

Agriculture Advisory Board

Minutes for May 13, '09

Members in Attendance

Bill McMoran Kraig Knutzen Kim Mower Murray Benjamin
Lyle Wesen Randy Good Nels Lagerlund

Members Absent

Mike Hulbert Bob Hughes John Vendeland Greg Lee

Others in Attendance

Kendra Smith – Natural Resource Lands Policy Coordinator

Don McMoran - WSU Extension

Mike Shelby – Western Washington Agriculture Association

David Sheridan – Skagit County Public Works

Jan Flagan – Skagit County Public Works

Dianne Crane – Skagit County Public Works

Carly Ruacho – Skagit County Planning & Development Services

Will Honea – Skagit County Prosecuting Attourney

Mary Heinrich

Call to Order and Consent Agenda

Chair Kim Mower called the meeting to order at 6:58 PM. Introductions around the table, agenda was consented and amended as needed.

Minutes

At this time in the meeting not enough AAB members were present to make a quorum. Voting on the minutes was suspended until late arriving members were in attendance.

Guest Speakers

Jan Flagan spoke of the history of the Drainage Utility, as well as the funding as tax collected by the County from property owners. A chart was passed around showing the comparison of rate charges compared to other counties. She gave a brief summary of the types of projects and procedures for responding to complaints. She passed around charts showing drainage concern areas in the County. She responded to various questions from the AAB members, and is looking into re-establishing the Drainage Commission. AAB Drainage and Irrigation Committee will work closely when needs arise.

Diane Krane is the person who responds to citizen complaints. Some are simple, others are become larger projects.

Mike Shelby gave updates on the various projects the WWAA was working on. He talked about the Ruckelhaus meetings and how they are making progress finally after two years of stalling. The Ag community seems to be getting a larger voice; however the GIS report has not yet been shown. He felt confident the GIS report would be viewed in upcoming meetings. The Ag group is standing their ground on keeping the process voluntary, getting push back from environmental and tribe groups. He talked about Don Wood and Jay Gordon met with the Enviro committee. Enviro wants regulatory hammer. An upcoming meeting in Ellensburg will be to roll up the sleeves and get work done. A report is due this fall for the legislature. He talked about how the tide gate fish initiative is still in the works. A Biological Opinion has been completed. May be able to get some work done this summer. Drainage Districts have signed on. Could be a 5 year plan. He talked about working on a Samish TDL. He discussed how Don Berentson wants to consider a water master plan. Get all drainage commissions together and see what can be done.

Will Honea spoke on the BoCC decision with the Macken case the day before. He gave the county's perspective as to how the decision was made, how the fines were waived and suspended and on what conditions, and answered questions by the AAB members.

Committee Reports

Land Use – Discussion about the DOE Mitigation meeting, and Mary spoke of the Draft Rule and its many holes and weak points. She spoke also of the plan by DOE to establish the early release of credits and other problems. Future is not clearly defined.

The AAB members talked about the county's desire for the AAB to beef up support to Planning for the enforcement of the code. Lyle made a motion for AAB to formulate a letter to BoCC for this issue. Discussion around the table indicated because Mike was not present perhaps the motion was premature. The motion was not seconded, and Lyle withdrew his motion. Discussion with Carly showed the enforcement of the code had been historically weak, and for Planning to make the transition to more stringent enforcement would be helpful with AAB support.

Drainage and Irrigation – No report

Flood Policy – No Report

CAO – Chair failed to ask for a report

Open Spaces – No Report

Old Business

- a. Don has information that Nate Younquist is interested in filling the vacant position.
- b. Alternative Futures report by Kendra shows it is moving slowly. It is getting a much higher priority, and has added a Forestry committee. Will Forestry take too many funds from Ag? Ag and Forestry may both benefit. Oregon has developed model software and our group is

- currently studying it, and trying to get it. Mary spoke on model programs downfall at federal level.
- c. Carly informed the group that the Planning Department had not received the ag zone building code letter. Kim has a copy of the signed letter, so need to find out what happened to it.

New Business

At this point the meeting had enough members to discuss the April Minutes. Bill moved to pass the minutes as amended (there was discussion on the correct amount for Road Tax – reduced from 70% to 25%), Randy seconded, motion passed.

No other New Business

Extra Discussion

Mary talked about the Wetland Mitigation Bank proposal, gave handouts all around on her ideas for Transfer of Development Rights regarding Mitigation Banks. She gave a copy of her letter to Planning Commission. She also spoke on the tax advantages of conservation easements.

Don talked about how the budget cuts effected the WSU Extension. He spoke of the upcoming Young Farmer meeting agenda.

Next Meeting

The next AAB meeting will be June 10, '09, 7:PM to 9:PM at the Valley Business Center.

Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 9:03 PM

Minutes taken by Murray

Minutes prepared by Kim

Action items : Find the original ag zone building code letter

