be funded by the \$6,000 that Director Lesperance had set aside for the council (see item 7A).

8. New Business

A) Discussion and action regarding the creation of sub-grants for school organic garden programs **(Action)**

It was noted that despite the fact that the OAC budget cut would make funding school organic garden programs difficult or impossible, the OAC could still forward this cause by helping the Seeds of Change group to establish a better connection to Nevada agriculture. A motion was made by Sharon Davidson to draft a letter to Sierra Nevada Journeys thanking them for their presentation, and making them aware of the availability of the OAC's expertise regarding organic agriculture as well as extending them an invitation and/or scholarship to attend the Spring 2009 organic workshop. The motion was seconded by Jim Smith, and passed by a vote of 5-0. An additional motion was put forth by Jim Smith that due to budgetary constraints, funding school organic gardens via sub-grants should not be pursued further. The motion was seconded by Sharon Davidson, and passed by a vote of 5-0.

B) Discussion and action regarding tuition for council members to attend the Arden Anderson Program **(Action)**

No action was taken on this item due to budgetary constraints.

C) Discussion and possible action regarding collaboration with Farm Bureau for OAC functions **(Action)**

No action was taken on this item due to budgetary constraints.

D) Discussion and action regarding tuition for council members to attend the Eco-Farm 2009 event **(Action)**

No action was taken on this item due to budgetary constraints.

E) Organic Advisory Council chair and vice-chair position elections **(Action)**

A motion was put forth by Bruce Quinlan to table item 8E until the next Organic Advisory Council meeting in order to allow for time to discuss council member seats and time availability with all council members. The motion was seconded by Sharon Davidson, and passed by a vote of 4-0.

9. Schedule Next Meeting

The next OAC council meeting was scheduled for Thursday February 26, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. at the Nevada Department of Agriculture, 350 Capitol Hill Ave Reno NV 89502.

10. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.