

Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board
Meeting Summary – June 12, 2019
Skagit County Administration Building

[Members in Attendance](#)

Michael Hughes	Nels Lagerlund	Tim Van Hofwegen
Justin Hayton	Steve Omdal	
Terry Sapp		

[Proxy Designations](#)

Barbara Cleave

[Members Absent](#)

Scott Hanseth	Barbara Cleave	Don McMoran
John Morrison	Kraig Knutzen	Steve Wright
Murray Benjamin		

[Others in Attendance](#)

Kara Symonds, Skagit County Public Works
Bill Blake, Skagit Conservation District
Betsy Stevenson, Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)
Hal Hart, Planning and Development Services

[Call to Order, Introductions](#)

Michael Hughes called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

[Approval of Meeting Summary](#)

Nels Lagerlund moved to accept the May 8, 2019 summary with correction of Omdal corrected on page 3, Tim Van Hofwegen seconded. Motion carried.

[Guest Speaker](#)

Bill Blake, Skagit Conservation District

Bill attended at the request of the Board to provide an update on the District's activities and proposed fee increases.

Update Programs- Conservation Stewardship Program fees rates/changes, working with Sarah (NRCS) helping landowners with some compensation, cover crops, organic wheat. Bill provided a handout listing the changes/rates. Add \$5/ parcel proposed, handout provided for vehicles. He has been working with Ron Wesen writing it up in resolution as up to \$5, wouldn't have to be that much.

\$126,000 funds cut to \$95,000. Bill will work 4 day weeks starting in September.

Tim Van Hofwegen- What is the definition of forest?

Bill 20-40 acres; 5 acres. Kevin Zobrist-bugs & disease. SCD management plan considers slopes, soils, etc. Looking for certain types of trees that will tolerate climate change. Carbon sequestration- coniferous species (less runoff & erosion)

Terry asks why do some dairy farmers look to SCD for a plan and others don't? Nels -we have conservation plan, support them but ask questions with new tax. Taxing people you are trying to save. Beef program want to charge more and more, with beef prices down. Jeff and Terry live on non-ag land and would pay \$5 per parcel even in the city. Terry questions cant there be a maximum. Bill has filed with County Commissioners, they are holding a hearing in August/September and they can ask the Treasurer what a fair number is. Tim finances a lot of single family residential development. People buy property with trees with no idea what to do. Is there really a market for it? Bill stated, it is not a harvest plan; it helps them know what will grow well. (mutual benefits) A cultural assessment costs about \$4,000 and on-site observer another \$4,000 for a dairy farm. Conservation Commission is paying for that. Terry questioned what outreach is, who is it reaching? Horse owners, backyard wildlife, sustainable gardening, and rain garden, some work in the cities- stormwater, retention, & maintenance.

New Business

HAL HART, PDS Update

Handout- Growth Report from State OFM- 225 housing permits (from last year) tracking just like last year. Looking at Paccar expansion; 150 workers. Referrals to SCD-be a team on that. Hired Long Range Planner; Michael Cerbone (Multhomah County Director, Forester). Lisa Gruter-AG Tourism study, he will follow up with her next week. Lisa Janicki took Michael on a tour yesterday, AG tourism problem areas-doing things w/o permits. Hal stated he is more thankful for what we have here in Skagit. Terry mentioned SVH app, getting to know feature, moved here for rural character. Buy 40 acres and build house on it. Nels stated BCC talking about housing shortage. Hal- help with cities, co-ownership in cities, senior housing, & mental health housing. Teach them how to support Ag here. Steve stated incentive for cities to go higher density. Hal-preserve land base in rural areas, drive development to cities. Terry-Envision Skagit said it was not well accepted, Hal suggested breaking it down to show them what can work. Terry said-give people ways to experience ag; little opportunity to do it in a meaningful way. Steve stated that cities build up, not out-referenced to Trillium's proposal.

KARA SYMONDS, PUBLIC WORKS Update

Burlington has Agricultural Heritage Program, donate to Farmland Legacy Program. (Kara also sent her notes) - 11,500 acres in the program, 225 development rights eliminated, 25 in queue.

Conservation Futures- offer has gone down a bit, before-land value (has stayed same) after-with encumbrance of easement.

40 acre, 1 DR \$400,000 (10,000 per acre)

Used to be \$280,000

Now about \$320,000

\$80,000 dev. Right (they pay on difference; so the offer is going down). Substandard lots the offer is still more.

5 year review of all appraisals

Farm to Market poplar farm had contacted them, now working with DucksUnlimited to create wetlands (Futures Board concerned about affecting neighbors) Nels, right across way Raser Duck Club ponds (there is an easement. Michael stated they should stay in preserving farmland if hiring monitoring contractor.

Committee Reports

Economic Development- Don McMoran

Nothing this month.

Critical Areas – Nels Lagerlund

Letter to Commissioners for Critical Area type stuff. Hold off after meeting yesterday. PSP Leadership Council meeting was here. Salmon Recovery Board recommended mandatory buffers. Concerned with TMDL streams for temperature. Jenna gave great presentation TFI, DFI projects that have been done on AG land. Wanted to send letter when Salmon Recovery Board made buffer recommendations. Leadership Council didn't adopt that recommendation. Propose wait & see.

Land Use –Barbara Cleave (Chair), Michael Hughes, John Morrison, Steve Wright

Nothing this month.

Flood, Drainage & Irrigation – Jenna's presentation from May.

Old Business

Nothing this month

Adjourn

Justin Hayton moved to adjourn, Nels Lagerlund seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm

Next meeting is July 10, 2019 at 7 pm