

Viticulture Advisory Committee Meeting

4.9.24

Minutes

1. Welcome
 - a. Meeting called to order at 3:00 PM.
 - b. Present: John Azevedo, Bob Dempel, Joe Dutton, Steve Dutton, Nick Frey, Karissa Kruse, Mark Sanchietti, Mel Sanchietti, Ryan Stapleton, Jim Young
 - c. Absent: John Balletto, Chris Bowland, Laura Breyer, Nicole Hayden, Joan Patrick, Michael Sangiacomo, Brent Young
 - d. Staff: Joel Grogan, Connor Murphy, Merilark Padgett, Megan Rhodes, Rachel Smith
2. Approval of minutes
 - a. Motion to approve 11.14.23 minutes from Jim Young, Second from Mel Sanchietti.
 - i. Motion approved.
3. Ag/NR Department update
 - a. Chair Joel Grogan gave updates regarding the Ag/NR Department.
 - i. Submission of Strong Workforce Grant proposals:
 1. Green house facility improvements: propagation house and shade house at Shone Farm.
 2. Expand dual enrollment opportunities between SRJC and local high schools, allowing currently enrolled high students to take SRJC courses. Grant would provide funding for curriculum revision for SRJC courses and support for faculty, who would be both high school and SRJC faculty.
 3. Pilot classes: SRJC courses in Animal Science and Agribusiness will be taught at Analy High School.
 4. Expand the Animal Health Program textbook library.
 - ii. Working on articulating specific SRJC courses with 4-year university courses, these SRJC courses would transfer to UC. Should boost enrollment in Ag classes from general education students.
 - iii. Shone Farm & Horticulture Program Plant Sale Saturday 4.27.24 from 9 AM – 1 PM at Shone Farm; flowers, landscape plants & vegetables. Also have available online pre-sale of plants.
 - b. Connor Murphy reported that the School District will most likely not be filling the Pavilion Manager position vacated by Chris Wills.
4. Viticulture program update
 - a. Merilark provided the committee with lists of Summer and Fall 2024 Viticulture class offerings. Things are going well.
 - b. Merilark acknowledged the Sangiacomo Family for being awarded the California Association of Winegrape Growers “Grower of the Year” as well deserved.

5. Update on Well Project Shone Farm

- a. Mark reported that the well drilling is complete. The well-head is located in front of Block 4B off to the left of the main road headed west from Belding Center building. It yields 20 gal/minute. The drillers reported water at 75' deep, and they drilled down 400'. Weeks Drilling Company got the winning bid out of three bids submitted. Grant funding covered the cost of the geologist's report and the drilling.
- b. The next phase of this project is to bring in power and set up the pumping capabilities. Mark plans to set up the concrete pad (including the pressure tanks and plumbing) next to the spray shed outbuilding near the recycled water pumping station in front of Block 6A. Plans are to bring power to that spray shed site and to the barns, plus potable water as the open trenches will allow for that. This plan keeps the well-head site simple and compact, while all the required plumbing will be away from the vineyard block headlands and out of harms way.
- c. Mark thanked Rachel Smith for her assistance with the funding. Phase 2 of this project will also require getting three bids, otherwise known as the "bid-walk".
- d. Rachel Smith asked for a cost estimate, and if the bid-walk, and work for Phase 2 could be completed in the next year. Mark replied "yes". Getting it bid & completed sooner rather than later is advantageous for everyone.

6. Shone Farm Vineyard Development Update

- a. Mark reported that Block 8 (4.4 acres) will be pulled and replanted. The VESCO permit for that block expires April 2025. The plan is to plant back to Chardonnay, to keep that part of the ranch (Blocks 6,7 & 8) all contiguous in Chardonnay. Mark thanked the client who buys the fruit from Block 8, John Azevedo of Jackson Family Farms, for being flexible and supportive of the replant project.
- b. Block 8 is the lowest yielding block on the ranch (infected with red-blotch virus), so replanting it with healthy vines will be a big improvement. Block 9, which is 10.8 acres of Pinot noir planted in 1997, is the oldest block on the ranch. But it continues to produce well, so shouldn't need to be replanted in the near future. Mark concluded that after Block 8 is replanted, all the ranch blocks will be in good condition.

