

**Skagit County Agricultural Advisory Board (AAB)**  
**Minutes – November 19, 2003**

Members in attendance:

Mike Hulbert  
Rose Merritt  
Bob Finkbohner  
Roger Knutzen  
Larry Jensen  
Randy Good  
Lyle Wesen  
Murray Benjamin  
Bob Hughes  
Oscar Lagerlund  
Randy Good

Members not in attendance:

Beth Vander Veen  
Dave Boon

Others in attendance

Ken Dahlstedt  
Dyvon Havens  
Gary Christensen  
Chal Martin  
Rich Royston  
Kay Haaland  
Tom Karsh  
Allison Deets

1. Call to order & introductions:

Mike Hulbert, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order shortly after 7pm and welcomed members and guests to the November meeting, noting that Chal Martin, Director of Public Works, was in attendance, as well as Kay Haaland from Cooperative Extension and Rich Royston from Wild River Publishing.

2. Minutes:

Mike Hulbert called for a motion to approve the minutes and agenda. Rose Merritt moved, and Murray Benjamin seconded, approval of the agenda and minutes as written. Motion carried.

3. Discussion Items:

a. Samish 2514 Process – Chal Martin.

Public Works Director Chal Martin returned to provide the Ag Advisory Board with an update on the Samish 2514 Process. He announced that a steering committee meeting was coming up and reported that a change in the position of the Upper Skagit tribe given the recent changes in the Skagit Systems Cooperative, as well as a letter from the Upper Skagit tribe to the County, had completely changed the direction and dynamic of the steering committee.

The current proposal includes a “water bank” system for ag users in the Samish Basin, but with the changed conditions in the political landscape, that proposal may change. Mike Hulbert asked about the current make-up of the group, and Chal reported that two tribes, the Upper Skagit and Swinomish, Skagit County, the town of Darrington, water purveyors, the City of Anacortes, and the PUD have all been active participants. As yet, Mount Vernon, Burlington, and Snohomish County have not attended a meeting. Chal will report back to the AAB on further developments at either the February or March meeting.

b. Board of County Commissioners Vision for the AAB – Chairman Dahlstedt

Commissioner Dahlstedt was unable to attend the October meeting, but was able to offer the position of the BCC with regard to AAB activities. Commissioner Dahlstedt laid out three key roles the BCC sees the AAB filling:

- Big picture “visionary” group – Commissioner Dahlstedt said the BCC feels that this group should not be another planning commission; that is, that the AAB should be looking more towards the big picture rather than project by project as it works on inconsistencies between current policies and the comprehensive plan
- The BCC’s “eyes and ears” in the ag community
- Leader in developing agricultural economic viability/development policies

Lyle Wesen asked Commissioner Dahlstedt if the BCC envisioned the AAB bringing viewpoints to the Commissioners or did the Commissioners plan on bringing the issues to the AAB. Commissioner Dahlstedt replied that the idea behind creating the AAB was to help the industry, and that he felt there would be an exchange – that sometimes the BCC would probably bring issues to the AAB for review and recommendations, and that sometimes the AAB would bring issues to the BCC.

Commissioner Dahlstedt also reported that he is on the National Association of Counties Ag and Rural Affairs Committee, and is also chairing a new subcommittee on food safety. The National Association of Counties is in a good position to work on legislation coming up in Congress as well as helping to address issues of concern to farmers, so Commissioner Dahlstedt would like input from the AAB going forward as he works on both committees of NACO.

#### c. Strategic Planning Session – Kay Haaland

Kay Haaland, Community Development and Leadership Training Specialist with WSU Extension, will be leading the AAB’s strategic planning retreat in January. She outlined the procedures of the meeting as well as her role as facilitator. She will be back to visit the AAB every three months for one year, which is required as part of her job but also gives her the opportunity to assess the AAB’s progress and keep the group on track.

Kay will be sending out a survey to all AAB members in late December to help her develop an agenda for the day and to give her better insight as she helps the AAB develop its strategic plan. Part of the day will be spent discussing what makes an effective board, how boards are typically structured, and identifying committees on the AAB.

Kay will secure the meeting site, All-West Select Sires in Burlington, for January 15<sup>th</sup>. The meeting will start at 8.30 am.

#### d. Miscellaneous Items

- Tom Karsh reported that County Administrator Gary Rowe, had, along with the Finance team, found some money for the AAB for the fiscal year 2004. As the result of an appropriation from the Public Works budget, the AAB will have \$30,000 for FY2004.
- Allison Deets asked who would be attending the Western WA Ag Summit in December and suggested carpooling to Everett for the meeting. Oscar Lagerlund, Lyle Wesen, and Mike Hulbert will represent the AAB along with Allison.
- Allison Deets requested volunteers for a planning committee for the spring 2004 Ag Summit, which will be hosted by Skagit County AAB. Rose Merritt, Lyle

**Adjourn regular session.**