

Skagit County Agricultural Advisory Board Meeting Summary – September 11, 2019 Skagit County Administration Building

Members in Attendance

| | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Michael Hughes | Nels Lagerlund | Barbara Cleave | Don McMoran |
| Justin Hayton | Murray Benjamin | Terry Sapp | Tim Van Hofwegen |

Proxy Designations

Members Absent

| | | |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| Kraig Knutzen | Steve Omdal | Steve Wright |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|

Others in Attendance

Michael See, Skagit County Public Works
Kara Symonds, Skagit County Public Works
Hal Hart, Skagit County Planning & Development Services
Michael Cerbone, Skagit County Planning & Development Services
Kim Adams, Skagit County Planning & Development Services

Call to Order, Introductions

Michael Hughes called the meeting to order at 6:58 pm

Approval of Meeting Summary

Nels Lagerlund moved to accept the August 14, 2019 minutes, John Morrison Seconded. Motion carried.

Guest Speakers

Kara Symonds & Michael See – Skagit County Public Works

Kara & Michael presented an update regarding the implementation of the VSP Work Plan

- VSP was put into place to manage & protect farmland/critical areas
- Watershed protects critical areas, more fish & wildlife areas on ag land
- Trying to enhance the critical areas
- Just put out the two year status report that focused on Wahacca
- Using Ariel photography with inferred data to see vegetation and find clusters of loss that are ¼ of an acre (testing with Ariel photography is shown to be accurate)
- Trying to protect what already exists and “do no harm”
- Looking for long-term agriculture methods for protecting ag land
- 5-year status update report due in 2022 will provide more detailed information
- Public Works hired someone that will be running an advisory group and gather information to complete reporting requirements
- New hire hopefully to target outreach
- Department of Ecology has some confusion on what the VSP was created for. Attended the last meeting to do some fact checking to make sure the correct information is out there.
- Michael will carry the message that the Agriculture Advisory Board is willing to participate at the next meeting

Murray Benjamin- “After submitting the 2-year review, how long does it take to get a response?”

- Kara mentioned that the 2 year status report is just a check in to make sure the goals are being met. The 5-year check in is the more important one which will occur in 2022.

Nels Lagerlund- Suggested possibly sending out some mailers asking for outreach from the community, asking public for participation to meet the goals of the VSP. No one has asked the AAB to participate, how would they participate to be part of the plan in the future? Possibly hold a public meeting?

Terry Sapp- Would be a grand opportunity to tie in many groups prior the review working with the AAB & rural land owners, could have flyers out at the Tulip Festival or other large community gatherings & events.

- The idea was to have success from the VSP & TMD as protections, not to add more agriculture rules on land owners
- Kara: we have to make sure we get it right and it will show what works and what is not working on the next report

HAL HART- Director, Skagit County Planning & Development Services

Hal presented a Housing update for Skagit County

- Lots of permitting this year and it is different every year. August showed high permitting where April is usually where permitting is the highest
- Skagit valley farms investment was much bigger than it's costs
- How much open ground is in Skagit County, what is not being built? A lot of retirees are coming from Seattle to retire out of the big city. County land is parking lots, there is a lot of land we can use to work with the city of Vernon to re-invest in the Downtown area.
- Looking 20 years down the road, what is needed? Go vertical, looking at options
- Need to find a developer instead of government
- Burlington is looking at the future and looking for ways to get more housing

Michael Cerbone- Assistant Director, Planning & Development Services

Michael presented on the Docket & Skagit County Comprehensive Plan

- Michael explained how the Docket works- The docket is to amend the Comprehensive Plan where the community can submit requests to change code. The Board of County Commissioners reviews the docket and chooses which ones to present to the Planning Commission for approval.
- Michael passed out a handout to include the current docket items (will send out links to the docket for board to get more information)
- Michael will come back to October meeting to discuss C-2: Drainage District Coordination, C-4: Trails in the OSRSI, & C-5: Habitat Restoration Classification
- The next Planning Commission meeting on September 24th will include the a presentation on the MMRO Removal on PL18-0404 from the docket
- Kiewit has withdrawn their Rock Quarry Permits

New Business

None reported

Committee Reports

Economic Development- Don McMoran

- Submitted Budget to Board of County Commissioners –waiting to hear back
- Took a 1.7% 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
- USDA Arability Grant to provide Assistive Technology to farmers

YOUNG FARMER OF THE YEAR NOMINATION:

- Dwyane Faber-Dairy farmer moved up to the finals

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

Nels Lagerlund moved to adjourn, Murray Benjamin seconded. Meeting adjourned at 9:01 pm

Next meeting is October 9, 2019 at 6 pm