

RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS  
SKAGIT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Tuesday, January 20, 1987

Flag Salute

9:00 a.m. Discussion - Rental House - Vietnam Veterans of America.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

10:00 a.m. Discussion - Skagit County Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual - Elected Officials.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

7:30 p.m. Continued Public Hearing - Consideration of Moratorium on Aquaculture Activities. (Meeting to be held in Hearing Room "C.")

The Skagit County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, January 20, 1987, with Commissioners Walberg, Vaux and Rohrer present.

DISCUSSION - RENTAL HOUSE - VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA.

This item was postponed indefinitely.

DISCUSSION - SKAGIT COUNTY PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL - ELECTED OFFICIALS.

Present for this discussion were Jerry McInturff, Skagit County Auditor; Michael Rickert, Skagit County Prosecuting Attorney; Phyllis Coole-McKeehen, Skagit County Clerk; Paul Mahoney, Skagit County Assessor; and Ruth Wylie, Skagit County Treasurer.

Jerry McInturff stated that the elected officials have met several times to amend the current Skagit County Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual to fit the needs of the elected officials.

Commissioner Vaux asked why the current manual was not applicable to employees of elected officials.

Mr. McInturff explained that the majority of their employees are covered by union contracts, and the manual would not apply to those employees. However, the elected officials would like to have the opportunity to establish policies for their exempt employees.

Discussion followed regarding the grievance procedure authorized in the current manual.

Mr. McInturff stated that he may wish to establish different policies and procedures for his employees than the Commissioners choose for their employees. He noted that various counties around the state have various methods of handling this matter. He also requested the opportunity to contract with an outside agency to review the manual as it pertains to the elected officials' non-union employees.

Ruth Wylie stated that she was one member of the committee which reviewed the current manual, however she was not representing the elected officials.

Commissioner Vaux asked if the elected officials were willing to accept the liability of a possible illegal firing of an employee.

Mr. McInturff and Mrs. Wylie said they were.

Phyllis Coole-McKeehen stated that they want to go one step further and review the manual as it pertains to them.

Commissioner Vaux expressed concern regarding protecting the taxpayers from personnel problems.

Bob Taylor, Administrative Officer, informed the Board that Otto Klein, the County's personnel attorney, would be able to advise as requested.

In answer to a question from Mr. Taylor, Mr. McInturff stated that he wants the opportunity to enter into an agreement with his non-union employees to be able to fire without cause. Mr. McInturff noted that there are other areas in the manual with which the elected officials do not agree.

Commissioner Vaux motioned to direct Mr. Taylor to meet with the elected officials either individually or collectively to delineate problems and questions to be answered by Otto Klein's law firm, if they would agree to that. Commissioner Rohrer seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Mike Rickert stated that his employees don't know what policy covers them.

Chairman Walberg explained that currently, the Prosecuting Attorney's employees are under the direction of the current manual.

CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING - CONSIDERATION OF MORATORIUM ON AQUACULTURE ACTIVITIES.

Chairman Walberg explained that this public hearing was continued from last evening.

John Pitts, Aquaculture Coordinator for the State of Washington Department of Agriculture, summarized many documents and reports to address the three major

problems relating to aquaculture: (1) environmental concerns; (2) conflicts with commercial fishing; and (3) conflicts with multiple uses on Puget Sound.

Mr. Pitts explained that the interim guidelines will be available in the next two weeks. If followed, the guidelines will eliminate the environmental questions and concerns which have been expressed, and no moratorium would be needed.

With regard to commercial fishing, there will always be foreign competition for the commercial fisherman. There is currently more of a market for fish than fish are available. Commercial fishing can actually thrive alongside the aquaculture industry. Processing plants can stay open more months out of the year when processing both pen fish and commercially caught fish.

With regard to the multiple uses on Puget Sound, Mr. Pitts explained his proposal of raising fish in net pens to be released. He also suggested the use of aquaculture sites for safe ports and tourist attraction.

Mr. Pitts also noted that pen sites don't necessarily have to be ugly. He stated that experience has shown that property values in the vicinity of aquaculture sites are not negatively affected.

Commissioner Vaux requested copies of two documents referred to by Mr. Pitts: (1) December 1986 Department of Agriculture report, and (2) the British Columbia report.

Connie Funk, speaking as a member of Citizens for Clean Industry, stated that she was in favor of the moratorium because of her concerns regarding aesthetic impacts on Deception Pass and other State parks. Ms. Funk stated that she was not against aquaculture or industry, however, she felt industry in residential areas was intolerable.

Jim Wilbur, of the Swinomish Tribal Senate, opposed the moratorium, and recommended a coordinated State approach to the matter. He presented copies of the November 1986, Draft Interim Guidelines for the Management of Salmon Net-Pen Culture in Puget Sound.

Larry Lee, 320 Sioux Drive, Mount Vernon, stated that he was President of Moore-Clark Company, a major supplier of fish food in the Northwest. He favored controlled growth of the aquaculture industry.

Konrad Kurp, of Anacortes, asked Mr. Pitts about the Environmental Impact Statement.

Mr. Pitts stated that the Department of Fisheries will be presenting that to the Legislature for funding.

Mr. Pitts stated that he did not favor the relocation of his position under the Department of Fisheries.

Mr. Kurp expressed concern with the potential for people selling their fish rearing permits.

Gary Funk, of 1566 Sneeoosh Road, La Conner, asked Mr. Pitts if the citizens will have input into the decision of where fish pens will be permitted.

Commissioner Vaux stated that input could be made during a public hearing for a specific site permit.

Francis Barcott, 1820 8th Street, Anacortes, favored the moratorium to allow the necessary time for research. He felt fish pens were not compatible with commercial fishing.

Lois Englebright, 492 Salmon Beach Road, Anacortes, questioned the tax impact to Skagit County's economy.

Jan Wise Hansen, a fish farmer, answered various questions from Commissioner Vaux. He explained that his company is an all American company which pays regular taxes. Mr. Hansen explained that in the past occasional problems have occurred with algae, not disease. The same water system passes through the Puget Sound as through the Canadian waters, and thus, an algae bloom can contaminate many areas, cause a lack of oxygen, and suffocate the fish. He also informed the Board of the methods of cleaning the pen sediment from the water. Also, he stated that they are supporting research on vaccines against disease and research on different feeds. Mr. Hansen stated that he would be happy to raise fish for release.

Mrs. Englebright asked if there is a monitoring system for currently existing net pen facilities.

Betsy Dwire-Stevenson, Senior Planner, stated that the County does not currently monitor the facilities.

As there was no additional comment, Commissioner Rohrer motioned to close the public hearing. Commissioner Vaux seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Commissioner Vaux motioned to continue deliberations on this matter until 10:00 a.m., Wednesday, February 18, 1987, in the Commissioners' Hearing Room. Additionally, he motioned to instruct the Skagit County Department of Planning and Community Development not to accept any aquaculture applications prior to February 18, 1987. Commissioner Rohrer seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.