

**Skagit County Conservation Futures Program Advisory Board
(CFAC)**

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday January 12, 2016

Members Attendance

Scott DeGraw	Mike Hulbert	Wendy Pare	Owen Peth
Steve Sakuma	Keith Wiggers	Andrea Xaver	

Staff Attendance

Kara Symonds, Skagit County Public Works

Linda Christensen, Skagit County Planning & Development Services

The meeting opened at 7:00 a.m.

Member Update

Kara received a request from the Northwest Agriculture Business Center (NWABC) on behalf of the Farmland Legacy Program to write a letter supporting a grant funded educational program to assist established and new farmers. The grant is \$600,000 spread over three years. The CFAC suggested the NWABC should contact the Board of County Commissioners to write the letter. The CFAC supports this grant for the agriculture community.

There were no changes to the agenda.

December Meeting Minutes

Keith moved to approve the December 8, 2015 meeting minutes and Andrea seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Pending Property Review

Kara summarized the pending properties and noted the four on the list are not added to the pending property map (handout). Once those four have been ranked, Kara will add to the map. Ranking will be done at the February meeting.

Kara announced the State Recreation and Conservation Office will accept a grant application this spring for new funding.

The CFAC discussed the acreage protected so far versus the development rights eligible for protection. Steve said it's important for all entities to be on the same page knowing how much

acreage needs to be protected. Make sure the goal is the same for all entities. Wendy said it would be handy to have a graph showing the trend on how farmland has been preserved.

Skagit Land Trust

Scott said he would like to arrange a meeting with Skagit Land Trust (SLT) to discuss possible partnership potential for future conservation easements. Though SLT has not partnered with the FLP much, they might work with the FLP to preserve certain areas of farmland.

Match Funded Projects versus Standard Projects

Scott feels this discussion is needed so we know what to do if an applicant needs immediate funding and is willing to either accept a 50% discount or if we are approached by a group willing to match funding on a specific piece of property. This discussion has to do with both the funding of properties and prioritizing applications with various point totals after they are scored. It's a tool or a process to show the FLP transparency. A discussion ensued on how to formulate the process. Kara explains to the applicant all funding possibilities. After the discussion occurred it was agreed upon that given our current situation where we have sufficient funding for all of our projects using match funding, we could accelerate the typical 2-3 year process if someone will take a discount or a match is immediately available. These will be evaluated case by case, and some recognize this could change given budgets or applicant demand.

Mike said he would like to see this group become better at finding funding sources, besides the usual state and federal grants. There was a discussion about marketing to the public sector for funding, but this can be expensive. Scott mentioned it's a good idea to approach new private groups and learn about their goals regarding conserving farmland. We could approach them when we have a property fitting their goals. The time to address other funding possibilities is after a property has been ranked.

Financials

Kara reviewed the 2016 Conservation Futures budget sheet. Wendy requested a report showing revenue and expenses.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 9, 2016