



SKAGIT COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

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Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board

Meeting January 13, 2010

Attendance

Murray Benjam, Mike Hulbert, Bob Hughes, Nels Lagerlund, Bill McMoran, Greg Lee, Kim Mower, Randy Good

Members absent – Kraig Knutzen, Lyle Wesen, Nate Youngquist

Non members present –

Kendra Smith – Land Use Coordinator
Carly Ruacho – Planning and Development Services
Carolyn Kelley – Skagit Soil Conservation

Guests –

Josh Greenberg – Ag Land Inventory

Rick Haley – Microbial Source Tracking

Gary Christiansen – Planning and Development Services

Tim Devries– Planning and Development Services

Call to Order and Consent Agenda

The meeting was called to order by Chair Nels at 6:00PM. He made note of agenda adjustments with the guest speaker order.

Guest Speaker

- Josh Greenberg - Josh handed out maps for his presentation of agriculture acres in Skagit County. He spoke of NOA maps from 2006 indicating 89,000 acres in the ag zone with 67,000 in active use – 76% being used for agriculture. Satellite imaging does not always collect accurate for ag, particularly for pastures. He continued to speak of the Washington Department of Agriculture ground survey totaling 55,000 acres in ag, from roadside observations. More discussion about pie charts. Last page map shows

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agriculture outside Ag NRL. Conclusion was 82,000 acres in Skagit County in agriculture activity. Board members asked questions and had discussion of analysis of numbers on the maps.

- Gary Christiansen – Administrative Official Interpretation Memorandum. Gary presented the memo to the board outlining Planning’s work on siting criteria of non ag buildings on ground in the ag zone. Discussion of 14.16.400 code of single family residences on ag land. Reviewed the memo draft. Questions from the board on some details.
- Rick Haley – Samish Bay microbial source tracking background was presented, with discussion on the fecal coliform problems going on for decades. Samish shellfish continue to have closures from high fecal coliform counts. Water sampling regularly with attention to storm water runoff. He discussed how several entities came together to establish the Clean Samish Initiative. He talked about the different testing methods. False positives are a problem. The County will use the bacteroides PCR method, and the EPA will handle the work without charging the county. He discussed the Pollution Identification Correction (PIC) program.

The Minutes were noted, a motion by Bill and seconded by Greg to accept as written. Motion passed.

Committee Reports

- Land Use – Mike decided to further discussion of the AOI Memo at the committee level. He will plan meetings accordingly.
- Economic Development – some discussion to extend meetings for further discussion at committee level. Meetings will be planned.
- Drainage and Irrigation – Public Works presenting to BoCC the Drainage Utility Plan. Discussion of the Phase II interim ordinance. County must comply with Ecology for permit. Public Hearing March 2nd. Discussion of subject tabled for February AAB meeting.

Old Business

Bill talked about a potential new board member to fill a District 3 vacancy position. James B. Carston had submitted a letter for the position. A motion by Murray, seconded by Kim, to accept the letter. Motion passed. The letter will be forwarded to the BoCC for acceptance.

New Business

No new business

Extra Discussion

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Kim noted that recent news stated the County was now in compliance with the GMA for the first time in 19 years, with the exception of the CAO in Ag NRL. Discussion on how this process has been stalled by the Ruckelshaus Center meetings that were created after a voter initiative. Further discussion noted how nothing was accomplished at the conclusion of the meetings, and nothing went to the state legislature. Kim spoke on how the AAB CAO committee had submitted a white paper to County legal staff for review about a year ago, and has had no response to date. CAO committee to review and report to the board in upcoming meetings.

Carolyn talked about Ecology's scrutiny of the Samish watershed. She expressed her frustration that landowners were not taking advantage of the programs for water quality improvements.

Discussion of board members to invite Mac to the next meeting.

Next Meeting

The next AAB meeting will be February 17, 2009

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Bob, seconded by Bill. Motion passed, meeting was adjourned at 8:12 PM

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