

MINUTES
VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
September 12, 2007

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jan Nelson, John Sundquist, Jim LaRue

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ross Penhallegon, Peter Graham, Mike Koivula, Chris Melotti, Kai Williams

STAFF PRESENT: Orin Schumacher, Stephonee Freeman

B/CC PRESENT:

GUESTS PRESENT:

PUBLIC PRESENT:

Jan Nelson called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Discuss at October Meeting.

III. GENERAL COMMENT

NONE

IV. YELLOW STAR THISTLE REPORT

Schumacher passed out a handout from Penhallegon on Yellow Star Thistle. Schumacher explained that he has not found anymore of this plant. Citizens have been turning in samples of what they thought was Yellow Star but turned out not to be. Schumacher discussed possible ways that the plant was brought into the County, possibly by livestock. Penhallegon was responsible for alerting the media and informing the public of the weed. Schumacher stated that there has only been one site where the plant was found. It was discovered by Bill Manewal. Schumacher stated that the County will be using manual control to eliminate the plant.

V. NSA DISCUSSION - SCHUMACHER

Schumacher briefly explained that there needs to be discussion on sign removal. He explained that the system is flawed. Some citizens are misplacing their signs and actually placing signs on their neighbor's property. Some of this is accidental and some intentional. Schumacher explained the benefits of using GIS to eliminate the human error in the process. Schumacher stated that he is waiting for VMAC approval before going to the Board. Schumacher explained that citizens can put personal "No Spray" signs on their private property but not in the ROW. Schumacher stated that it was a large expense per year for NSA sign installation and maintenance. If the signs were removed and maintenance gone, the County could save approx. \$50,000 per year. Sundquist's idea is to use door hanger signs that would be hung on doors of property owners notifying them of spraying. Signs would be posted seven days in advance and

seven days after spraying. Schumacher stated that signs have not been made yet. Schumacher stated that the door hanger idea is time consuming. He would prefer that if he has a plan to spray a certain area, he would bring that information up on the computer and if there were NSAs there, he would delete out that portion of spray and not go in that area. If he had to use the door hanger method, it would take too much time. Schumacher explained that there may be occasions that he would talk directly with the property owner about the spray situation for a particular plant infestation. Schumacher stated that he needs to have more accurate information for the NSAs. The old system of tracking the NSAs is outdated and not as accurate as would be using the GIS system of mapping these areas. Sundquist stated that he is ready to use this new mapping system but wants it be available for other uses too. Schumacher stated that the property owner's info in the no spray area will not be available to the public. LaRue stated that the owners of crops need to protect their crops. He stated that maybe there should be exceptions made for those. Sundquist stated that everything in the ROW should not be burned down. He stated that the County should help the property owners by putting in and maintaining a grassy swale buffer strip. He explained that the County would be responsible for mowing it. LaRue stated that the County is who will be sued if someone gets in an accident because they can't see because of the grasses overgrown in the ROW. J. Nelson stated that people have to drive with caution and it is ridiculous to say that someone crashed because of the vegetation being too high. LaRue stated that people will sue the County in those cases. J. Nelson stated people won't win because of the cost and having to pay a lawyer. Schumacher stated that there are numerous cases where someone has sued the County for these reasons and they have won every time. J. Nelson stated that that is too bad. She stated that most people do not sue. She explained her personal experiences and stated that she didn't sue the County. J. Nelson stated that the County is not responsible for helping the farmer make more profit. Schumacher explained that bio-swales were not created for low maintenance vegetation. He stated that no matter what you put in, weeds and grasses still will come through. He stated that Tom Schindler (Marion County) explained that all they did with their ditches was to slope back the ditches and put in seed mixes. Sundquist asked if it was an engineering problem that prevented Lane County from using bio-swales. Schumacher explained that it is easier to do a bio-swale on new construction but not on existing sites. Schumacher reported an incident recently where a home owner called and said they thought their ROW was contaminated with herbicides. Orin went there and agreed that it looks like someone sprayed and ran off and came through their ditch. He explained that the ODA has a regulatory pesticide enforcement agent. Schumacher explained that the ODA did respond to the incident. He stated that the ODA ran in to the same problem that the County does. If they don't get there the day it is applied, there is nothing they can do. By the time the sample gets to the lab, it is too late.

J. Nelson explained that she has attended some meetings that Commissioner Fleenor has held and whenever she has brought up the issue that residents cannot use sprays in their Rows, people have been very concerned. J. Nelson reported that she has also told citizens that they also cannot use mechanical devices in the ROW. She stated that it is up to the County to take care of that. J. Nelson stated that things should be left as is. She doesn't want it maintained with herbicides. Sundquist stated that the "Illegal Spray Committee" is still gathering info on this. LaRue stated they should talk to the grass seed farmers and they should share their ideas since the County can't maintain everything. Sundquist agreed and stated that the "Illegal Spray Committee" may or may not say that the public needs to be informed.

J. Nelson left at 6:40 pm to attend Commissioners "Listening Tour" at Willamalane.

LaRue and Sundquist decided to stay and watch a brief presentation from Schumacher.

VI. VEGETATION MANAGEMENT FINANCES

Schumacher explained through the slides, the cost, budget, projects, etc.

He explained the vacation, sick time, benefits and how this all affects the budget for the fiscal year (July 1st through June 30th).

General discussion about Vegetation Management Finances.

Sundquist requested that Schumacher provide this presentation information to new members and current members.

Sundquist requested that there be discussion on the Health Advisory Committee support of the governor's issue regarding children's health and pesticides.

VII. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

Discuss at October Meeting.

VIII. NEW ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING – WED., OCT 10TH, 2007

- Minutes

Meeting unofficially adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Debby Woodruff, Recording Secretary