

**Skagit County Agricultural Advisory Board (AAB)**  
**Minutes – February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006**

Members in attendance:

Oscar Lagerlund (Chair)  
Dave Boon (Vice-Chair)  
Randy Good  
Bill McMoran  
Murray Benjamin  
Ron Wesen (for Lyle Wesen)  
Bob Hughes

Members not in attendance:

Mike Hulbert  
Annie Lohman  
Kim Mower  
Roger Knutzen

Others in attendance

Ken Dahlstedt  
Bob Rose  
Carly Ruacho  
Allison Deets

1. Call to order & introductions:

Chair Oscar Lagerlund called the meeting to order at 6.10 pm. He welcomed members and guests to the meeting. County Commissioner Ken Dahlstedt was in attendance, as well as Bob Rose, Executive Director of Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland.

2. Minutes:

Quorum was not present. Chair Oscar Lagerlund postponed the approval of the January minutes to the March meeting.

3. Request for assistance from Conservation Futures Committee – Randy Good

Agricultural Advisory Board member Randy Good, who also sits on the Conservation Futures Advisory Committee (CFAC), reported on the retreat of that committee yesterday. The CFAC oversees the Purchase of Development Rights program for farmland in the County. The Committee worked most of yesterday to identify next steps for the program, which has recently passed the 5,000 acre mark in protecting Skagit farmland. The Committee is exploring the concept of having “neighborhood councils” to discuss issues related to agriculture, including farmland protection, and issues addressed by the AAB. Randy Good would like to request the assistance of the AAB as the CFAC begins work within different communities in the County. The first “test run” will be with folks from around north Burlington, and will be a lunch meeting of an ad hoc group at Bob’s Burgers and Brew. A CFAC member will be at the meeting, and CFAC would like to request that an AAB member attend as well. Chair Oscar Lagerlund agreed and will leave it to Board members to select a representative once the meeting date has been set.

4. Update on County Affairs – Commissioner Ken Dahlstedt

Commissioner Ken Dahlstedt provided the Board with an update on County affairs. Commissioner Dahlstedt spoke first on the water rights issue, and specifically the new instream flow rule. The Commissioners are concerned that the allocation to farmers will not be sufficient; they feel agriculture will require at least 17cfs of water. Also, the allocation for PUD appears to be inadequate; the County believes PUD will need at least 15 cfs. However, the County is also concerned about continuing on its present path of fighting the

water rights issue if agriculture is headed in a different direction, which Commissioner Dahlstedt feels it is doing through the Comprehensive Irrigation District Management Plan.

Commissioner Dahlstedt also reported on the Supreme Court hearing, held the previous week. He said he's heard "mixed messages" as to whether the outcome will be good or not for the County and agriculture. Bob Rose said that it seemed to him, based on the line of questioning by the Justices, that the Court is looking for some kind of balance. AAB member Murray Benjamin asked what would happen if the court ruling goes against county. Commissioner Dahlstedt said that if the ruling goes against the County, the Court will probably send the parties back to growth hearings board with instructions to "work it out."

Regarding the proposed code revisions, Commissioner Dahlstedt said he's concerned that about whether the ag community really wants to tighten code regarding non-ag uses. He said the Commissioners support ag, and want to continue to support ag, but want to know whether the Ag Advisory Board is sure that it knows what it's doing and is aware of the unintended consequences. Oscar Lagerlund said the AAB is here to advise the County Commissioners, and they can take the AAB's advice and recommendations or not, as they see fit. The bottomline, Oscar pointed out, is that "our job is to find the issues that are important to agriculture and bring them forward."

4. Land Use Committee Update

The Land Use Committee was scheduled to meet last Wednesday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, with several non-profit conservation organizations to discuss the code revision recommendations made by the Ag Advisory Board as part of the Comprehensive Plan Update. Unfortunately, two days prior to the meeting, the person who had arranged the discussion phoned to cancel, saying that the groups didn't see any reason to meet with the Land Use Committee. Oscar Lagerlund expressed his disappointment, as well as that of the Committee, that the folks interested in these code recommendations were unable to attend. The Committee took the time to discuss upcoming issues.

Chair Oscar Lagerlund adjourned the meeting.

**Adjourn regular session 8.00pm.**