



**Whidbey Island Grown
Steering Committee Meeting
August 7, 2017 -- 6:30 p.m.
WSU Extension - Island County, Coupeville, WA**

Meeting Minutes

Attending: John Burks, Kettle's Edge Farm - CHAIRMAN
Kelsi Mottet, Whidbey Island Conservation District
Mervyn Floyd, Slow Food Whidbey Island
Melanie Edwards, Willowood Farm
Lee Fritsch, Volunteer
Robert Pelant, Pacific Rim Institute
Sherrye Wyatt, Northwest Agriculture Business Center
Lis David, Orchard Kitchen
Gloria Mickunas, Whidbey Party Girls
Steve Williams, Foxtail Farm
Loren Imes, Quail's Run Farm/WSU Extension- Island County

Chairman John Burks called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Membership Update: Sherrye gave an update on the relaunch underway with partners Goosefoot, Port of South Whidbey, Northwest Agriculture Business Center, Whidbey and Camano Islands Tourism, Whidbey Telecom, Port of South Whidbey, the Whidbey Island Conservation District, Bayview Farmers Market and Organic Farm School. She submitted a letter of interest by the August 1 deadline to Goosefoot for the 2018 grant process. If WIG is invited to submit a full proposal that will be due this fall. News about the USDA Farmers Market Program Promotion application should happen in September, the grant includes funds for staffing WIG.

A list of current members (38) and a relaunch flyer, as well as decals, bumper sticker and a framed logo have been sent to all members. In order to encourage continued momentum, a September 1 deadline has been proposed to become a founding member and to ensure participation in the Whidbey Island Grown Week (Friday, September 29-Sunday, October 8). The discount code WIG2017 at checkout is still available in order to save \$50.

Members and Partners * – 38 as of August 7, 2017

While some members qualify for more than one category, everyone is listed in only one category for the purpose of this discussion.

FARMS - 12

12 Birches Farm
Deep Harvest Farm
Ebb Tide Produce

Eckholm Farm
Foxtail Farm
Glendale Shepherd

Quail's Run Farm
Hunters Moon Farm
Kettle's Edge Farm
Lavender Wind Farm
Organic Farm School*
Willowood Farm

LOCALLY MADE -1

Turnco Wood Goods

DINING - 5

Braeburn
China City
Fraser's
Orchard Kitchen
Oystercatcher

MARKETS - 4

3 Sisters Market
Bayview Farmers Market*
Goose Grocer
South Whidbey Tilth

LODGING/VENUE - 4

Blue Goose Inn
Eagle's Nest Inn
Guest House at the Cultural Center
Pacific Rim Institute

LIBATIONS - 2

Comforts of Whidbey
Spoiled Dog Winery

SUPPORTER - 10

Whidbey Party Girls!
Sherrye Wyatt PR/Marketing
Slow Food Whidbey Island
WSU Extension - Island Co.
Goosefoot *
Whidbey Telecom *
Port of South Whidbey *
Northwest Agriculture Business Center *
Whidbey & Camano Islands Tourism *
Whidbey Island Conservation District *

Tools - Website Profile, Website Calendar, Social Media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram), Bumper Stickers, Window Decal, Twist Ties, Member Sticker with Year, Framed Sign, Rack Cards, Electronic Logo for Use in Own Marketing. *Rolls of stickers order in progress.*

Recruitment Strategies: Lis David gave an overview of her recruitment and outreach to the dining community. Strategies include email, face to face, mailings and phone calls. She is sending a spreadsheet of the contacts she has made and everyone is encouraged to share their efforts and add to the list so there is a comprehensive record of who has been approached. Sherrye has followed up with past WIG members, attendees of the Farm to Table Forum, and more. Simply direct prospects to the website where they may join and give them the WIG2017 code. Goal is to exceed 50 members by September 1. There was discussion that restaurants with Penn Cove Mussels and Whidbey Island wines, brews and spirits are a gateway for encouraging them to carry more WIG farmer member products/produce. One of the goals of WIG is to open the door for more communication to share opportunities for increasing revenue for everyone.

It was noted that while many people have acknowledged their desire to join, they seem to be just too busy to go to the website. One idea was to just invoice people - but the consensus of the group was not to take that approach for several reasons including recordkeeping/renewal in the membership software and the need for members to take ownership and build their own profiles.

Advertising to Date

- **Whidbey Art Trail** - \$225 ad ran in year round brochure that is widely distributed;

- **Whidbey News-Times** - \$80 ad ran one time in a special farmstand section that was underwhelming so the group agreed to hold off on any more print advertising and to instead put more energy into social media;
- **Rack Card** - the promotional piece spearheaded by the Whidbey Island Conservation District it is now being distributed throughout Whidbey Island as well as off island through Certified Folder's distribution channels, including ferries. There was quite a bit of discussion about the opportunity to do a new fall/winter rack card utilizing grant funding. After the discussion, the consensus of the group was that rather than create a new card, it would be more practical to put resources and energy into increasing the printing and distribution of the current rack card. That card combined with electronic advertising will reinforce brand recognition and drive people to the website.

Future Events

- **Whidbey Island Cider Festival** is planned for 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. on September 30 at the Pacific Rim Institute. Robert Pelant gave an update and invited members to promote and to attend or become a volunteer. WIG will have rack cards and recruitment flyers at the event.
- **Whidbey Island Grown Week** (First week of Oct - Friday, Sept 29-Sunday, Oct 8). The 10 day celebration of local products, services, and experiences. Each Whidbey Island Grown member is encouraged to organize at least one idea, special offering, event, or promotion either one day or multiple days during that time frame. This collaborate collection will be marketed together to increase their overall impact and draw attention to what is local. WIG WEEK is one example of collective marketing planned for Whidbey Island Grown. This is also a recruitment tool so a WIG member may pair with a prospective member to feature local products that week, so everyone sees the benefit. Example would be a restaurant featuring several Whidbey Island wines by the glass.

Action Items

- Create Whidbey Island Grown Week events and submit them to the calendar as soon as possible. All members will be encouraged to get their events organized so they may be promoted.
- Everyone should increase promotional activity about WIG. WIG members may cross promote each other using social media. Sherrye and Elicia have plans to do more with Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
- Create a Facebook Group for WIG members to communicate with each and share timely information and ideas in a forum.
- WIG members may include a story about WIG Week in their email newsletters and blogs and invite their subscribers to join or include rack cards or recruitment flyers in their deliveries.
- Step up the recruitment efforts - everyone needs to help get the word out. Peer to peer is the most effective.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Sherrye Wyatt