

SKAGIT COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD (AAB)
MINUTES
September 17, 2008

Members in Attendance

Murray Benjamin
Randy Good
Bob Hughes
Mike Hulbert
Nels Lagerlund
Kim Mower
Lyle Wesen
Annie Lohman
John Vendeland

Members Not in Attendance

Roger Knutzen
Greg Lee
Bill McMoran

Others in Attendance

Carly Raucho
Curtis Johnson
Mary Heinrich
Ellen Bynum
Ryan Walters
Gary Sorenson
Rick Haley

Kendra Smith, staff

Call to Order and Introductions

Kim called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Introductions were made and Kim requested each of the members to write their contact information down so she could have them on file in order to better contact them.

Minutes

Mike moved and Randy seconded to postpone the minutes to the next meeting so that the AAB would have time to read them. Passed unanimously.

Old Business

1. Development Codes. Residences in agricultural lands as a secondary use. Mike gave an overview of what the committee (Mike, John, Annie and Carly) discussed as to ways to ensure that new residents being constructed not be allowed in Ag-NRL unless they are for those who will actually be farming. Ideas ranged from requiring a Farm Plan (which was not fully supported) to requiring a Schedule F of the IRS 1040 be submitted to the PDS prior to obtaining a building permit showing 3 years of farming income. There was discussion that other forms for corporate operations may be more appropriate and there needs to be some more research into the different scenarios. A signed affidavit was also suggested. It was stressed that confidentiality needed to be respected. One other suggestion from Mike was to require the farmer requesting to build in the Ag-NRL to also place

the remainder of the parcel in a Conservation Easement. This would also help alleviate the concern of future expanding UGAs that would increase densities and once again impact farmland.

Mary Heinrich informed the AAB about a recent lawsuit in Vermont in which the court ruled that the Ag land could be protected to remain solely for the purpose of farming.

Mike asked that other AAB members please get back to him with any other ideas and that he and the rest of the committee would continue to work on this and report back next meeting...hopefully with something to vote on.

2. Committee Reports. Kendra pasted out a VERY draft version of what each committee developed regarding policies on the following topics: Land Conversions, Drainage and Irrigation, Flooding and the CAO. Committee members should look these over and be prepared to take the next steps.

New Business

Mike moved and Annie seconded to move the meetings from the third Wednesday of the month to the second Wednesday of the month. Passed unanimously.

Presentations:

Court Ruling on Drainage District 22 and the DFI – Curtis Johnson. 1. Curtis gave an update and shared his concern on the ruling that upheld the Tribes lawsuit on the cleaning of a drainage ditch. It was ruled to be a 'take' and the Drainage District is subject to \$25,000/day. It is putting the Districts against one another. District 22 has until October 17th to work something out with the Tribe. 2. DFI is going reasonably well as this is regarding everything above tide gates. Districts can act between windows and both the State (WDFW) and the Feds (Corp) are in support. Tribes came up with a questionable 'limited factors analysis'. 3. Curtis raised concern with the County not taking care of culverts under county roads.

Wetland Bank Appeal Update – Ellen Bynum. Ellen gave an update as to how the hearing has gone and that there are 2 and possibly 3 more days of testimony left. It looks like it would be some time in December before the HE would be rendering a decision. Alan Rozema sent a letter outlining what has occurred and the letter was distributed to the AAB. Concerns were voiced as to who the County picked as a consultant for the Alternative Futures Analysis, John Lombard, because of his views expressed in 'Crosscut' as to how Skagit County needs to be the mitigation ground for the rest of urban Puget Sound. It has been estimated that the Clear Valley wetland bank can generate up to \$31 million in income....due to sold credits.

Water Quality Monitoring and Riparian buffers – Rick Haley, Ryan Walters, and Gary Sorenson. Rick presented the results of his testing over the past 5 years (since October 2003). Basically: no stream met the water quality standards totally during the duration of the testing (dissolved oxygen, fecal coliform or temp); small streams and sloughs have the biggest problems; and the Skagit River is in descent shape. Rick explained that State water quality standards are based on what the State wants or thinks the use a particular

stream should be. No baseline data- only whether it is a Salmonid stream or not. There are two types of standards, one for core Salmonids and one for general. The Samish has fecal coliform problems after heavy rains. Standards there are for recreational contact and shellfish beds. The monitoring program will cost up to \$173,000 next year. The County has said they will do it but same past grants are not available. Stay tuned...

Existing buffers in riparian corridors – Ryan introduced Josh Greenberg's (and GIS staff) work and played a recorded CD showing Josh's presentation to the BoCC.

Next Meeting

October 8th 7:00 Kendra's building.

Adjourn 9:00, but meeting continued to 10:00 to finish the presentations.