

Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board
Minutes November 12 2008

Members in Attendance

Bill McMoran	Mike Hulbert	Craig Knutzen (stand in for Roger)
Kim Mower	Greg Lee	
Randy Good	Nels Lagerlund	

Members not in Attendance

John Vendeland	Annie Lohman	Lyle Wesen
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Others in Attendance

Ron Wesen, Commissioner Elect

Carley Raucho, Planning & Development Services

Carolyn Kelley, Skagit Conservation District

Betsy Christianson, Snohomish Agriculture Advisory Board

Rone Brewer, Washington Waterfowl Association

James Cafferty, Washington Waterfowl Association

Allen D. Elliott

Kendra Smith, Skagit County Staff

Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 by Chair Kim Mower. Board members present were noted and introductions from all visitors commenced.

Kendra handed out binders to board members for keeping board business paperwork in order. Kendra noted to members the need to cut back at all levels in the County and asked for approval of having "packet" information sent via e-mail with the exception of Bob, who would get his sent in the mail because he does not use a computer. All agreed.

Carly handed out copies of the response from Planning to our letter regarding the Elliott B&B issue. The letter informed us that the proposal was not suggested, prepared, or proposed by Planning and Development Services, but merely a receipt of a letter from the landowner.

Minutes

Minutes were read by Murray. Mike brought attention to a correction that he was not present the month before. Bill motioned to approve October Minutes as amended. Randy seconded, board voted to approve the motion.

Old Business

- I. White papers. Discussion was held to decide what category Wind and Solar, etc., should go under. Was decided to place a subcategory of "Land Use" under "1. Ag Land Conversion Policy". Mike will be chair of this Ag Land Conversion Policy, and was asked by Kim to call up at least two meetings of the members of this committee to discuss issues regarding the wording of the policy, land use, and anything else under this category. Was agreed to have these meetings before the next AAB meeting.
- II. 2. Drainage and Irrigation Policy. No report
- III. 3. Flood Policy. No report
- IV. 4. CAO Policy. Randy reported that the CAO Policy committee members had met and worked on a white paper to address the need for self-regulation of the CAO. He presented copies of the work and passed them around. This paper is an outline of how a citizen advisory board, made up of AAB members and/or others the BoCC and AAB members approve of, could be the intermediary between the County and folks coming under review for enforcement by the County after a complaint. This is to help resolve a problem before the County steps in with official enforcement regulations. The AAB will review this white paper after Will Honea makes a presentation about this issue.

New Business

Bylaws, or, Order of Procedure, was noted by Kim in need of review. Kim asked for at least two volunteers to do this. It was decided Kim and Randy would take on the task. They are to meet and discuss the document and present their recommendations at the next AAB meeting.

Craig Knutzen desires to step into Roger's position on the Board. Discussion was held to take the necessary steps to resign Roger and enlist Craig. Kendra will help Roger and Craig with their paperwork needs, then the AAB will be in position to ask BoCC to approve Craig as a new

member. Murray suggested Kendra look into Roger's term period. Kim suggested Kendra look up all members term periods for reference.

Kendra reported on the trip earlier in the day by her and AAB members Kim and Bill to the Snohomish Ag Advisory Board meeting in Everett. She gave details later in the meeting.

Guest Speakers

Rone Brewer and James Cafferty of Washington Waterfowl Association presented the Heritage Lands Program. The non-profit desires to purchase about 1000 acres in 200 – 300 parcels to be re-leased back to farmers to generate income to run the program. The farmers will farm the land according to leased agreements and after harvest public access will be allowed under the guidance of WWF. They have a business plan they are working on at this time. The board members discussed their plan, pertaining to several issues such as insurance coverage, the possibility of taking the lands off the tax base, competition with other farms, possibility of the non-profit to change directions for the land use by a new board. Rone assured the AAB members that the core purpose of the project was to insure agriculture for perpetuity with possible PDR/easements, and would include an inner advisory board to keep the project on track.

Allen Elliott came before the Board as a further action after our letter submitted last month to Planning. Last month the board discussed his plans to turn his home into a B&B with 12 or less bedrooms. The board sent a letter of disapproval to Planning, outlining how his plans went against the existing code. He brought his project to our meeting to help us understand his proposal, which is to agree to a few changes within the code that would pertain to his situation, and a very few others within the county like his. Much discussion was exchanged trying to get him to understand the position of the ag community, the hassles of dealing with a steady stream of non ag visitors to the establishment not familiar with the county's "right to farm" rules. The Board will discuss this further at upcoming meetings.

Kendra spoke about the visit to the Snohomish Ag Advisory Board meeting. Was noted the four main topics were a) Open Spaces Taxation; b) FEMA and the "take" problem with flood maps; c) PDR/TDR report from staff with observation they seem to be in infancy; d) Farmer presentation of his continuous drainage problems brought on by Sno. County projects. Wanted reimbursement from Sno County for his troubles. The two groups discussed coming together in joint discussions in meetings separate from regular meetings. The two groups recognized the value of combining forces to speak with a louder voice on ag issues. The first meeting will be scheduled after the 1st of January, 2009, and be held in Stanwood. Betsy spoke of some of their programs and the desire to promote farmland.

Bill commented on how both counties have a lot in common.

Ron Wesen thanked everyone for their vote and help in the campaign. Informed board members campaign signs can be returned to him to be stored in his barn.

Kendra gave a brief update on the Alternative Futures, refreshing everyone in a nut shell what is, a study of population growth and what Skagit county could look like in 50 years, depending on what priority is focused on. A website is now available.

Next meeting

December 10, 2008

Noted for next meeting: elections!

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12PM

ACTIONS

Committees to set up meetings for discussion: Conversion and CAO

Bylaws review

Roger to send paper of resignation

Craig to draft paper for AAB to present BoCC for acceptance

Minutes taken by Murray

Minutes prepared by Kim