

Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board  
Meeting Minutes – December 12, 2018  
Skagit County Administration Building

### Members in Attendance

Nels Lagerlund	Michael Hughes	Barbara Cleave	Murray Benjamin
Scott Hanseth	Steve Omdal	Terry Sapp	John Morrison
Steve Wright			

### Proxy Designations

Murray Benjamin for Greg Lee  
Michael Hughes for Kraig Knutzen

### Members Absent

Greg Lee	Kraig Knutzen	Tim Van Hofwegen
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### Others in Attendance

Don McMoran, WSU  
Dan McCarty, Skagit County Public Works  
Hal Hart, Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)  
Stacie Pratschner, Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)  
Kathy Jewell, Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)

### Call to Order

Nels Lagerlund called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Introductions around the table.

### Meeting Minutes

Murray Benjamin moved to accept the September 12, 2018 minutes, Steve Omdal seconded. Motion carried.

### Local Issues

#### Guest Presenter - **Stacie Pratschner, PDS**

The 2018 Comprehensive Plan Amendments have passed and regarding P-2 the Board of County Commissioners has directed PDS to begin a long range agritourism study which could take up to two years.

Stacie discussed her timeline, funding options and possible stakeholders to include on the various committees; Focus groups, Technical Advisory Committee, Steering Committee. She hopes AAB will be a part of the steering committee and very involved. Everyone discussed ways to reach out to the public, property owners, farmers, various groups and businesses regarding the agritourism study.

First we need to decide what is included in the definition of “agritourism”. It was proposed that if there is a use not included in the definition the code needs to include a time/deadline for appeal and the need for enforcement. It was discussed how to reach out to the public so all voices are heard on this topic. Plan to use advertisements in newspaper, social media, and a variety of avenues.

Stacie noted that she foresees a four prong approach to this study;

1. Through the study we have the opportunity to set policies that encapsulates our values and how we want agritourism to look in our valley.
2. Then we design implementing code that is easily enforceable.
3. Planning Department, permits must be reviewed and conditions applied per the new code.
4. Team to enforce the code.

Stacie mentioned the next steps are to apply for grants, use a consultant and plan a kickoff meeting.

## Committee Reports

**Economic development-** Steve Omdal (Chair), Don McMoran, Terry Sapp

Don McMoran;

2 companies interested in locating to Skagit County; 1 pickle production and 1 edamame production. Don explained the main reason they are interested in Skagit County is the tariff wars, worried about import law changes and so want production within USA to be ahead of the issue.

**Critical Areas** – Nels Lagerlund (Chair), Murray Benjamin

Nels – Orca Taskforce and salmon recovery funds received \$1.31 million for habitat restoration. He feels there is going to be a push for more restoration in our county. Advises we need to stay in the loop and keep an eye on what's happening.

Steve Omdal was at the WPPA meeting last week. Patsy asked to be on the Salmon Recovery Taskforce.

**Land Use** – Barbara Cleave, Michael Hughes, Scott Hanseth,

No Report

**Flood, Drainage & Irrigation** – Kraig Knutzen (Chair), Greg Lee, Scott Hanseth, Nels Lagerlund

Water: Don met with Jenna Friebel, Director of the new Skagit Drainage and Irrigation District Consortium. Putting together a report about the need for uninterrupted water for Agriculture. In front of BOCC Monday January 7, 2019 at 2:30 pm. She is also on the water taskforce representing the districts and agriculture. Doing a study of how much water agriculture needs. Early next year talking about down river water. Terry says Seattle City Lights (SCL) supports the instream flow rule of 2001, which had nothing for agriculture water. Was a forum for Ag to be represented but wasn't.

Nels talked about the FERP licensing SCL, Kara Symonds is working on flood control and nobody from the county is requesting water for agriculture. We need someone from the county to push for agriculture water. Commissioner Janicki wants a number of what agriculture needs. In the newspaper she said 200 csf out of the river for irrigation. Nels asked group if we should invite her to the next AAB meeting to talk about this? Or Jenna?

## New Business

Open position on the Board in District 2—Justin Hayden was a name proposed, discuss with Commissioner Dahlstedt.

## **Don McMoran, WSU Extension Update**

Budget 1% cut for 2019

Publications: Two PBYS for potatoes and parsnip

Grants: WSU Water Irrigation Systems Efficiency (WISE) and Cover Cropping grants are going as planned, hoping to continue 2019. Looking at writing a grant for blueberry commission.

Still waiting to hear back on the proposals for the Puget Sound Partnership Near Term Action (NTA) grant which is large. National Agribility was out doing tours and Don feels confident. Farm Bill passed today with will have positive impact on these grants.

### Workshops at WSU extension in Mount Vernon

Jan. 11- W. WA Seed Workshop

Feb 8 - Skagit Ag Summit

Feb. 22 - W. WA Potato Workshop

March 8 - W. WA Berry Workshop

April – train the trainer for worker protection standards

End of April - prelicense pesticide training

April – Tractor safety

New University Provost and new Associate Dean for Extension and new front office staff (temp).

Terry asked the group if someone can help him understand the Envision 2060 background, how it was received and impact it may have had. Everyone discussed the public backlash and that it died out. Ended up being a group of opinions put into the report, never had a chance to evolve. Stacie explained that the plan was not formally adopted or adopted by reference and is not part of the comprehensive plan.

## **Old Business - None**

### **Elections**

Opened the floor for nominations for Chair; Steve Omdal nominated Michael Hughes; Barbara and Scott seconded – passed unanimously

Opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chair; Scott nominated Nels Lagerlund, Steve Omdahl seconded, closed the floor for nominations and passed unanimously

Everyone thanked Nels for his years of serving as Chair. Nels suggested everyone needs to suggest agenda items and issues to talk to the BOCC about. Nels would like to see a part-time county employee (like Allison initially) being involved in agriculture and contacting the 7 ag groups in the valley. He spoke to Commissioner Wesen about this again, may need to put this into a formal request. Murray suggested if we did a quarterly or every 6 month report to the BOCC. Murray agreed to put together such a report for the AAB to review. Steve Omdahl suggested cc'ing the BOCC on the approved meeting minutes. Nels suggested also sending to department directors, WW ag, SPF, etc

Michael moved to adjourn, Scott seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm

Next meeting is Jan. 9, 2019 at 6 pm