

Meeting Notes
Envision Skagit Citizen Committee
October 14, 2010 – 1:00 to 4:30 pm
Board of County Commissioners Hearing Room
1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon

Attendees:

Kerri Cook	Grace Popoff	Nate Youngquist
Cory Ertel	Gustavo Ramos, Jr.	John Cheney
Peggy Flynn	Doris Robbins	Kirk Johnson, Skagit County
Jim Meyer	Tim Rosenhan	Project Manager
Kim Mower	Ryan Sakuma	Lisa Dally Wilson, Facilitator
Nicole Pomerleau	Gary Thor	

Meeting Handouts:

1. Envision Skagit 2060 Proposed Ground Rules for Citizen Committee (emailed)
2. Summary Meeting Minutes from September 30th CC Meeting (emailed)
3. Updated Citizen Committee Roster (distributed at meeting)
4. Preliminary Schedule for Citizen Committee Field Trip to Lower Skagit Valley(distributed at meeting)

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting commenced at 1:05 pm. Gary Thor, who was unable to attend the first meeting due to a conflict, introduced himself to the Citizen Committee. John Cheney, who arrived partway into the meeting, also introduced himself. The remainder of the Citizen Committee members also made brief introductions to the new attendees.

Logistics

- **Sept. 30th meeting notes:** There were no comments, edits or suggested changes to the September 30th summary meeting minutes, which are now considered final.
- **Groundrules:** The committee returned to Section 6 of the ground rules, regarding decision making. There was discussion whether the threshold for moving a recommendation should be a fraction of the whole 14-member committee (for instance 2/3 or ¾), or a specific number (for instance 9 or 10.) After discussion, the committee agreed that the threshold should be a specific number, which it then agreed would be 9. **Nine committee members are needed to move a recommendation forward. Majority and minority opinions will be recorded.** The committee agreed that major decisions/recommendations should only be made when a large majority of the committee is present at a meeting. There will be a note included in the groundrules that all Citizen Committee members who miss previous meetings have the personal responsibility to be briefed prior to the next meeting, and that discussions will not be repeated prior to a decision for the sake of those who were not present at the time the committee discussion took place.
- **Schedule:** There was discussion of a possible need to revise the schedule, because the Envision model may not be ready for presentation on Nov. 15. Instead, the upriver field trip will occur the week of November 15th, either on the 15th or it might be moved to the Nov. 17th or 19th. The Envision presentation will be held at the next regular meeting of the Citizen Committee.

Committee member identified any scheduling conflicts they might have on the 17th and 19th. Kirk asked committee members to hold their calendars open on those Nov. dates until a final scheduling decision could be made over the weekend and communicated to the committee no later than Tuesday the 19th of October.

- **In-kind hours:** Lisa asked committee members to submit their in-kind hour sheets for September, and said that it appears that EPA rules do not allow the counting of commuting time to and from meetings.
- **“Gadgets”:** The committee discussed the use of electronic communication devices (cell phones, emails, text messaging) during committee meetings. Committee members were asked to minimize their use so as not to disrupt discussions. Some members said they need to monitor their cell phones in case of family or business emergencies but agreed to put their phones on vibrate mode and be as discreet as possible in monitoring them.
- **Briefings and Technical Information:** Citizen Committee members were reminded to maintain a list of topics, briefings and technical information you feel would be helpful in moving forward. Envision Skagit Staff will solicit these lists in approximately 2 weeks.
- **Citizen Committee Role:** Kirk Johnson provided an explanation of the different roles of the Steering Committee, Technical Committees, and Citizen Committee in the Envision Skagit process.
- **Pass Agreement:** A reminder that every committee member has the option to “pass” or “pass for now” when asked to provide input to the group.

Visioning Process

The committee then engaged in a visioning process to identify those aspects of life (people, places, things) in Skagit County that they love and cherish, and would like to see maintained into the future; and also those things they hope can be avoided or improved upon in that same time period (challenges). Committee members proceeded to post photos they had taken on a large wall map identifying the positive features of life in Skagit County and describe the features that the photos helped to illustrate. Photos of challenges were posted on a second map and also described.

Once everyone had posted and described their photos, the committee broke into four separate groups to discuss values identified during the visioning process, as well as similarities and differences in those values, and challenges. The committee then came back to the whole to report on the results of their small group discussions. The results of the visioning process are described in Attachment 1 to these meeting notes.

Next Steps

Kirk distributed an itinerary and related information for the Oct. 20th lower valley field trip and asked committee members to assemble in the parking lot of the County Administration building at 8:15 a.m. for an 8:30 a.m. departure.

