



SKAGIT COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD
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Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board (AAB) Meeting Minutes
June 10, 2015, 7 pm
Skagit County Administration Building

Members in Attendance

Murray Benjamin	Ty Clark	Barbara Cleave
Scott Hanseth	Mike Hulbert	Michael Hughes
Kraig Knutzen	Greg Lee	Nels Lagerlund
Terry Sapp		

Members Absent

Jim Carstens Brian Duquaine

Others in Attendance

Linda Christensen, Skagit County Planning
Kirk Johnson, Skagit County Planning Department
Don McMoran, WSU
Steve Omdal, Skagit County Port Commissioner

Call to Order

Chair Nels Lagerlund called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

Agenda Review

There were no changes or additions to the agenda.

Meeting Minutes

Barbara moved to approve the April 8, 2015 meeting minutes and Mike Hulbert seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

TDR Update

Kirk Johnson gave an overview of the TDR project from the project onset in 2011 through the present. Kirk distributed a diagram that illustrates the proposed program. Kirk discussed the process going forward. The Planning Department anticipates the full proposal (policy and code) will be ready for public release by mid-summer of this year. The Department will seek another opportunity to meet with the Planning Commission to discuss the draft policies and code before

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the proposal is released. A 45-day public comment period will give the AAB a chance to comment and Kirk will give the AAB an early notice when the Notice of Availability will be published.

The AAB asked Kirk who will administer the TDR program, who will collect the funds, and who would monitor the land for compliance. Kirk responded that those details are important and details will be worked on as the process continues.

Below is an excerpt from the May 28, 2015 Staff Report written by Kirk Johnson.

In 2011, Skagit County initiated a process to consider development of a transfer of development rights (TDR) program.

TDR is a voluntary, market-based mechanism to encourage the conservation of working farm, forest and open space lands, while transferring residential development potential from those lands to areas where growth is appropriate and desired.

In 2012, the Board of County Commissioners (Board) approved [Resolution R20120276](#), appointing a TDR Advisory Committee whose purpose was to “review and provide input on key policy and technical issues, and TDR public outreach efforts, to the County planning staff and consultants, the Planning Commission, and the Board of Skagit County Commissioners.”

The Planning & Development Service department (Department) worked with the Advisory Committee from September 2012 through August 2014, holding a dozen advisory committee meetings to consider a wide range of issues and policy options related to TDR and related density credit programs.¹

The TDR review process also included independent staff and consultant research; a detailed TDR market analysis; focus group meetings with potential TDR program users; and periodic project updates to the County’s Agricultural and Forest Advisory Boards and the Planning Commission, city and town planners through the Skagit Council of Governments, and the Board.

In July 2014, the Department issued a report, *Skagit County Transfer of Development Rights: Project Findings and Program Recommendations*, which reviewed and analyzed the major issues surrounding such programs and summarized the Committee’s discussions on key issues.

The report included [Final Recommendations](#) from a majority of committee members (8) that Skagit County should move forward with a combined TDR and density credit program, and a minority of committee members (3) that the County should not move forward with TDR at this time.

On August 6, 2014, project staff and TDR Advisory Committee members made a

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presentation to the Board on the TDR recommendations report and the majority and minority recommendations, and several members of the general public also spoke. (See [TV21 Video](#))

On September 29, 2014, the Board adopted [Resolution R20140298](#) directing the Department to draft TDR and density credit program policies and code based generally on the TDR Advisory Committee's majority recommendation with the additional guidance from the Board included in that resolution.

The Board added consideration of TDR and density credit policies and code to the 2014 Comprehensive Plan Amendment docket through [Resolution 20140390](#). Department staff has been drafting the proposal in preparation for its release for public review and comment this summer. A Planning Commission hearing and deliberations are anticipated in the early part of the fall.

The Department has developed a working title for the program – the Conservation and Development Incentives Program – in an effort capture the program's overall purpose and goals and to encompass both the TDR and density credit components. Also see the diagram of the proposed program included as [Exhibit A](#) to this memo.

Voluntary Stewardship Program Update

Two VSP committee meetings were held since the April meeting of the Ag Advisory Committee. In late April the county planning staff continued to explain the mapping process for assessing the quantity and the type of buffers that border the designated waterways. The planners had initially proposed not to include grass filter strips in the buffer assessment, but several committee members argued for inclusion. Ty was unable to attend the May meeting, however, Kara Symonds reported the following: "*Basically at the last VSP meeting we had a Voluntary measures workshop, which we'll continue at the June meeting. It was an exercise to outline all the components of a voluntary plan that considers the landowners interests. We'll review what we came up with at the June meeting and build on that. It all came down to flexibility – in terms of plants, widths, etc.*"

Ag Summit

Ty reported a \$5K grant from EDASC is ready for use regarding agriculture. Ty would like to see the money used for an agricultural summit to discuss agricultural economic development in Skagit County. Nels suggested that a subcommittee meet to devise a plan. Don McMoran, Ty Clark, and Steve Omdal will meet and report back to the AAB in July.

Other Business

Nels distributed the Shoreline Master Plan (SMP) Update memo dated May 26, 2015. This memo contains information regarding the SMP final planning commission pre-release review for the June 2, 2015 meeting. Nels pointed out a concern in section 14.26.435, Dredging and Dredge Material Disposal, (1) (c) and (2) (b) (iii).

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Don McMoran gave an update on WSU Extension activities.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 8, 2015, 7 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

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