

**Skagit County Agricultural Advisory Board (AAB)
Minutes –November 14, 2007**

Members in attendance:

Kim Mower
Murray Benjamin
Randy Good
Lyle Wesen
Bill McMoran
Mike Hulbert
Bob Hughes
Nels Lagerlund

Members not in attendance:

Dave Boon
Roger Knutzen
John Vendeland
Annie Lohman

Others in attendance

Commissioner Sharon Dillon
Mary Heinrich
Carly Ruacho
Kendra Smith

1. Call to order. 6:05 p.m. Kim Mower called meeting to order and welcomed Commission Dillon and the committee.
2. Minutes: Lyle moved and Bill seconded to approve the October minutes. Passed unanimous.
3. Proxy: Mike for John.
4. Office move: Kendra gave an update on the move. Boxes and furnishings are in the new location but there is no phone or computer access. Not sure when it will be available. However, count on the next meeting being at the new location.
5. Ruckelshaus Center (Center)...Preserving Ag Viability and Protecting Critical Areas: Ryan Walters from the PA office gave an update. He mentioned that it was the end of the year so important for Skagit to get some things done by the end of the month and over to the Center for their consideration. The Center has decided to have ‘extra’ public process and input. They are soliciting comments on the monitoring plan. Skagit can only beef that up but can not do any regulating via codes. At the December 6th Rick Haley and Jeff McGowan (who are working on the water quality and salmon habitat portions respectfully) attended with Ryan. DOE presented for ½ hour and then took testimony for the remainder of the meeting. He suggested that everyone send a post card. December 21st are due to the Board of County Commissioners but they will take no action until later. They have asked a third party to come in and take a look at the County’s program and give feedback by March 31st. Ryan said that the program needs to have benchmarks (baseline) as conditioned by the Supreme Court case and HB 5248 also alludes to this requirement. This is to be completed by Dec. 31st of 2010. Lyle asked if there has been enough time to get any results yet. Ryan said ‘no’ for salmon and ‘yes’ for water quality. Randy mentioned that the Cattleman’s data has been available for 5 years now. It was done in 2001/2002 by Pat Larson. Public Works needs to add this information into their results. Pat Larson was awarded an Oregon award for her work.
 - a. Ryan confirmed that the GIS department had been requested to do some work examining where and how much riparian habitat is already present in the agricultural designations. This work needs to also be completed by March 1st 2008. Randy commented that some streams will never meet the water quality standards and never

have. What are they expected to do about that? Ryan said the County's 'academic' is tasked with looking in to that. John asked if there are some areas that may be askew? Ryan said no. Ryan then said the next Center meeting will be the following week. They have gotten very little done except set the ground rules and they have had 6 meetings. AAB offered a tour and it was suggested that next May or June would be the best time to see everything in action.

6. Grants: Don Stuart sent information on the Pioneers in Conservation grant. He will try and attend the next meeting.
7. AAB Mission and Goals: Kendra asked the AAB to revisit this and perhaps try and generate a one page paper that could be used by all explaining the top most important issues facing ag in Skagit County at this time. This is something that should be reevaluated on a regular basis and presented to the BoCC so that they are kept informed on the pressing issues. It would be a good thing to present to the BoCC twice a year the "State of Ag in Skagit County" This can be done in conjunction with the other resources. We can take advantage of TV 21 and get info to the community (inform and educate). John thought this was a good opportunity and volunteered to help put a visual package together and Mike said that he would be willing to help. The discussion was to pick 3-4 topics to expand upon and engage the BoCC. Murray said this could be a balance and help educate. Kim also said she would like to be involved. New committee: John, Mike, Lyle and Kim. They will be starting to put something together.
8. Planning Dept. Update: Carly informed the AAB that there is a working group for "habitat" special uses that should be formed. These will be processed under special uses. The working group may pursue different criteria than what the PDS had originally proposed. Carly will oversee the group.
9. Topics for next meeting when Commissioner Dillon will be attending:
 - a. Wetlands
 - b. Bayview
 - c. Irrigation
10. AAB opening: Dave Boone has formally announced his resignation. The position needs to be advertised in the paper.
11. Misc:
 - a. Lyle said that Don M asked him to remind everyone of the Farm City Day. Please invite other farmers for lunch at the Cotton Tree on November 19th.
 - b. Chuckanut Park District Update: Lyle commented that not much was going on right now, except trying to understand who was to be doing the SEPA.
12. Adjourn: 7:58 p.m.