

**Skagit County Agricultural Advisory Board (AAB)**  
**Minutes – July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2004**

Members in attendance:

Dave Boon  
Larry Jensen  
Rose Merritt  
Oscar Lagerlund  
Randy Good  
Lyle Wesen  
Bob Hughes  
Kim Mower  
Mike Hulbert

Members not in attendance:

Murray Benjamin  
Roger Knutzen  
Annie Lohman

Others in attendance

Burt Reanier  
Jeroldine Hallberg  
Dave Brookings  
Jeff McGowan  
Steve Sakuma  
Bob Rose  
Ric Boge  
Carly Ruacho  
Dyvon Havens  
Allison Deets

1. Call to order & introductions:

Oscar Lagerlund, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order shortly after 7pm and welcomed members and guests from Skagit County Public Works and Planning & Permit Center, as well as Steve Sakuma and Bob Rose, from the Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland.

2. Discussion Items:

a. Bayview Subarea Watershed Project – Dave Brookings

Dave Brookings from Skagit County Public Works, made a presentation, at the request of the AAB, on the Bayview Subarea Watershed Project. Due to the proposed Bayview Subarea Plan, which would allow for more dense development, Public Works is developing a plan to manage the drainage and other needs associated with increased density in the Bayview area. Dave Brookings outlined the basics of the project, and the challenges Public Works has faced in developing a strategy watershed management, as well as the progress made thus far, and then opened the discussion up for questions.

Dyvon Havens asked if Public Works has had any discussion with WSU's specialist in low-impact communities. Dave Brookings reported that the department has not worked with that specialist, but that some elements of a low-impact development model could be included in the plan; however, incorporating those elements would necessitate a change in county code to allow for such an approach.

Mike Hulbert asked about liability in the event of a system failure. The plan calls for shared responsibility – if the runoff is natural, the landowner below is responsible for managing that. Mike pointed out that Bayview is a rock and the water runs straight from the hill down to the lowlands and asked how the County plans to address that in addition to the current problems?

AAB member Lyle Wesen also noted that the costs for drainage are ongoing, but that the cost for a developer or homeowner are up-front, one-time expenses. Dave Brookings told the Board that we need to develop an interlocal agreement to collect revenues for ongoing maintenance, perhaps in the form of a drainage utility fee. Lyle pointed out that it is not fair to

the utility or others paying in when the drainage utility district only addresses one or two locations within the utility district. Dave Brookings agreed and said that that element would need to be worked out over time.

Lyle Wesen also asked where the Port fit into this picture, and Dave stated that the Port is out of date, but meetings thus far have been unproductive in bringing the Port up-to-date.

b. Critical Areas Ordinance Update – Carly Ruacho

Carly Ruacho, from the Planning & Permit Center, provided the Ag Advisory Board with an update on the Critical Areas Ordinance and related issues. After providing some background information for context, Carly reported that the County had adopted an ordinance that it felt fulfilled the order from the Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board, which called for a change in the adaptive management section and an additional language change to address concerns about enforcement.

The County must respond to two objections to the amendment, made by WDFW and the Swinomish Tribal Nation, by August 12<sup>th</sup>, and will then have a compliance hearing in front of the Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board on the 19<sup>th</sup> of August. The WWGMHB will come back with an order either indicating that the County is now in compliance, or that the County needs to do more work on the ordinance.

Carly Ruacho also reported that Public Works, which has developed a water quality monitoring plan and a habitat monitoring plan, is getting low levels of participation in the program, especially in the ag zone. She appealed to the AAB to encourage farmers who might be approached to grant the right of entry to Public Works so it can do its monitoring.

Randy Good asked what objections had been put forward to the amendment, and Carly reported that both briefs filed cover previous arguments, but that the Swinomish Tribe is rearguing its previous case and expanding its scope. Lyle Wesen asked when the County can expect a response back from the WWGMHB after the 19<sup>th</sup>. Carly stated that the County could expect the response in six weeks; typically the decisions are handed down in 6-8 weeks. She also noted that it could be a “whole new ballgame” with the retirement of one WWGMHB member.

c. Ag/Tribal Summit – Steve Sakuma

Steve Sakuma presented the Ag/Tribal Summit draft consensus paper to the AAB for its review, which he has been working on for quite some time with Dave Hedlin, Richard Smith, Ron Wesen, and Larry Lowe, as well as tribal representatives. After some discussion, Bob Hughes moved to take a vote of the AAB’s position on the paper. Larry Jensen moved to make a friendly amendment to support the efforts being made by Steve and others, but not to support the document itself. Mike Hulbert noted that everyone supports Steve and his efforts to reach consensus with the tribes on behalf of agriculture. Rose Merritt asked if the process had been condoned by the Board of County Commissioners, or if it was a recognized group that was meeting. Steve responded that it was not, and Rose voiced some concern about being uncomfortable with groups not backed by the County, which has gone to bat for agriculture, working on reaching a consensus and then bringing it to the AAB at the end of the process. Dave Boon noted that it was important for the AAB not to step into the middle of issues like this without first finding out if the Commissioners wanted the AAB to take the responsibility of offering a position on the paper. Lyle Wesen moved to table the issue pending a meeting with the County Commissioners to find out if they wanted guidance from the Ag Advisory Board. Rose Merritt seconded the motion. Table motion passed unanimously.

3. Minutes:

Oscar Lagerlund called for a motion to review and approve the minutes. Lyle Wesen moved that the minutes be approved as presented. Rose Merritt seconded the motion. Motion carried

**Adjourn regular session.**