

Skagit County Agricultural Advisory Board (AAB)
Minutes – April 18th, 2007

Members in attendance:

Kim Mower (Chair)
Nels Lagerlund
Roger Knutzen
Bill McMoran
Dave Boon
Randy Good
John Vendeland
Bob Hughes
Lyle Wesen
Annie Lohman

Members not in attendance:

Mike Hulbert
Murray Benjamin

Others in attendance

Tom Karsh
Marge Swint
Carly Ruacho
Allison Aurand
Kendra Smith

1. Call to order. 7:05 p.m. Kim Mower called meeting to order and welcomed the committee. Randy Good proxy for Mike Hulbert, Bill McMoran proxy for Murry Benjamin

I. Randy Good –setback for AG changed to be the same as for IF, however, IF was changed. Lots of confusion going and PC will meet tomorrow night and it may change again. Carly presented what is happening in Planning. People adjoining Ag need to get permission. This means it can be 8' on the side. Will leave setback at the 200' setback. Annie would this be a "for sure" recording of the less than 200' on the title? Carly-yes. Roger concerned how this will affect farming. Recommended to call Planning Commissioners. PDS is not making a recommendation. Annie asked if the AAB can hand deliver a letter? The AAB took a position and Roger will hand deliver. Allison offered to work with them to take language from the original letter.

II. Tom Karsh Assessment for the Clean Water District. 1st year, multiple parcels, lots of exemptions so the team in the Accessory's Office may have made some mistakes. Dave Thomas in the Accessory's Office has had issues directed to him. Second issue, dairy farmers already jump through hoops within getting a dairy management plan and is charged- this make create a double payment. Current code allows any property owner to request an adjustment ... a reduction. Only one dairy farmer has come forward. They feel they have been double dipped. Suggested to have every dairy farmer come forward and ask to have the assessment reduced. Can't undue this program this tax year. Two plans: **1.** look out for self and apply for a reduction and adjusted on second half of payment. Section 6.68.120 goes to PW Director Dairy should be there. Requests can be from groups or individuals. Is the farm in good standing with their permit....so an explanation as to what consequences are should also be addressed. Include when last inspection occurred. Kim will create a letter that could be used by farmers. All NPDES participants don't get taxed. Some dairies may have a NPDES. Is the whole county being taxed because of two individuals....how can my farm in Concrete affect the shellfish beds. Funds are used for ...Tom handed out budget showing where (it looks like everyone but farms are exempt.) **2.** Letter to the BoCC discussing how this needs to be changed. Kim: does the AAB want to have a subcommittee to work on this? \$780,000 coming in. \$1,000,000 was the goal. Bring in money to cover existing and future county needs for dealing with water quality. Tom will send Jenson letter to Kim.
Ag paying more than what they should...over taxed.

III. Mike Shelby- Not here ... Habitat project. Get vested before the code is passed. Concern of big projects on neighboring properties and the affects to farming. Participants in Ruckelshaus study...hope that Ag will be represented by 6 farmers on committee. Concern- need to have enough participation from Ag and that there may be a stall tactic in place... Mike and Jay Gordon from dairy federation are on boardneed someone from Skagit/Snohomish area. Barbara Bailey also pushing to get Ag needs represented. It is a loose bill. E-mail info back and forth to keep everyone informed and contact Mike with any questions.

IV. FAB/AAB June 18th 6:30 a.m. Commissioner's Hearing room.

V. Wetlands mitigation bank. Allison stated that the presentation was to Western Washington Ag and that the AAB was uninvited. Randy Good did attend the June 13 meeting put on by SPF and took wonderful notes...see Randy for full details. It was SPF's hope to try and get farmers on board. Some of his observations were as follows: No trading outside of WIRA's and limit trade of lands to within the county. (Salt water mitigation west of I-5.) No demands for other banks in the county. 300 ac left to Ag's 226 ac to land trust. Look at impacts of log jams. If this doesn't work they will sell the land as 'ranchetts' and more loss of ag land will occur. Provide \$ into ag easement John Roozen had comments: Nature already creates wetlands and creating them has proven to be ineffective. Is SPF representing Ag... any more experiments with buffers on the Nookachamps. They have turned it over to executive board to make decision. Every foot of fish habitat has a negative affect on swan habitat...not addressing any ESA issues. DOE is not asking for that. Habitat is not for salmon in this case. AAB sent several letters to BoCC and didn't receive any feedback also to DOE and the COE.

VI. Will Honea presentation on the water right s up in Concrete.

1. Treaty rights are involved and a 1996 MOU
2. Anacortes says no more wells in Skagit County and can't regulate with out permission from Anacortes
3. Water rights for the ag community ...Anacortes suggested using pipe lines from PUD (very expensive).

What are they suing over 10,000 csf (442 cfs are allocated) In Wenatchee, out of 888 cfs, 641cfs is used for human consumption.

Anacortes is concerned over Carpenter/Fisher and Nookachamps where the basin is allocated 633 gal/day with the average household using 350/day house (66 new allowed), Anacortes is therefore suing over .012% of the Skagit River flow that goes to Anacortes.

DOE will not talk to Anacortes as well as the Upper Skagit.

Anacortes to gain \$1.7 million in profits. Would sell to PUD and farmers would pay high rates.

VII. Kim concerned about agencies coming on land and ceasing animals: Valuable horses...citizen being able to get sheriff to come on property. Concerned about people watching to get something for nothing. What triggers getting someone to actually come on property. Codes are enforced by complaints. Animal activist staring around the county. More people living in county and don't want to see dead animals. What is in the County codes? Animal control code...health dept.

VIII. Annie- Points out that if the Lummi Tribe can set their own clean water regulations...the Ag community needs to pay attention to this....regulating water that is not actually on the reservation. It may have significant affects

IX. Randy- Manget Estates 141 ac farm land zoned Rural Reserve. Long CaRD rest into an OS-PA. Concerned about loosing more valuable farm land. Will look into this and go to the Commissioner's Hearing.

Agenda for July meeting.

- Setback issue
- Sustainability
- Comparison of industries
- Present top issues on both sides to start brain storming

Adjourned 9:12

See you July 18th at 6:30 a.m.

Chair Kim Mower called for adjournment of the meeting.

Adjourn regular session 9.20pm.