Kirk and Lisa also distributed copies of the Skagit Land Trust book *Natural Skagit* to committee members. Kirk explained that upon request, the land trust agreed to provide the book at wholesale cost to the project for distribution to the committee. Kirk said the book is intended as a celebration of place and

highlights special natural features of the Skagit Valley as well as its natural resource industries including farming, forestry and fishing, and its history and communities.

Meeting Adjourned

Meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm

Near Term Schedule

- Wednesday, October 20 8:30am – 4:30 pm All Day field trip – Lower Valley
- Wednesday, October 27 7:00 – 8:30 pm Robert Lang Presentation – Lincoln Theatre
- Thursday, October 28 7:30 – 9:00 am -Optional Breakfast -Robert Lang and County Commissioners – Calico Cupboard Mount Vernon
- Thursday, November 4th – 1:00 – 5:00 pm - Ecology of Place Technical Briefing. Location tbd
- **Friday, November 19th – All Day Upper Skagit Field trip – (NOTE CHANGE IN SCHEDULE)**

ATTACHMENT 1

Visioning Notes

The following is a summary of the notes from four separate breakout sessions. (Note, Individual Citizen Committee values, from photo presentation, are not included in the formal meeting summary)

VALUES (also similarities in Values) – Note, in no particular order

- Communities (small towns, local business, support local economy, social/cultural events, tourism, rural lifestyle, sense of community, historical preservation)
- Natural environment (connection to nature, sunrises/sets, seashore, forests, wetlands, wildlife/waterfowl, trails, climate, Intact wild scenic place – exists still)
- Agricultural Base (local produce, small local farms, available markets for commercial agriculture, aesthetic eye candy, economic sustainability, variety, jobs, tourism (farm tours, tulips), sense of place, cultural self image, small scale to commercial scale, large variety of crops).
- Farmland priority over urban development (group #4)
- Soils
- Economic Base (Vibrant Local Business, Tourism, sustainable, home grown business to larger scale)
- Water (clean water, quantity, for drinking, fishing, fish habitat, for farming - irrigation, access, employment opportunities (eg., Port), recreation, waterfronts, river, bays)
- Recreation (Trails, horses, fishing, snow mobiles, camping, hiking, hunting, rafting, birding, biking)
- Infill development (counterpoint to sprawl, below)

DIFFERENCES in Values

- Industry: employment vs. pollution
- Population vs. land use
- Infill vs. sprawl
- Rivers: Wild Scenic vs. flooding & Levees
- Forestry: employment vs. Clear cut
- Development vs. Quality of Life (More people, more services, means more land)
- How can the economic base be sustained/grown without degrading the natural environment – DON'T WANT TO BE KENT, BUT WHAT DO WE WANT TO BE?
- Economic Base (eg., increased tax base, services, etc) equates to pressure on environmental resource base and “connect to nature theme”.
- Business: Large vs. small
- Farmland vs. urban development
- Private property rights vs. public good. Carrot vs. stick
- Government defining what is economically viable business vs. market based approach

CHALLENGES

- Preserving our values
- Urban density
- Asking cities to densify development to accommodate population growth
- Redevelopment (an economic opportunity)- Revitalization of downtown areas, historical preservation, sustainable development, local retail, employment opportunity, infill, smart growth
- Sprawl (empty lots, stores, and buildings; Abandoned Developments, putting 10# in a 5 # bag, density)

- SMART GROWTH – Where do we put it, how do we do it, affordable housing, existing “stock” – redevelopment, infill, empty buildings, revitalize downtown. Asking Cities to Densify [REOCCURRING THEME]
- Infill – where?
- Economy – JOBS, Attract more local business
- Affordable housing
- Maintaining salmon, shellfish
- Preserving traditions (cultural)
- Understanding Agricultural Needs
- Farmland preservation/ag viability – tipping point? Preserving Ag, sense of place
- Fractured Farmland
- Planning and past planning
- Traffic, Transportation, Infrastructure (Roads, bridges, broadband, for future growth)
- Clear Cuts
- Removing forest land for development
- Water Needs (for population growth, water right limits, domestic, commercial, agricultural)
- Clean Water (Water quality, stormwater, septic contamination)
- FLOODING, Flood Control, NO AGREEMENT ON FLOOD CONTROL
- Energy (looking behind or looking ahead?)
- Preserve the special nature of place (small towns, rural agricultural, etc) without depriving others of opportunity (Blending private property rights with long-term community goals)
- Opportunities for young people to return – Need ecommerce, broadband, employment, housing, living wage, telecommuting options.

NEEDS

- Balance needs of Ag, Forestry, Ecosystem Needs and Sustainability
- Balance: Development vs. quality of life
- Ag AND Fish (will need further discussion)
- Processing for Ag in Skagit County