

Skagit County Agricultural Advisory Board (AAB)
Minutes –July 15, 2008

Members in Attendance:

Murray Benjamin
Randy Good
Bob Hughes
Roger Knutzen
Bill McMoran
Don McMoran
Carly Ruacho, Planning & Development

Others in Attendance

Kendra Smith, Natural Resources
Zoe Parsons, Natural Resources

1. Call to order: Kendra Smith called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.
2. Chair: Both Kim and Mike were absent so the attending members appointed Murray to chair the meeting.
3. Residential Use in Ag: Carly presented. PDS has asked the AAB to give input on the section of County zoning code that pertains to residential use in AG lands. Section 14.16.400(2)(b). The code language allows residential use as a secondary use to agriculture. The question from PDS: should this be enforced and if so, how? Carly gave 3 options to consider. (See the attached memo from Carly.) After some discussion Bob explained why he did not like #1, Bill did the same for # 2 and Murray suggested that #4 plus a tax statement could be submitted if the applicant for the residence wished to do so. This item will be tabled until the next meeting so that the AAB can have time for considerations.
4. Old Business:
 - a. Wetland Banks
 - b. DOT
 - c. Open Space/Greenbelts

Carly and Randy reported on the Police Station meeting regarding ‘open space’ corridors. It is thought there is no need for additional trails. Carly mentioned they are amending the way the maps look and some of the text. More balanced now with habitat and riparian buffers. Randy said that trails as such really are not a requirement and suggested that John V would be a good one to put some thoughts together on what a corridor is...connector vs. separator. Need to put that the trails/greenbelts are VOLUNTARY up in front in the document.

ACTION: Kendra to get Randy, John and Mary together to discuss the Trails Proposal.

5. New Business:
 - a. Issues and Policies

Subcommittees were formed for discussion of the five top issues in order to create “White Papers” to present to the Commissioners. Once the subcommittees have met,

Kendra will prepare drafts for approval by the AAB at their August meeting. Subcommittees are as follows:

AG Conversions – Roger, Mike, Bill, John
Drainage/Irrigation – Roger, Nels, Bill, Don
Critical Areas – Randy, Murray
Flooding in Skagit and Samish basins – Bob, Annie, Lyle
Comp Planning/Permitting: All

(Those not at tonight’s meeting (or ‘volunteered’ to a subcommittee) will be contacted to chose in which they want to participate.)

ACTION: Kendra to hold meetings and prepare draft reports for the AAB’s input and approval. Final “White Papers” will be presented to the Commissioners

b. Wind Farms

Carly announced that Special Use Permits are no longer needed to have a wind farm.

AG Board has requested more information on File BP08-0427 regarding a building permit application for the construction of a 45-foot tall winder generator.

Carly mentioned that more information on wind farm discussion can be found on a National Public Radio series “Shifting Grounds.”

ACTION: Kendra to provide more information at August meeting.

c. Snohomish County AG Advisory Board

The AG Board wants to continue to receive Snohomish Country AG Board’s agenda and materials.

d. Concerns

Murray asked each member to state their top concerns.

Bill: Wetland mitigation is at the top of his list.

Bob: Drainage and tide gate issues are his major concerns, especially the difficulty of working with the federal government and Indian tribes.

Carly: Of importance to her is the issue of schools near Bay Ridge which was approved by the Commissioners for \$1.2 million.

Don: Handed out the ‘2007 Skagit County Agriculture Statistics’ and asked the group to let him know of any errors. He also mentioned the AG safety program for youths and that the July 10 field day had 200 participants. WSU may be moved to the Research Station. Roger suggesting adding an AG museum to this new location.

Roger: He believes the Bayview School siting has safety issues.

Randy: Irrigation is his top issue. He feels in-stream flow needs to be addressed. Another issue of importance is the continuing issue of density credits.

Murray: Wants the state and county to do a better job of cleaning up road sides. He recommends that a maintenance provision be added to projects as they are approved.

Kendra announced that all budget requests must be in by August 1. Carly's request for the Board's stance on allowing building permits for residents in ag-NRL will be added to the August agenda. Murray asked that the AAB receive a copy of "Open Space requirements" from the RCW for further discussion.

The AAB would also like to explore wind farm policies.

ACTION: Kendra to provide copy of "RCW 84.34.020" to AG Board.

6. Next Meeting: Needs to re-scheduled to August 20.
7. Adjourned: 8:57 p.m.