



SKAGIT COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

**1800 Continental Place
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Agriculture Advisory Board
April 13th, 2011

Members in Attendance

Kim Mower Jim Carstens Randy Good Nate Youngquist Kriag Knutzen
Lyle Wesen Greg Lee Bill McMoran Nels Lagerlund Mike Hulbert
Member(s) not in attendance – Murray Benjamin

Others in Attendance

Ron Wesen – Skagit County Commissioner
Public Works Director- Henry Hash
Corinne Story – Skagit County Health Department
Dan Berentson – Skagit County Public Works
Carolyn Kelly – Skagit Soil Conservation
Bill Dowe – Skagit County Planning and Development Service
Carly Ruacho – Skagit County Planning and Development Services
Kendra Smith – Skagit County Natural Resources Coordinator
Michael Hughes- citizen

Call to Order, Introductions and Minutes

Chair Nels called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM. Introductions all around and the board members briefly reviewed the March Minutes. Kim motioned, Nate seconded, to approve the Minutes. Motion passed.

Guest Speakers

Dan Berentson – Reviewed Governor Gregoire’s video about the Samish River fecal Coliform issue. 4000 acres of shellfish area had been downgraded from samples taken after excess rain. The area was re-opened a few days later. Commissioner Wesen spoke of the technical details of water sampling.
Other details were described by Story from Health Department. Berentson will forward a letter from the Health Department. Story discussed septic procedures for property owners in several water basins. She reviewed the process of sending letters and septic inspections. The Thomas Creek sub-basin is the area they will start their work since this showed up as the hot spot in Rick’s initial testing. He will be looking at the tributaries as well. Health Department (Health) has obtained an EPA grant to do the septic inspections. Health has sent notices to property owners with the following outcome: They have heard back from 20 out of 22 in the Thomas Creek area; 51 out of 117 in the Samish Basin; in the middle Samish there have been 20 inspections out of 65 respondents with 68 landowners. There are 2 staff working on this

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(looking for septic failures and critical area violations) and there have been 3 referrals to the Conservation District for farm plans. Health does not have the staff to work full time on the Samish since they have another grant due very soon and need to focus on getting that one completed. They will move to the Samish as soon as possible. Several maps were passes around for viewing, as well as a spreadsheet of statistics. She reported only about 20% of parcels have been checked for septic activity. She said the project should be done by 2012. Berentson talked about DNA testing, and will report back next month. He also talked about the “Clean Samish Initiative”, upcoming meetings and expects to put more effort into the immediate future. Discussion around the table emphasized the need to keep animals out of the creeks.

Committee Reports

- a. Envision 2060 Kim asked board members details about dikes. Discussion about dikes and how they are maintained, property ownership, and dike districts in general. Most of the land under the dikes is privately owned and the dike districts only have an easement to do work in the dike prism. There is also the issue of the dike integrity itself and by no means should this be put into jeopardy. Other concerns are the issues of liability, clean up and waste treatment. Randy wanted to know who was showing the various presentations.
- b. Land Use – No report
- c. Economic Development - No report
- d. CEO – Note above Guest Speaker portion
- e. Flood and Drainage – Commissioner Wesen discussed the Army Corps of Engineers dropping the flood studies. Kraig reported on a horse arena development was impacting farming activities in a neighboring parcel. Carly explained property owner’s need to contact County officials to address the issue. Commissioner Wesen talked about the dike blowing out on the Samish. He reviewed the maintenance on Samish dikes have not been adequate. He was alerting AAB the property owners will be expected to pay more for repair revenue.

Old Business

Mike asked about the code revisions recommendations. Carly reported receiving the letter from AAB the previous month and the language changes as per its recommendations. Discussion about deliberations and Public Comment and Commissioner’s review. Carly will email a copy of the letter and possibly Public Comment letters to AAB members. Nels passed around copies of a citizen’s internet posting of Joe Leary Slough

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A letter from Bob Hughes requesting to be removed from the AAB was presented. Then there was some discussion about the Operating Procedures as to how to proceed with acquiring a new person to fill the position. Kendra will advertise the opening and present all interested applicants to the AAB at their next meeting. The AAB will make a recommendation to the BoCC. The BoCC will make the final decision.

New Business

Nels read a notification about the extension of recruitment for the Shoreline Master Plan Advisory Board. Commissioner Wesen and board members discussed the details and the need for more sign-ups from the ag community.

Extra Discussion

Carolyn Kelly talked about the Governor's response to the Ruckelshaus meetings. Commissioner Wesen emphasized the need to focus on the Samish issue.

Adjourn

Randy moved, Greg seconded, to adjourn. Motion passed. Next meeting April 11th, 7:00 PM

Minutes taken and prepared by Kim Mower with additions from Kendra

Action items

- a. Expect a copy of a letter from Dan Berentson regarding the Health Dept.
- b. Expect a copy of the AAB letter to Planning regarding the Code Revisions Recommendations.
- c. Expect action regarding the open position on the AAB.

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