

# Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board Meeting Summary – November 13, 2019 Skagit County Administration Building

## Members in Attendance

Michael Hughes	Barbara Cleave	Tim Van Hofwegen
Murray Benjamin	Steve Omdal	Kraig Knutzen
Steve Wright	Terry Sapp	

## Proxy Designations

Michael Hughes for Nels Lagerlund

## Members Absent

Nels Lagerlund	Justin Hayton
John Morrison	Don McMoran

## Others in Attendance

Hal Hart, Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)  
Kim Adams, Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)  
Craig Macku, Land Owner

## Call to Order, Introductions

Michael Hughes called the meeting to order at 6:04

## Approval of Meeting Summary

Murray Benjamin moved to accept the October Minutes Steve Omdal seconded. Motion carried.

## Guest Speaker

### **Hal Hart, Director, Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)**

Michael Cerbone was on the agenda to present an update on the Stormwater Review but was unable to attend due to family obligations. Hal presented some updates regarding compliance in Agricultural areas

- There are two properties in Skagit County that we are trying to clean up due to illegal activities.
- When the owners are not willing or cannot clean up the responsibility falls on the county
- Planning working with local agencies to gather a team looking to get the illegal acts to stop and to clean up the properties that hold, old RV's, Drug Paraphilia, Vehicles, etc.
- Gathering Bids from local contractors to go in and do the initial cleanup of the land on two properties currently.
- Next steps is to charge that back to the owner and if that isn't an option, it falls on the taxpayers.
- Murray Benjamin mentioned up in Day Creek people are now just ditching gutted cars & motor homes in the middle of the road and it has become a safety hazard. The local church is taking these and selling the scrap metal.
- Hal stated that we have hired a new Code Compliance Officer whom is also a retired Police Officer and he is looking at these kinds of issues.
- Steve Omdal asked if there is a State or County fund that supports the clean up? Something for a Public Hazard/Nuisance Property? Hal reported he would need to act right away and ask for an Abatement Fund from the Board of County Commissioners to clear properties, then put a lien on the property to hopefully re-coup some of the cost.

- Hal will look to get a list of how many of these Ag Lands are farms that are no longer farming turning into these kind of Public Hazard/Nuisance properties.
- Murray Benjamin suggested community clean-up days could help. Getting the community involved could get a lot of donated items to assist in the clean ups. Maybe some sort of free day at the Dump.
- Hal also gave a housing update, 72 new units in Burlington and the county needs to do more. Met in Hamilton discussed and approved at the meeting the previous evening the Forterra plan to add 200 housing units using 42 acres of Ag Land. Kim will forward the Forterra Report.

## New Business

### Discussion regarding the Mount Vernon Fairgrounds- is it in the right location?

- Terry Sapp questioned: Where will it go? It will be going to Agriculture Land, the only place new housing, fairgrounds, & squatters can go is to Agriculture land making the nearby land less desirable, and the loss of Ag land.
- Murray suggested making the new fairgrounds more of a Multi-Use space not just fair use. Make it possible to use it 35-45 weeks a year.
- Suggested to use space up near the port where there is already parking available during the off time of the businesses.
- The Port of Pasco was mentioned having a progressive way to use the space & using it as more of a Community Multi-use Center.
- Hal will bring information back to the board as it becomes more clear.

### Guest: Craig Macku attended the meeting to discuss the Maddox Creek Covert Replacement flooding issues

- Craig attended a Public Meeting at the Conway Fire Station and after the meeting said Ken Dahlstedt made a comment about the Maddox Creek Covert Replacement.
- Craig was concerned that the property owners have not been informed
- Craig stated they need to be looking for alternatives to divert Maddox Creek into Big Ditch as it has negative impact on Ag Land
- It will cause more Stormwater down to Maddox Creek
- This was an issue 12-14 years ago too

## Committee Reports

### Economic Development- Don McMoran

Nothing at this time

### Critical Areas – Nels Lagerlund

Nothing at this time

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

### Docket Items- Habitat Restoration Item C-5

- Barbara will draft a letter to send to the Planning Commission.
- Will send to the board for review and comment by noon tomorrow.
- Murray asked does it conflict with the state projects and Hal said he doesn't believe so
- How would C-5 Docket Item affect drainage districts? Kraig stated that trying to work around drainage districts makes it hard, input is important because getting a one rule fits all won't work.

- Stormwater Review is being pushed off until 2020, more on that next meeting from Peter Gill & Michael Cerbone
- Motion passed to draft letter to Planning Commission regarding C-5 Docket Item including the following statements:
  - RI and RRc-NRL should be treated similar to Ag-NRL. They typically border AG-NRL so the two impact each other. Outright permitting things that impact surrounding properties is too much, and some level of review should happen.
  - With the other permitted uses being similar to what is in Ag-NRL and with use of the land in agriculture, it would make sense that these two zonings would also require any habitat restoration be special hearing and not outright permitted use.

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

Kraig discussed that Drain District 14 now has 10 tubes and two large gates to help with Stormwater & Drainage. It was nice to see the improvements to the failing systems.

- Murray asked if it was helping with the shellfish & not contaminating the water- it is further North out by Edison and the studies came back good in this area.

#### Old Business

Nothing at this time

#### Adjourn

Steve Omdal moved to adjourn, Murray seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:29 pm.

Next meeting is December 11, 2019 at 6 pm