

Agritourism Advisory Committee

Tuesday, February 11, 2025

3:30 – 5 p.m.

Experience Olympia & Beyond
2424 Heritage Ct. SW Suite 101
Olympia, WA 98502

This meeting will be held in person, or can be accessed by Zoom:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85932350999?pwd=OKEdD6a8JnNylP2aGwRN2EuA1f3bQc.1>

MEETING AGENDA

3:30 p.m. – 3:35 p.m.	Welcome and Call To Order	Mitch Lewis
3:35 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.	Approval of Meeting Minutes – Oct. 22, 2024 Update on Robby & John’s Applications – Jennica New Business Marketing/PR Update – Emily Brooks Destination Master Plan Implementation – Emily Brooks Review of Byway Application – Dancing Goats and Singing Chickens Historical Pioneers & Multi-generation Farms – Mitch	Mitch Lewis
	Project Updates Update on Native Prairie Month – Jennica Thurston Bountiful Byway Rack Card & Distribution Digital Programmatic Advertisements New Members	
4:15 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.	Items From The Floor	Mitch Lewis
4:45 p.m.– 5:00 p.m.	Adjournment and Next Meeting	Mitch Lewis



Agritourism Advisory Committee

Tuesday, October 22, 2024

3:30–5:00 p.m.

This meeting was held in person and via Zoom:
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2424 Heritage Ct. SW Suite 101
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MEETING MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Chair Mitch Lewis at 3:31 p.m.

GREETINGS

Committee Members Present: Mitch Lewis, Robby Rutledge, George Sharp, Jennifer Colvin, Nathan Allan, John Bourdon

Committee Members Absent: Andrea Levanti

VCB Staff Present: Emily Brooks, Braeden Armin

Community Members Present: Jennica Machado

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Mitch Lewis motioned to approve the minutes from the July 23 meeting. John Bourdon seconded. No further discussion: motion carried.

INTRODUCTION

- Braeden Armin introduced himself as the newest member of the Experience Olympia team.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Harvesting Resilience Campaign:** Emily Brooks provided an update on the campaign launched in September. The committee appreciated the video content

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and supporting web. Funded by a SWT grant from the Department of Commerce, the campaign has received national media attention through press releases sent by Emily, along with sharing with a recent group press trip. Jennifer Colvin supported the effort to highlight the South County food scene.

- **Marketing and PR Update:** Emily Brooks reviewed recent media coverage, highlighting features of Rutledge Family Farm in NW Travel & Life and Wild Heart Sipping Vinegar in 1889 Magazine. Mitch Lewis led a discussion on agritourism challenges and gave praises to Rutledge. Ashley Creek Farms was mentioned as reopening this season and closed once all pumpkins were gone.

PROJECT UPDATES

- **Thurston Bountiful Byway Rack Card:** Emily Brooks discussed the new rack card to replace the trifold map in 2025. Suggestions were made to improve the design, including updated photos and a clear QR code placement, with Nathan Allan leading this conversation. Conversation was had about doing something more than just the rack card, but not a map, but ended up concluding we should stick with a rack card with more context. The card is expected to be finalized and printed by year-end. EOB to provide another version via email prior to printing.
- **Digital Advertising for 2025:** Emily presented initial designs for 2025 ads promoting the Byway, with a strong focus on advertising in the upcoming year. George Sharp suggested using the tagline "Experience the Bounty," and Emily and the team will refine the ads further. At the second meeting in Q2, Emily will provide an update on statistics.
- **Farmers Markets:** The committee explored pop-up opportunities at local farmers markets, with a discussion on tracking visitor engagement through geofencing. While there was a suggestion to promote the Byway during the slower winter months, the committee preferred focusing on spring and summer for greater impact. Mitch Lewis mentioned continued success distributing guides at the Tumwater Farmers Market.
- **Additional Project Updates:** Jennica provided updates on the May Prairie Proclamation, with a decision expected in January by the Board of County Commissioners. She also explained the LTAC funding process to the group, and provided positive feedback from BoCC and leadership at the County regarding the working lands tour.

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2025 Meeting Schedule: The committee agreed to move to quarterly meetings in 2025, with a potential mixer event in early spring. Mitch mentioned a retreat, and discussion was had on having one in mid-to-end 2025 to look at what we did and discuss strategy for 2026.

ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR

- John and Robby will need to reapply for their terms, as they are expiring this year. Their applications will then go to the Commissioners for approval.
- Jennica and Emily explained the LTAC process and Jennica noted that the County is working to untangle some contracts and financial obligations and how they fund the Byway.
- **Farm to School Program:** Mitch Lewis discussed the program's benefits for farmers and students, explaining that it helps local farmers by informing them of produce needs and enables schools to purchase fresh ingredients. This initiative, funded federally and by the state, also teaches students how to cook with locally sourced food.
- **Festival Collaboration:** George Sharp emphasized the importance of collaboration among Byway festivals to promote each other.
- **Google Business Verification:** Emily advised committee members to ensure their online content meets Google's verification standards, noting that nearly 40% of accounts are flagged as unreliable.
- **Artificial Intelligence Discussion:** The group discussed AI tools like ChatGPT and Gemini, sharing potential uses and ideas for implementation. Emily shared EOB's policy

NEXT MEETING

- Date: TBD. Emily to send out an email and calendar invites.
Time: 3:30–5:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

- The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m., following a motion by Mitch and a second by Robby.

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