



SKAGIT COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD
1800 Continental Place
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
Phone (360) 336-3303
Fax (360) 336-9478

Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board (AAB) Meeting Minutes
July 10, 2013
Skagit County Administration Building

Members in Attendance

Nels Lagerlund (Chair) Kraig Knutzen (Vice-Chair) Murray Benjamin
Tye Clark Dan Lefeber

Others in Attendance

Linda Christensen, Skagit County Kara Symonds, Skagit County Public Works
Steve Omdal, Port of Skagit

Call to Order

Nels Lagerlund called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Proxy Designation

Murray Benjamin for Jim Carstens
Kraig Knutzen for Greg Lee
Nels Lagerlund for Brian Duquaine

Consent Agenda

The agenda was amended to review and approve the June meeting minutes, not the April meeting minutes. This was a typo.

Minutes

Tye Clark motioned to accept the June 12, 2013 meeting minutes and Murray Benjamin seconded the motion. The motion passed.

GI Study Update, Kara Symonds, Skagit County Public Works

Kara Symonds, Watershed Planner and G.I. Project Manager for Public Works, provided a GI Study update and distributed handouts showing three alternatives that are currently being considered. The alternatives being discussed include: do nothing, Joe Leary Slough Bypass, Swinomish Bypass, and an urban protection alternative. The preferred alternative will be decided by October 1, 2013. Once the preferred alternative is decided, refinement of the project will take place through 2014.

*Skagit County Agricultural Advisory Board Members:
Nels Lagerlund (Chair), Kraig Knutzen (Vice Chair), Murray Benjamin, Jim Carstens, Dan Lefeber
Greg Lee, Bill Moran, Mike Hulbert, Nate Youngquist, Michael Hughes, Tyler Clark, Brian Duquaine*

Kara indicated that the Joe Leary Slough Bypass alternative would impact 3500 agriculture acres and will consist of 20 miles of new levee and the Swinomish Bypass would impact 2400 acres and have fewer miles of levy than Joe Leary Slough. For both alternatives there is a question on who will maintain the flood bypasses; most likely the county, but not without additional funding. The urban protection alternative concept is to protect urban areas and keep rural Skagit County intact. This alternative will impact 90 acres of agriculture and keep the Skagit Delta in the floodplain.

The AAB made the following comments:

Joe Leary Slough:

Kraig Kntuzen felt the total impact for this alternative could end up with more than 3500 acres. He also said that Drainage District 14 would be heavily impacted.

Nels Lagerlund said this alternative could make a flood event for the Samish River worse.

Dan Lefeber asked if this alternative could be made wider and not deeper; then perhaps farming could continue since a 100-year flood is a rare occurrence.

Swinomish Flood Bypass:

Dan said this option lessens the impact on farming.

Kara spoke about the FEMA floodplain being affected by the bypass alternatives. This option protects the Town of La Conner.

Murray Benjamin is concerned that the county may not be able to afford the liability and maintenance for any alternative. Perhaps “no action” would be the preferred alternative.

Farmers Memorial Project, Tye Clark

Tye Clark presented a draft plan for the Farmers Memorial Project. This project is a legacy tribute to those who have made the Skagit County agriculture successful, alive or deceased. The objectives of the project is to memorialize and commemorate the agriculture contributions of those past and present, and provide an area that is open and inviting and benefits the agriculture community, the public, and Washington State University.

The general concept(s) is this place will serve as a gathering place for field days, grower meetings, etc. There will be facilities for restrooms, BBQ area, patio with tables and chairs, and a relaxed permanent sitting area. It also provides an on-going memorial for past farmers and agricultural professionals and pays tribute to those contributing today. There might also be a special area for pioneer families.

Others can help by joining the Action Committee and get involved in the design, fundraising, and secure donations for plants, materials, and labor. One can purchase a brick, donate cash, or be a corporate sponsor. Comments and suggestion ideas can be submitted to Tye Clark at ty.clark.shf@gmail.com or cell phone 360/661-0566.

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Drainage District 14 Update

Kraig is standing in for Roger Knutzen who was previously scheduled to make this update. Kraig mentioned how the GI Study final alternative chosen will affect Drainage District 14 and the immediate area. The Department of Ecology has determined that before any excavation can take place as a result of the GI Study alternative chosen, an archeological dig would need to be performed.

Committee Reports

There were no committee reports.

New Business

Nels Lagerlund discussed the Williamson pipeline extension..

Adjourn and Next Meeting

Today's meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm and the next meeting is scheduled for August 14 at 7 p.m.