

# Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board

## Meeting Summary – December 9, 2020

### MS Teams Meeting

#### Members in Attendance

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

#### Proxy Designations

#### Members Absent

Steve Wright	Murray Benjamin	Justin Hayton	Terry Sapp
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#### Others in Attendance

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

Peter Gill, Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)

Lisa Grueter, Berk Consulting

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

Craig Macku, Member of the Public

#### Call to Order, Introductions

Michael Hughes called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

#### Approval of Meeting Summary

November Meeting Minutes approved with the next meeting date being changed from December 11<sup>th</sup> to December 9<sup>th</sup>.

#### New Business

##### Guest Speakers

**Lisa Grueter, Berk Consulting & Peter Gill, Skagit County Planning & Development Services**

##### Lisa and Peter presented a slideshow on Agritourism

- **What is Agritourism?**
  - Income, Education, Recreation, Rural
- **Process**
  - Discovery
    - Economics, Existing Policies, Case Studies
  - Policy Concepts
    - Objectives, Benefits
    - Drawbacks
  - Legislative
    - Code, Comp Plan
- **Purpose**
  - Evaluate the impacts to agritourism in the county
  - Develop a study, engage stakeholders, and provide a range of recommendations to policies and codes

- Identify stakeholders and facilitate conversation and public engagement
  - Create a common understanding of agritourism
  - Understand producer and neighbor needs
- Develop a situation assessment and policy concepts that addresses:
  - The various forms of agritourism
  - How agritourism affects agricultural viability and influences the agricultural land base
  - Community quality of life (e.g. Circulation, noise, etc.)
- Purpose amendments to the county Comprehensive Plan, land use map and development code to address agritourism
- **Schedule**
  - Task 1: Launch Project
    - Kickoff & Stakeholder Outreach Plan Oct-Nov
  - Task 2: Discover and engage
    - Stakeholder Engagement Dec-Jan
    - Situation Assessment Oct-Jan
    - Standing Appointed/Elected Meetings Nov-Feb
  - Task 3: Policy Concepts
    - Policy issues, Options, Refinement, Stakeholder Engagement, & Public Workshop Feb-June
  - Task 4: Preferred Concept & Review
    - Draft Proposal & Planning Commission Workshop June-Sept
- Situation Assessment: Outline
  - Concepts/Key Questions
    - How do ag & ag-tourism impact the local economy
    - What agritourism is currently allowed/prohibited in AG-NRL?
    - What agritourism activities are currently happening in Skagit County?
- Findings/HIGHLIGHTS Trends & Current Situation (In Progress to share in early 2021)
  - Land in production
  - Crops (type, value, acreage)
  - Number & size of farm operations
  - Taxable Retail Sales
  - Employment
  - Tourism stats and trends
- Case Study Options:
  - Criteria: (1)similar to Skagit in proximity to major population centers (2) similar to Skagit in agricultural productivity and diversity (3) represents a range of approaches
  - Selected: Whatcom, Snohomish, Oregon/Willamette Valley (perhaps Marion, Yamill Counties)
- Others
  - Limited Review: Definitions of agritourism/value-added agriculture
  - Lessons from designation agriculture & potential benefits and conflicts
- Outreach & Engagement: Objectives
  - 1. Create an open and inclusive outreach process for community members and stakeholders.
  - 2. Reach out to different county agricultural communities and producers.
  - 3. Educate the communities and interested agencies about the Agritourism Support project purpose and progress as early as possible and throughout the project.
  - 4. Provide easy and convenient access to project information that is useful, timely, and pertinent.
  - 5. Communicate clearly about constraints, values, and trade-offs associated with the Agritourism Support project.
  - 6. Engage stakeholders to gather current information and ideas that inform Agritourism evaluations and policy options.

- 7. Document and learn from outreach efforts.
- 8. Ensure elected officials, the planning commission, staff, and consultants understand community and stakeholder concerns and link the input to Agritourism Support products; and
- 9. Comply with the State Growth Management Act (GMA) requirements for continuous public participation (RCW 36.70A.035 & 140)
- Stakeholders-Preliminary
  - Producers, Rural Residents, Agricultural trade, tourism, Chambers of Commerce, & economic development organizations (e.g. EDASC), interested property owners, community organizations, agricultural agencies: WSU Extension, Conservation District, WSDA, Local governments, Port of Skagit, and service providers, appointed and elected officials
- Outreach Events:
  - Fall 2020: Website, Planning Commission, Interviews, Develop Survey
  - Winter 2021: Survey, Stakeholder Meetings, Standing Bodies
  - Spring & Summer 2021: Stakeholder events, Story Map, Standing Bodies
- Questions & Comments: Peter Gill [pgill@co.skagit.wa.us](mailto:pgill@co.skagit.wa.us) or Lisa Grueter [Lisa@berkconsulting.com](mailto:Lisa@berkconsulting.com)
- Goal is to come back January/February with a draft to get feedback and in Spring share ideas

### **Hal Hart, Skagit County Planning & Development Services**

Hal presented a short presentation on Planning & Development Updates

- Long Range Planning Efforts
  - Agricultural Tourism Efforts Continue with Peter as the Project Manager
  - (2) Shoreline Master Program Kick Started Back to Life after being on hold since 2016
    - (a) We briefed the Planning Commission last night
- Permit Issues – Growth of the Agricultural Industry
  - This past week Sakata Seed submitted an application to grow their footprint in Skagit County at their facilities near the airport
  - The next phase of their project growth would involve a 26,000 square foot greenhouse facility.
  - Single family housing appears to be down by 50% in the year of COVID but we have a long Que at the moment
  - Commercial permits were running about even with 2019 (66 compared with 70) but the value was higher this year and the permits included more structures
  - Continue Coordination with District Consortium looking at drainage issues/stormwater issues around airport. Meeting scheduled for tomorrow

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Economic Development- Don McMoran**

Island Grown, Amazon (drainage issues), Westland Distillery

ITFC is accepting bid, Island Grown permitting issues early next year, building in summer time

#### **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

**Question:** When will new County Commissioner take office- January 7-9<sup>th</sup>

- Possibly ask Commissioner Browning to join AAB Meeting in February or March for an introduction

### **Conway Pull Yard:**

- 18 acres has interested party, needs rails spare work, 12 acres are wetland, maybe railroad can add them back

### **WSU Update:**

- Workshops:
  - January 8<sup>th</sup> Western Seed
  - January 29<sup>th</sup> Ag Summit
  - February 18<sup>th</sup> Potato Workshop
  - March 13<sup>th</sup> Berry Workshop
- There will be a Spanish Pre-Pesticide License Course in Late April- need 35 participants or it will be cancelled

## Adjourn

John Morrison moved to adjourn, Steve Omdal seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:32 pm

Next meeting is January 13, 2021 at 6 pm