

Skagit County Agricultural Advisory Board Meeting Summary – August 14, 2019 Skagit County Administration Building

Members in Attendance

Michael Hughes	Nels Lagerlund	Barbara Cleave	Don McMoran
Justin Hayton	Kraig Knutzen	Murray Benjamin	Steve Omdal
Steve Wright	Terry Sapp		

Proxy Designations

Steve Omdal for Tim Van Hofwegen

Members Absent

John Morrison
Tim Van Hofwegen

Others in Attendance

Brandon Roozen, Western Washington Agricultural Association
Betsy Stevenson, Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)
Kim Adams, Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)

Call to Order, Introductions

Michael Hughes called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

Approval of Meeting Summary

Steve Omdal moved to accept the June 12, 2019 summary, Nels Lagerlund Seconded. Motion carried.

Guest Speaker

Brandon Roozen – Western Washington Agricultural Association

Brandon presented a discussion about the Lower Skagit TMDL PSP Leadership Council Meeting:

- Need to revisit the strategy of the TMDL as it has been in place for 10 years
- Low participation of the Ag Community
- Laws have changed since TMDL has been in place and should be reflected in the implementation
- Need to get more Agriculture representation/volunteers within the community
- Need to include Fish & Wildlife on Recovery/Restoration (they were never a part of any discussion)
- Work together with the Puget Sound Partnership to create improvement of water quality on Ag Land

Brandon read parts of an email from Scott Bohling from the Department of Ecology (Kim will forward email with attachments, meeting notes, & next meeting date & time to AA Board)

- AA Board should have been contacted to attend the meeting
- Nels & Michael will follow up with Michael See to discuss what they can do to participate, reinforce the County to slow down and include more Ag members
- Need to engage with the AG Community in a respectful way to form a group and allow more participation

Steve Omdal- “How are they developing a data base list on who is participating & how do you get on their list?”

- Due to staff turnover there is a disconnect in communication
- Feedback system is incomplete-need more support from community
- Suggested contacting Michael See to get the discussion started to help develop relationships & more follow through

Terry Sapp- “What is the message we are trying to get communicated?”

- Mischaracterization of landscape- did not paint the right picture
- Make sure the current correct information is being communicated-Have facts
- VSP is important for the County to reinforce value of program to state to retain adequate funding.
- Give time to work to be successful

Terry Sapp- Upriver has lots of drainages that run into the Skagit. Mandatory 200 ft. buffers on all those becomes critical for small farmers. Participated in the latter portion of the VSP, no force; nothing to be done through plan. Did not see an outreach to the Landowners to spread the word or garner interest. Why would land owners care? Doesn't come to anything purposeful, can't bring anything to the table to discuss. Might be able to help the cause.

Murray Benjamin- Not too many people know the history and the lawsuits, was not recorded well what has gone on with the County, WWAA, and other groups.

- Brandon-Leadership Council presentation by the County did not address this, need to resolve those issues, they want VSP to fail
- Communication is important. Help the county help us, push the County on the VSP, water quality issues, & salmon recovery

Michael Hughes- What ways can AA Board advocate with the county to improve these things

- Write a letter to ECY stating that you didn't get an invitation and would like to get involved
- Get the workgroup back together, ask for some info on the TMDL
- Contact Michael See as he is familiar with the TMDL
- Review previous TMDL meeting minutes
- Attend the next meeting on Thursday, August 29th 9:30-2:30 (Skagit Station Meeting Room)
- AA Board is to do research and make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners
- Need to find out the comment period or public hearing time (Kim will forward information regarding comment period & public hearing)
- Invite Michael See to join next month AAB Meeting

New Business

Building Permit Applications First half of 2019 in Ag-NRL Zoning passed out- Hal Hart to discuss in September meeting.

Committee Reports

Economic Development- Don McMoran

- Submitted Budget to Board of County Commissioners - got extensions for COLA's for Classified/AP's
- Took a 1.5 % cut in 2019 from state funding
- 2020 will be able to refill positions that have been vacant for the last 5 years

GRANTS:

- Cover Cropping
- Irrigation
- Suicide Prevention Grant from the Department of Health
- Pasture Management
- USDA Arability Grant to provide Assistive Technology to farmers

WORKSHOPS:

- Ag. Summit meeting today (planning meeting)

YOUNG FARMER OF THE YEAR NOMINATION

- Duane Favor-Dairy farmer

Critical Areas – Nels Lagerlund

Nothing at this time

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

Nothing at this time

Flood, Drainage & Irrigation – Kraig Knutzen (Chair), Nels Lagerlund, Steve Wright

Nothing at this time

Old Business

Nothing at this time

Adjourn

Murray Benjamin moved to adjourn, Justin Hayton seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:26 pm

Next meeting is September 11, 2019 at 7 pm