



SKAGIT COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD
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Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board (AAB) Meeting Minutes
January 8, 2014
Skagit County Administration Building

Members in Attendance

Murray Benjamin	Jim Carstens	Ty Clark
Brian Duquaine	Michael Hughes	Kraig Knutzen
Nels Lagerlund		

Others in Attendance

Linda Christensen, Skagit County Planning	Ron Wesen, Skagit County Commissioner
Steve Omdal, Port of Skagit County	Richard Brocksmith, Skagit Watershed Council

Call to Order

Nels Lagerlund, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Proxy Designation

Michael Hughes will proxy for Greg Lee

Minutes, December 11, 2013

Murray Benjamin moved to accept the December 11, 2013 meeting minutes and Jim Carstens seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Ron Wesen

Commissioner Ron Wesen was present to discuss the District 1 AAB vacancy and to discuss other agriculture related issues.

District 1 Vacancy

Ron said he would be interviewing three applicants for the District 1 vacancy on January 9 and any AAB members are welcome to attend. Ron asked the group what they are looking for in an applicant: Ty Clark said he is interested in someone who has a different background in agriculture than is already represented on the AAB; Jim Carstens said it is good to have diversity on the AAB; and Brian Duquaine said he wanted someone who is familiar with current agriculture issues. Ty added that the AAB must be reactive to current issues and able to bring them to the attention of the Board of County Commissioners. Kraig Knutzen noted that the applicants appear to have an interest in agriculture, but not a lot of experience in that area. Nels said that an AAB member doesn't have to be a farmer to be on this board.

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

Agriculture Topics

Commissioner Wesen said the Board of Commissioners is available to listen to the AAB's recommendations and advise them on any pressing issues. Ron noted the following issues facing agriculture today: Skagit County infrastructure, instream flow rules, open space trails, GI Study. A discussion followed regarding the GI Study. Nels asked how the AAB can contribute to the alternatives under consideration for the study. He also asked how the AAB can collaborate with the county and dike & drainage/irrigation districts regarding the UGA-2016 Comp Update and TDR project.

Richard Brocksmith, Skagit Watershed Council Executive Director

Richard introduced himself to the AAB and said he wants to know how salmon recovery affects the work of the AAB and related agriculture issues. He gave an overview of his work background and reasons why he was hired to the watershed council.

Murray said he is concerned about erodible farmland in the valley and that there is very little respect to local farmers on why restoration projects are being done; it seems like these projects are detrimental to agriculture. He would like more time spent with landowners regarding the fish enhancement projects. Jim said that it is critically important that the agriculture community collaborate with wildlife restoration agencies. Jim also said that it is important for the community to know where their food comes from. He also was concerned that a vast amount of money not be spent on restoration projects.

Richard said it is his goal to open up communication with all groups across the valley and learn how all can work together to meet the needs of fish, agriculture, and wildlife.

Planning & Development Services 2014 Work Program

Staff referenced questions to Commissioner Wesen regarding the 2014 Work Program. It was suggested that Planning & Development Services staff should attend a future AAB meeting to discuss the work program and other related agriculture issues.

Shoreline Master Plan Update

Commissioner Wesen mentioned briefly the status of this project.

Old and New Business

No old or new business.

Committee Reports

No committee reports

Adjourn and Next Meeting

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m. and the next meeting is scheduled for February 12, 2014 at 6 p.m.