

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

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday June 14, 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

Steve announced that strawberries are early this year!

April Meeting Minutes

Keith moved to approve the April 12, 2016 meeting minutes and Wendy seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Property Update

Kara summarized properties on the map (see handout). She submitted pending properties to RCO recently. One property is awaiting official information about the number of development rights.

Scott initiated a discussion on farm plans required for USDA conservation easement funding. Wendy will check with the CD on the farm plan status of one of the properties and Steve will check with Skagitionians on funding possibilities. Additional funding could come through USDA and the state Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). USDA has restrictions and the property owner referenced here is not interested in federal funding.

Owen stated, from his own experience, he supports a farm plan. The group has some concerns on habitat requirements tied to conservation easement funding. This discussion will continue at the next CFAC meeting.

Kara continued the property update discussion by sharing that the 2014/2015 easements are at the RCO awaiting signatures.

Steve Sakuma announced that he will recuse himself during the new property ranking & discussions to avoid a conflict of interest.

The CFAC discussed the Nelson (Koetje) pending property. It has a conservation easement, but there is one development right (DR) left on the property. The easement has USDA funding and to extinguish the one DR will be time consuming for both USDA and county staff. Kara will research a contract amendment as time allows. The CFAC has not discussed the pros and cons of funding the remaining DR. No matter what is decided, a USDA amendment will be required.

Monitoring Update

Kara said that Eric has worked two weeks so far this year. The letters were sent and monitoring has begun. Eric always puts the USDA monitoring tasks ahead of others because of reporting deadlines. Keith mentioned that easements with boundary line adjustments don't show up on the county maps properly. Kara said only one example can be found.

Financial Update

Kara produced a handout that showed a graph of historical Conservation Futures tax revenue. The CFAC said confusion is on the amount received based on the \$.0625 amount; the program does not get the full percentage. Other funding sources receive a piece of this levy amount. Scott noted that the CFAC needs a better understanding of this levy and how it affects this program. He will invite staff from the Treasurer's office to a future meeting to help explain the code. Parts of the code are conflicting.

Kara also summarized the money in the conservation futures fund and future money.

Other Business

Farmland Legacy Program Publication

Andrea asked when a new future Farmland Legacy Program newspaper insert would be published. Kara said the County's new public outreach employee can take on this task, but first she has other projects to complete.

Easement Amendments

Kara mentioned that the program still has two pending amendments; Miller and Axelson. Both are USDA easements. The Miller easement is not in violation because the owners are the same. The amendment will update current ownership for the properties within this easement. There are no new legally created lots.

Keith said there needs to be language in the easement in case a property is divided into separate ownership, clearly stating how the allowed impervious surfaces would be divided among the different parcels, unless there was a written agreement among the different land owners submitted (and probably recorded).

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.