

Agriculture Advisory Board

Minutes for April 8, 2009

Members in Attendance

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

Members Absent

Bob Hughes Kraig Knutzen John Vendeland

Others in Attendance

Kendra Smith Carly Ruacho Mary Heinrich
Cliff Butler- Skagit County Public Works

Call to Order and Consent Agenda

Meeting was called to order at 7: PM. Today's agenda was updated to include the guest speaker Cliff Butler.

Minutes

The minutes from the March and February meetings were noted and amended. However, at this time of the meeting not enough members were present to make a quorum to vote. After a while two more members arrived and the meeting was adjusted to accommodate a vote. The February minutes were moved to approve by Mike with Nels seconding, motion carried. March minutes were amended to include proxies, motion to approve by Lyle with bill seconding, motion carried.

Guest Speaker

Cliff Butler from Public Works spoke concerning herbicide spraying along the roads with reference to the 300 ft buffer rule. He said they needed more guidance. He spoke of the three primary issues the county deals with, a) spraying under the guard rails and how to control weeds in the buffer area. With 49 miles

of guard rails, 800 miles of roads, how to coordinate necessary weed control with spray, torch, and weed eaters, b) control weed and trees on rock lined banks of streams and ditches, and c) noxious weed control along the roads. Hand labor is not feasible at current economic conditions. County uses certified chemicals. DOE has OK'd the program. South Skagit Hwy and Lake Cavanaugh will not be sprayed this year. Discussion on road maintenance. He told us Dan Berentson had just been installed as the head of Natural Resources/Public Works. NR oversees the Drainage Utility. The road Fund pays 25% of drainage utility. Maintenance can only be done in areas where drainage utility funds are collected drainage districts. Discussion of how a drainage utility commission was needed. The BCC should adhere to Resolution #15882 and restart a drainage utility commission. The Corp of Engineers will be working on Cockerham Island this summer. He finished up by stating much needs to be clarified, sort out the district lines, what are all the issues.

Committee Reports

- a. Land Use – Discussion about the Code Enforcement 40 Acres Ag Accessory with Will Honea. Will was enthusiastic and had meeting(s) with Planning and needed to check it out with Legal.
- b. Drainage and Irrigation – Working on a new letter to BCC for a drainage Utility. Mike motioned to accept and send the letter to the BCC, Greg seconded, motion amended by Lyle, motion carried. Words in letter changed to “immediately instituted”.
- c. Flood Policy - Nels spoke on the plan to bypass flood water. Many groups want to cut through Fir Island.
- d. CAO – no report
- e. Open Spaces - Mike reported of his letter reading at the 3-17-09 meeting. Randy reported on the large crowd, with 16 or 17 speakers mostly against the proposal. Money comes from sales tax increase.

Old Business

Kim read from a recent letter from Elliott. No change on AAB stance to adhere to our current code. Brief discussion on recent AAB letters

New Business

A posting in the media for a replacement for Annie resulted in no response. Randy spoke concerning Ag Futures land map and GIS Report on buffered river areas. Information about the Snohomish Ag Advisory Board was passed around to AAB members and briefly discussed.

Extra Discussion

Mary presented members with papers, emphasizing the need to attend the DOE Draft Rule meetings on 4-15-09. Bill told the group of Mr. Norris' plan to claim 26 acres within UGA on Riverbend for City of Mt. Vernon.

Discussion about conservation easements. Mike wanted to have easier access to information with lists including properties in easements. Kendra spoke of the different types of language used over the ages, causes some confusion. Kendra also spoke of the Ruckleshous developments and will ask Mike Shelby or Mike Rundlett to attend the next AAB meeting. Kendra reported Bill 1967 passed the House and went on to Senate. Discussion of how the UGA cannot expand into the floodplain. Kendra spoke of long range planning of windmills. Mary spoke of the laws protecting solar panels, no shading allowed. Carly spoke of upcoming public hearing meeting on 5-5-09 concerning the wetland mitigation bank.

Next Meeting

The next AAB meeting will be May 13, 2009, 7: 00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Valley Business Center.

Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Minutes taken by Murray, prepared by Kim

Action items

- a. Amend letter to BCC concerning Drainage Utility Commission and sign.
This was done after the meeting adjourned.