

“CORRECTED”

**SKAGIT COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD (AAB)
MINUTES
August 20, 2008**

Members in Attendance

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

Not in Attendance

Roger Knutzen
Annie Lohman
John Vendeland

Others in Attendance

Carolyn Kelly
Tom Dwyer
Don Gordon
Mary Heinricht
Janet McRay
Jim McRay
Beverly Macken
Marvin Macken
Mark Petrie
Carly Raucho
Carey Smith
Ron Wesen

Zoe Parsons, Staff

Call Meeting to Order and Introductions

Chair Kim Mower called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm and asked everyone in the room to introduce themselves since there were a number of guests.

Minutes

The minutes were corrected to show that Don had 20, not 200 participants in the WSU July 10 field day. Randy Good's top issue is water, not irrigation.

“CORRECTED”

OLD BUSINESS

I. Wind Turbines

Carly Ruacho pointed out that those wanting a wind turbine only need a building permit, not a special use permit. She also noted that there are three applications pending and two with approval for zoning. Bill McMoran feels there are a lot of unanswered questions. The topic will continue to be discussed at the September meeting.

ACTION: Add discussion of wind turbines to September agenda.

II. Snohomish County AG Advisory Board

The group likes receiving materials from the Snohomish County AG Advisory Board. It was suggested that a few of Snohomish's members be invited to join the Skagit County AG Advisory Board at a future meeting.

ACTION: Kendra to invite a few Snohomish AG members to join our group occasionally.

III. White Papers

Kim Mower and Mike Hulbert met with Kendra Smith to review how to proceed with the position papers. This topic was postponed for discussion at the September meeting.

ACTION: Add discussion of 'White Papers' to September agenda.

IV. Miscellaneous Old Business

Carly Raucha has four options for dealing with a residence in an AG zone but wants something in writing from the AG Advisory Board with their preference. Kim Mower mentioned there had been a subcommittee discussion about this issue in the past.

ACTION: Kim Mower, Randy Good, Bill McMoran, Carly Raucha, and Annie Lohman will meet to develop a recommendation to present Planning on how to deal with a residence in an AG zone.

NEW BUSINESS

I. Ducks Unlimited

Mary Heinrich suggested to Tom Dwyer and Mark Petrie from Ducks Unlimited they present their views and goals to the AG Advisory Board which is their reason for attending this meeting.

Tom expressed Ducks Unlimited's desire to become more involved in helping to preserve farmland. While Ducks Unlimited has a mission to sustain water fowl, they believe both goals can be accomplished.

“CORRECTED”

Ducks Unlimited works up and down the Oregon coast and, with more birds wintering in Puget Sound than ever before, they are trying to figure out how much space is needed to sustain water fowl. While they are concerned about losing estuary habitat, they are willing to find funding to help provide money to protect AG land.

Bob Hughes asked if Ducks Unlimited would be willing to help build dikes or fix existing ones.

Mike Hulbert expressed concern over who would control the easements. Tom Dwyer responded that Ducks Unlimited doesn't care who controls the easements but believes there needs to be an enforcement authority.

Mary Heinrich asked what Ducks Unlimited's policy is on owning land. Tom Dwyer responded that they don't own much land.

Lyle Wesen recommended that Ducks Unlimited meet with the Conservation Futures Advisory Board.

II. Macken Presentation

Randy Good gave a summary of the Macken's situation involving their cattle utilizing the stream for watering. He pointed out that it has not been resolved to the Macken's satisfaction.

The Mackens were told to remove their cattle from the stream or be subject to a fine. They did get the cows out of the creek within 21 days so they wouldn't be fined the \$10,000. Carolyn Kelly clarified that Ecology threatened the fining not the County. Beverly Macken acknowledged this correction. The cattle still have limited access for watering; however, this is still not in compliance with the County's Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO).

Carly Ruacho with the County Planning Department pointed out the Mackens now only have two ways to rectify the situation.

1. Hire a qualified consultant as called out in the code, or
2. Have a Skagit Conservation District planner review the situation. The Mackens would need to make an appointment for a farm plan which would then have to be implemented.

Carolyn Kelly clarified that John Schuh is a "Qualified Planner" but the Mackens have chosen to use someone else. Randy Good stated there is no data showing the Mackens are polluting and feels that someone from the County needs to go out and see if the problem has been resolved.

Randy and Kim Mower will be meeting with the Mackens on August 27.

III. Heritage Program

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Carolyn Kelly with the Skagit Conservation District reported on the Heritage Program, noting that although funding was proposed for Wiley Slough, it was vetoed.

The program is proposing to purchase the development rights off AG land use the money to make it available to the public for birding recreation and farming. There appear to be a lot of questions as to whether it should be considered. How much farmland will actually be taken out of production.

ACTION(S): Everyone was asked to read the Heritage Program document Carolyn had available and be prepared to discuss it at the September meeting.
Add Heritage Program to September agenda.

IV. Miscellaneous

Don McMoran announced that interviews were being held for Director of WSU's Research & Extension Center. He also stated that WSU will be teaching a class on "Cultivating Small Acreage Farms."

ACTION ITEMS:

- Add discussion of wind turbines to September agenda.
- Kendra to invite a few Snohomish AG members to join our group occasionally.
- Add discussion of 'White Papers' to September agenda.
- Kim Mower, Randy Good, Bill McMoran, Carly Raicho, and Annie Lohman will develop a recommendation to Planning on how to deal with a residence in an AG zone.
- AG Advisory Board members were asked to read the Heritage Program document Carolyn Kelly had available and be prepared to discuss it at the September meeting.
- Add Heritage Program to September agenda.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 17, 7 – 9 pm

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 pm

Submitted by: Zoe Parsons