

Marion Citizens Advisory Network – meeting notes from 4/29/08

Note: Our next meeting is September 30th, 6:30-8:30pm;

Members Attending: Cindy Pease, Joan Erwert, Jeff Hollabaugh, Zach Taylor, Jerry Mullen, Ryan Kinnett, Jim Castle, Ken Meier, Larry Pearmine and Juanita Estrada
Extension office and others: Mike Bondi, Patti Jarrett, Derek Godwin

Overview of Agenda and Goals/Accomplishments:

- ❖ Get to know each other and how we work in the communities we serve
- ❖ Learn about advisory committee and other supporting committees in Clackamas County
- ❖ Increase understanding of the Extension Service as an organization serving Marion County (notebook of materials)
- ❖ Discuss opportunities for advising and advocating for Extension Service

Introductions - We had a brief round of introductions which included each person giving a brief statement of their paid and volunteer work and their relationship with Extension programs. Ken Meier, Larry Pearmine and Juanita Estrada attended for the first time.

Ken Meier – Ken has been active with OSU Extension Service since the 1930's. He started in Clatsop County before moving to Marion County. He has been active in 4H, Master Gardeners and the Family and Community Development programs.

Larry Pearmine – Larry commented that he started in 4H with Ken as his 4H leader.

Larry and his family own Pearmine farms. They grow a variety of vegetables, grass seed, fruit trees and nursery crops.

Juanita Estrada – Juanita works for the Salem-Keizer school district and specializes in bilingual programming and migrant populations. She has been a teacher for over 30 years, and she was in 4H for 10 years in Mexico.

Presentation and Discussion of Extension in Clackamas County – Mike Bondi, staff chair, and Patti Jarrett, advisory council chair; Mike and Patti talked about the origin of the advisory council in Clackamas County, why it was originally formed, impacts it has had on their budget, their role in working with Extension and the additional groups and efforts that have grown out of the council. Here are a few highlights from their presentation and discussion:

OSU mandates that every county will have an advisory council. The form in which they take is highly variable from county to county, but their traditional roles are to provide advice to the staff chair on budgets, advice to faculty on their Extension programming (content, people served, delivery methods) and advocacy to elected officials, stakeholders and citizens. Patti views their role as Extension's "eyes and ears in the community".

"You get out what you put into it" – The advisory committees are only as successful and productive as the members want it to be. Mike acknowledged that every county is a little different in how they function and the tasks on which they work. He suggested that the committee *define a clear vision with purpose, goals and objectives, then organize around it.* It's the old "form follows function" rule. We are all busy people that don't need another meeting to attend that is not productive.

Meeting frequency and format – They acknowledged that Extension is a complex organization with many different programs and funding streams. They decided to meet monthly for 8-9 months out of the year in order to adequately learn about Extension so the committee members can do a better job as advisors. Each month, a different faculty member delivers a presentation on their program. In addition, faculty submit written updates each month for the meeting. Patti said they have a pot luck dinner each time they meet, and this starts 30 minutes before the meeting begins. She also said they have held some meetings at people's homes and farms as a way to learn more about operations and Extension programs.

New groups/committees formed by the Advisory Committee – Some folks on the committee became involved in fundraising efforts. They decided to create a non-profit organization to handle these funds. The group is called Clackamas County Friends of Extension. There were also some folks that were interested in additional funding sources to help create long-term financial stability. They decided to create an Endowment fund for Extension activities in Clackamas County.

Advisory Committee structure/roles – Mike provided three handouts which included roles of the advisory council, an agenda from one of their meetings and a table of contents for their member notebooks. They currently have 17 members in their council and each person serves a 3 year term. They have a chair, vice chair and secretary. They have always operated on consensus for decision-making; however, Mike pointed out that he is not opposed to using a majority-type voting system if the group gets bogged down in decision-making.

Creation of a tax base (Special District) – The advisory committee decided a couple of years ago that there are not enough funds coming from the County budgeting process to support the Extension office and programs, and these funds would become increasingly difficult to obtain. They decided to work with the county commissioners to create a special district (5 cents per \$1,000 assessed value). The county commissioners supported them by placing them on the ballot. They have delivered presentations to all of the cities in the county and have received their approval to include the cities. They are progressing through the legal process and expect to have the special district on the November ballot for the citizens to vote on the tax base.

Derek provided everyone with a notebook of reference materials and gave a brief introduction to the contents.

Derek explained that he needed some direction from the group on where we should focus our time as a network. He realizes that in order for people to attend and be involved in a committee, they needed a purpose and they need to feel that they are contributing to the group. With this in mind, he wanted everyone to share what they would most like to learn and do as a group. Basically, what should we focus on first?

There were three main areas of interest shared:

1. Learn more about the funding structure and various Extension programs serving the communities. People feel they understand just one or two pieces of the organization, but they need to understand more in order to be an advisor and advocate.

2. Learn what my role is and how I can contribute. There is not a clear understanding about what each person is expected to work on and how they can contribute to the committee and organization. In addition, some folks expressed that there are some roles and activities in which they do not support and will not be involved (e.g. fundraising events).
3. We need to have a clear structure – We need to clarify the organizational structure, purpose for the group, focus for meetings and agenda.

Derek gave a brief overview on the various areas in which he could use help from the group. Derek is hoping that each person will have an interest in one or more of these items in which to volunteer their time and expertise.

1. Business planning – budgeting, creating a business plan
2. Program expansion –
 - a. creating new positions
 - b. program planning to reach new audiences
 - c. office/classroom locations, outdoor classrooms
 - d. funding - partnerships, grants, fees for service
3. Program management – supporting/modifying existing efforts
4. Outreach and marketing –
 - a. General public - raising awareness and understanding of our programs, recruiting new clientele
 - b. Elected officials, stakeholders, partners – raising awareness/understanding for the purpose of funding and partnerships
5. Recognition – recognizing and showing appreciation for our volunteers, volunteer leaders and partners

We made some decisions about our next steps which included the following items:

1. We need to meet more often if we are going to make significant progress.
2. We need to have the faculty (1 or 2 at a time) attend the meetings to teach others about their programs.
3. We need to be added to the newsletters (preferably electronically), and we need to receive regular updates from the faculty for each meeting.
4. We decided to keep our next scheduled meeting on September 30th; however, we need to plan out an additional 4-6 meetings through the school year. There will be some conflicts on the dates we choose, but we will need to go ahead and schedule them the best we can.
5. We need to receive more information by email before the meeting, so we can be ready to work on items during the meeting.
6. Jim Castle and Ryan Kinnett offered to help plan the next meeting and schedule the additional meetings.
7. Jim Castle offered to be the secretary and take notes for the future meetings. Jim also offered to help Derek with drafting a more defined structure for the network.
8. Cindy Pease offered to help review our annual budget and offer suggestions.
9. Jim and Cindy offered to attend the budget presentation with the commissioners on May 20th at 4pm (Courthouse Square Annex, Senate Hearing room).