



SKAGIT COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD
1800 Continental Place
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
Phone (360) 416-1338

Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board (AAB) Meeting Minutes
January 13, 2016 6 pm
Skagit County Administration Building

Members in Attendance

Murray Benjamin	Scott Hanseth	Michael Hughes	Sloan Johnson
Nels Lagerlund	Greg Lee	Steve Omdal	Terry Sapp

Members Absent

Steve Bertelsen	Jim Carstens	Barbara Cleave	Kraig Knutzen
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Proxy Designation

Murray Benjamin for Jim Carstens
Nels Lagerlund for Kraig Knutzen

Others in Attendance

Linda Christensen, Skagit County Planning & Development Services
Don McMoran, WSU

Call to Order

Nels called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm

Agenda Review

Nels added the City of Sedro-Woolley UGA Proposal

Introductions

New AAB members, Sloan Johnson and Steve Omdal, were introduced to the group.

Meeting Minutes

Greg moved to approve the December 9, 2015 meeting minutes and Michael seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Farmworker Housing

Nels voiced his concern about the Raspberry Ridge project. The AAB is interested in reaching out to the Housing Authority (HA) to voice their concerns and offer positive suggestions as the process continues.

Skagit County Agricultural Advisory Board Members:

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Nels will contact the HA directly. Nels concerns are he doesn't want to see farmworker housing in an area not zoned for this purpose.

Don recommends that the Board of County Commissioners ask the Housing Authority (HA) post a bond; hence the proposed project is used for its intended use. Murray said the County should encourage the HA to handle this housing issue; it's much bigger than what the AAB can handle. Terry advised that it's in the AAB's interest to go into the record voicing their concerns.

Steve described a dormitory style housing alternative could be a better solution. Michael will contact farmers in Eastern Washington counties to learn how they handle farmworker housing. Terry offered a word of caution; the AAB is not tasked to solve the low-income housing issue. The AAB is interested in solving housing issues for low-income agriculture workers. This topic will go on the March meeting agenda for a continued discussion.

Sedro-Woolley UGA Proposal

A brief discussion ensued. Nels read the 2015 Docket memo and all reviewed the map. Linda offered public comment deadline information and Nels took note that a comment letter will probably be written by the AAB. Dale Pernula will attend the February meeting to discuss the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update that includes the 2015 Docket proposals.

Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP)

Nels read a statement update from Kara Symonds:

Public Works is currently routing a contract with the Washington State Conservation Commissioner to fund VSP tasks, including the creation of a work plan. The grant agreement goes through June 2017. The Commission is funding the County a total of \$270,000 for performance period.

Over 2015, Public Works drafted portions of the work plan with input from our VSP watershed group. These drafted portions of the work plan are being reviewed by our technical partners, as Ryan mentioned. Once we receive feedback, the County will reconvene the watershed group to share that feedback and review our next steps, which include finalizing and implementing the work plan.

Shoreline Master Plan (SMP)

Nels read a statement update from Betsy Stevenson:

Work has been restarted on the draft SMP Update. We are finishing the edits of the second round of study sessions with the Planning Commission and are scheduled to meet with the Planning Commission on January 19 and February 2 to complete that review.

For Kraig and Michael, I plan to send the draft SMP to the Shoreline Advisory Committee just prior to its scheduled public release in early February. A workshop with the PC is scheduled for March 1 and a public hearing is scheduled for March 15. Comments would be accepted until early April.

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If other AAB members are interested, I would be glad to make it available to them as well. I would like to come to an AAB meeting during the 60-day comment period to answer questions, or provide an overview.

During this last round of revisions, we have tried to simplify the language and the regulations, to make it easier to use and understand. There is a lot of information to cover, but we believe it is much improved on that front. I hope to talk with you soon.

Ag Summit

Don announced that details of the summit are coming together nicely. Most speakers are locked in, except for legislative representatives. The legislators will be in session and they cannot attend the summit; however, Don will facilitate videos if possible.

Committee Assignments

Terry will serve on the Economic Development Committee and Sloan Johnson will serve on the Land Use Committee. Don will serve as the WSU liaison on the Economic Development Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

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