



SKAGIT COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

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Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board (AAB) Meeting Minutes

January 11, 2012

Copper Room

Members in Attendance

Murray Benjamin	Jim Carstens
Randy Good	Mike Hulbert
Michael Hughes	Kraig Knutzen
Gregg Lee	Nels Lagerlund, Chair
Bill McMoran	Kim Mower, Vice Chair
Lyle Wesen	Nate Youngquist

Others in Attendance

Don McMoran – Mount Vernon Northwestern Washington Research & Extension Center (WSU)

Linda Christensen – Skagit County AAB Administrative Coordinator

Carolyn Kelly – Skagit Conservation District

Peter Browning – Skagit County Health Department Director/Local Farmer

Call to Order, Introductions

Nels called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Linda Christensen was introduced as administrative support from Skagit County for the AAB.

Consent Agenda

Two additions are made to the agenda: 1) a discussion from Carolyn Kelly about Washington State legislative bills and 2) Don McMoran has an announcement about his new position at WSU and project information.

Minutes

Murray motioned to accept the December 14, 2011 meeting minutes as presented and Lyle seconded. The motion passed.

Skagit County Agricultural Advisory Board Members:

Nels Lagerlund (Chair), Kim Mower (Vice Chair), Murray Benjamin, Jim Carstens, Randy Good, Bob Hughes, Kraig Knutzen, Greg Lee, Bill McMoran, Nate Youngquist, Lyle Wesen, Don McMoran, WSU Extension Mike Hulbert.

Committee Reports

Shorelines

Michael reporting there is nothing new to report since the last AAB meeting and noted there is a Shoreline Advisory committee meeting tomorrow the 12th.

Flood & Drainage

Nels reported that there are signs near his property and on or near Joe Leary Slough. He believes the county road shop installed them, but is concerned about the meaning of the sign. He feels it could be an awareness component of the Clean Samish project. There was a concern amongst the AAB that the sign that this ditch refers to will become a fish waterway.

Economic Development

Don said they he has plans to meet with Don Wick about the upcoming Economic Summit and will report back to the AAB in February.

Old Business

Transfer of Development Rights Grant

Kim reported that she and Nels met with Kirk Johnson of the Skagit County Planning Department for an overview of a grant that was approved by the Washington State Department of Commerce, funded by the Environmental Protection Agency for years 2012 through 2013. Presently Kirk is getting preliminary information together to form an informal committee that will consist of various representatives in the community, i.e. AAB, Forest Advisory Board, Conservation Futures Advisory Committee, Skagit Land Trust, and others. Kirk said that it is his intention to keep an open line of communication regarding the progress of this project and will get input from all on a regular basis. This project is a product of the Citizen Committee's final recommendations through the Envision Skagit 2060 project grant funded through the Environmental Protection Agency. More information will follow as it is available.

Randy asked Nels to send him a copy of e-mail from Kirk about this project. Mike is concerned how this project will benefit the Farmland Legacy Program.

New Business

Legislative Update by Carolyn Kelly

Carolyn gave a report of two important bills before the Washington State legislative body this week. One would benefit agriculture and the other will not. Carolyn suggested that the AAB write a letter as a group or individually to our legislative representatives.

Section Seven of HB 2253 exempts habitat and mitigation projects from the SEPA checklist process. It also exempts city and county projects as well. The hearing for this bill is Friday, January 13th. Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland has written a letter of concern to Olympia. There is also a companion bill.

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SB 6082, introduced by Senator Haugen by request of the agricultural community would add items to the SEPA checklist for projects that impact agriculture land. The hearing for this bill is Tuesday, January 17th.

James made a motion that the AAB write a letter to the Skagit County Board of Commissioners voicing concerns for HB 2253 and support of SB 6082. Mike seconded. The motion passed. Kim was tasked with composition of this letter and will report back later in the meeting.

WSU Update by Don McMoran

Don reported big news that he was selected as the Director of the Vernon Northwestern Washington Research & Extension Center. He will oversee 11 full-time staff members. Recent staff changes include an opening for the Beach Watchers lead and the Master Gardener Coordinator.

A big project for this year is the Community Food Assessment project. This project will show what kind of food is produced here in the valley and how the community can access the food. The focus is on potatoes and how much is produced here. The unknown fact is how much potato product is coming in from other areas. This project will set the stage on what we can do here to promote locally produced food.

Another project is a video production on the happenings of local farms and machinery. Due to staff changes, the video has experienced a few setbacks. This will be a 15 minute video and will air on TV 21.

Other upcoming WSU projects include a branch of WSU in Everett offering an engineering program, a cattlemen expo in Stanwood, and a potato workshop on February 13th.

Extra Discussion

Nels noted that after a recent rain event the Samish River went from less than 200 cfs to more than 700 cfs and caused a shutdown of the bay. The bay was reopened the next day after sample results showed that the cfu counts were below the criteria for a 5 day closure. A discussion ensued regarding sampling.

A discussion was held with Peter Browning regarding marine recovery and an upcoming workshop scheduled for January 22 & 23. The workshop goal is get homeowners into compliance. A discussion continued regarding pollution hot spots and sampling.

Kim presented the legislative letter to the AAB for their approval. Randy made a motion to approve the letter and Mike seconded. The motion passed.

Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM

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Kraig Knutzen, Greg Lee, Bill McMoran, Nate Youngquist, Lyle Wesen, Don McMoran, WSU Extension Mike Hulbert.*