7. Winery Contracts Update

- a. Mark presented a spread sheet detailing the current winery contracts.
- b. Block 1 Sauvignon blanc (new vines) is open and there has been interest from wineries.
- c. Blocks 2, 3, and 4 are under contract.
- d. Block 5 contract was recently renewed for another 3 years, flat rate from 2023 price/ton. The previous contract was for 44 tons; the new contract is for 65 tons.
- e. Block 7 Chardonnay (new vines) is open and there has been interest from wineries.

- f. Blocks 6, 8, & 10 are under contract.
 - g. Blocks 9 & 12 are under contract.
 - h. Block 14 under new contact, three-year flat pricing from 2023 contract, but with a 40 ton cap. There are approximately 48 tons now open from that block. Two wineries, Purple Wine Company and Joel Gott, have shown interest in purchasing this fruit. Mark reported that he will be meeting with representatives from these two wineries within the next week or two. Mark brought a few bottles of the 2022 vintage from Block 14 for the Advisory Committee members to taste, as that wine was given a vineyard designate for the Coppola label.
 - i. Steve Dutton complimented Mark on his efforts towards selling the Pinot noir, and added pricing for Pinot noir “In 2024, flat is the new up”.
8. Update on Sanchietti Farming Contract w/ SRJC
- a. Mark reported that the current Sanchietti Farming Contract is in its last year. Kate Jolley, Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services & Finance/Administrative Services, signs all the grape contracts for the School District. She will present the new Sanchietti Farming Contract to the Board of Trustees for approval prior to her signing of Mark’s contract.
9. New Business
- a. Joel Grogan asked about possibly using the well water for irrigating the winegrapes. Mark replied that the water would have to be stored up in a reservoir, as the 20 gal/min yield would only be enough to irrigate partial blocks (row by row).
 - b. Mark stated that the “slip” area behind the Dutton Pavilion would be a great location for a potential reservoir. Conveniently placed for roof water catchment from the Dutton Pavilion roof and surface sheet water flow catchment from rainfall events, that could be increased by pumping well water into the reservoir. Possible funding and expertise from Goldridge RCD could make this a viable project that would contribute to Shone Farm being water-secure.
 - c. Nick Frey asked if this would be a 10 acre/foot reservoir. Mark responded saying that we should work it backwards from what the needs of the ranch might be, plus consideration of permitting limitations. John Azevedo stated that a 49.9 acre/foot reservoir (and under) is “easy” for permitting, and above that is more difficult.
 - d. Mel Sanchietti encouraged Connor & Mark to work with the Goldridge RCD on this potential project, as they would be very interested in assisting and facilitating it. He reiterated that projects similar to this are out there, and there is funding for them.
 - e. John Azevedo stated that irrigation of vines and trees can be from open reservoirs, but vegetable crops cannot be irrigated with this type of stored water.

- f. It was agreed that this reservoir project discussion will be put on the agenda for the next Viticulture Advisory Committee meeting in the Fall.
 - g. Karissa Kruse reported that the Sonoma County Winegrower's Sustainable Winegrape Growing Day and BBQ at Shone Farm was moved from 4.16.24 to Friday 7.26.24.
 - h. Mark added that Shone Farm is one of the seven pilot ranches for the "Farming of the Future" development venture. He explained that Agrology sensors have been installed in Blocks 2 & 10 for measuring carbon flux in the soil. This will be showcased during the 7.26.24 event. Wilbur-Ellis and Agrology will monitor the soil carbon flux data.
 - i. Megan Rhodes announced that her office recently launched a "Learning Aligned Employment Program" funded by a grant. This is specifically targeted for students working as paid interns, and will reimburse 50% of the students' wages back to their employers. Part of the agreement is that when the internship ends, the employer will give the students opportunities for full-time employment, either with their company or with connections to the industry. The funding for the grant is \$2.4 million over the next eight years.
10. Set date for Fall 2024 meeting
- a. Tuesday, November 12th at 3:00 PM at Gale Ann's Vineyard.
11. Meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM.