

Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board

Meeting Summary – July 8, 2019

Skagit County Administration Building

Members in Attendance

Michael Hughes
Kraig Knutzen

Barbara Cleave
Tim Van Hofwegen

Rachael Ward Sparwasser
Don McMoran

Proxy Designations

None

Members Absent

Steve Omdal

John Morrison

Terry Sapp

Murray Benjamin

Justin Hayton

Nels Lagerlund

Steve Wright

Others in Attendance

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

Kim Adams, Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)

Craig Macku, Community member

Call to Order, Introductions

Michael Hughes called the meeting to order at 7:37.

Approval of Meeting Summary

Tim Van Hofwegen moved to accept the June 10, 2020 summary, Barbara Cleave seconded. Motion carried.

Guest Speaker

Hal Hart, Director, Skagit County Planning & Development Services

Hal gave his Director's Planning Update: Continuing Commissioner Goals 2020-2021

- **Continue to Support Permit Process**
 - This is key to the County's economic recovery – encouraging investment
 - Look for ways to process permits efficiently-200 + calls into the Planning Department weekly, Permits are being reviewed, and trying to shorten the review time- Retirements have greatly impacted workloads
 - Follow the codes, train on the code
 - Explain and educate
 - Build into the process data collection efforts
 - Where are our protected critical areas
 - What state are our protected critical areas
 - Update permit software

- **#2 Housing**
 - Continue to find ways to support housing – including through a streamlined permit process- 11-14% of people are out of work
 - Look at ADU Changes that would support this goal
 - Continue to coordinate housing regionally, locally through a variety of strategies – coordinating regionally with cities, working with other departments and groups to provide more housing.
- **#3 Shoreline Master Program**
 - Skagit County has made application and should receive funding to complete this process
 - We will continue to work on these issues through June 2021.
- **#4 Agricultural Tourism Effort**
 - Untrack this effort now that staff and consultants are in place – coordinate with other efforts.
 - Work with all stakeholders in the County.
 - Define what the opportunities are to expand Agricultural Tourism in Skagit County
 - Develop an Agricultural tourism effort that is consistent with Skagit County as a community.
 - Continue preserve working agricultural lands and a viable agricultural economy.
 - Continue to document and update our reporting of development in Ag NRL.
 - Considering a subcommittee for Ag Board with Commissioners to get ideas heard- Will keep Board updated on this
- **#5 Continued Support for the Docketing Process**
- **Support 2020-21 docketing process**
- **No updates regarding the Fairgrounds-will keep Board updated on any news**
- **Hal will ask the Building Official/Flood Plain Coordinator, Jack Moore for an update on the Flood Prevention Code Amendment-will revisit this in August, possibly ask Lisa Gruder to attend August meeting to provide an update**

New Business

Covid-19 Discussion

- Next week Inslee to issue guidance for Agriculture- may make changes
- Has anyone heard of anyone needing help in the Ag community- been pretty slow
- Will farmworkers be able to separate employees? Statewide mandates are not fair as different parts of the state have different aspects, can't treat them all the same
- Growers and Dairy's seem to be doing okay, more concerned about berry season & processing

District 3 Planning Commission Vacancy

- Has been filled by Joseph Shea, a Skagit County Public Works Employee
- Michael Hughes brought up concerns with two members of the Planning Commission being Skagit County Employees
- Seat was open for a year, there were other applicants but they chose Joseph
- Think about this as other openings come up
- Possibly a conflict of interest?
- May in the future want to provide some feedback or advice from the AG Board

Committee Reports

Economic Development- Don McMoran

None at this time

Critical Areas – Nels Lagerlund

None at this time

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

None at this time

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

None at this time

Old Business

WSU Update:

Don McMoran reported:

- Providing great outreach for public
- Working on building updates for bringing employees back in phase III
- WSU has asked for a 10% budget cut across the board will get worse if school does not go back in fall
- No football team will cause lack of funding (29 million)
- Grants
 - Cover crop grant-discouraging mustard seeds
 - Irrigation systems- funding through USDA CIG Grant got an extension for this year
 - Puget Sound Partnership- Outreach for Pasture Management
 - Ag Suicide Prevention grants, three suicides in Skagit County
 - Famer Assistance Program- More outreach to Washington/Oregon
- Ag Leaders Breakfast is first Friday of the month at 7 am at the Farmhouse

Adjourn

Kraig Knutzen moved to adjourn, Tim Van Hofwegen seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:07 pm

Next meeting is August 12th, 2019 at 7 pm