

Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board

Meeting Summary – January 13, 2021

MS Teams Meeting

Members in Attendance

Michael Hughes	Nels Lagerlund	Barbara Cleave	Justin Hayton
Kraig Knutzen	Steve Omdal	Terry Sapp	Rachael Ward Sparwasser
Tim Van Hofwegen			

Proxy Designations

Members Absent

John Morrison	Murray Benjamin	Steve Wright
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Others in Attendance

Peter Browning, Skagit County Commissioner
Hal Hart, Director, Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)
Don McMoran, WSU Extension
Kim Adams, Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)
Craig Macku, Community Member

Call to Order, Introductions

Michael Hughes called the meeting to order at 6:22 pm

Approval of Meeting Summary

Nels Lagerlund moved to accept the December Meeting Minutes summary. Motion carried.

Guest Speaker

Peter Browning, Skagit County Commissioner

- Commissioner Browning joined the December meeting to introduce himself as the new Skagit County Commissioner
- Introductions were made from the Board as well
- Questions arose about the Board of Health Proposal, potential fines for Health Official violations
 - January 20th hearing date, Commissioner Browning stated the Commissioners were meeting tomorrow to see if it will be moving forward. Don't think it will go any further, need to focus more on education, not complaints and punishment
 - Cases are trending downward & Skagit is on a better path, hopefully within a few weeks we can start opening more businesses
 - Skagit not getting fair share of vaccines

Hal Hart, Director, Skagit County Planning & Development Services

Hal Hart, Planning & Development Updates

- Shoreline Master Program (SMP) moving forward. Now through June
- SMP has been dormant for some time, Betsy Stevenson, PDS is still the project manager

- Big Policy piece of SMP going to the Commissioners this Summer
 - Kraig Knutzen had questions, Kim to send out pertinent information to Board
 - There are some people that were on the original board that would like to have all the information
 - Ask Betsy Stevenson to join meeting in February to give update- focus February meeting on the SMP Updates and March/April for Ag Tourism
 - Need to protect the future of Agriculture
- Ag Tourism, Peter Gill, PDS project manager along with Berk Consultants
 - Peter to possibly come in March to Ag Meeting to provide an update on progress
- Mainstream Mitigation
 - Will Hone, Skagit County Prosecuting Attorney & Reah Burns, Department of Ecology
 - Seattle City Light & DOE using for mitigation
 - MOU opens door for staff to work together
 - Keep it simple, a lot of people moving to Skagit
 - Next month, process going to Commissioners for review
- New Report in Real Estate to rent is hard to find
 - King/Snohomish County is seeing a 15-20% increase
 - Housing Demand is high
 - Gwen Hoops, PDS to get Annual Housing Report that will show what is being used that is in the AG NRL and other use
- Hexcel has come in for permit for large expansion
 - More expected this year
- Sub-Divisions near Peterson Hill & Whistle Lake are in the works
 - Don McMoran mentioned that Amazon is going to Arlington as well
 - Bellevue getting five Amazon facilities that are 12 stories high.
 - Amazon looking for new cities to have fulfillment centers
 - Everett getting a big fulfillment facility
 - Hoping to have more facilities up north, Burlington, Bellingham- Use Paine Field to help get things from Tacoma to Everett faster
 - Amazon to invest in electric fleets and has purchased 14 planes from Delta to distribute to the north for Air-Ground-Homes services

New Business

Whatcom Water Adjudication

- Needs to be funded by State Legislature
 - All water users to finalize water rights
 - Nooksack River a lot of farms in that area

Committee Reports

Economic Development- Don McMoran

- Amazon Fulfillment Center, Beef Processing Facility, Westland Distillery- All at the Port
- Ag Overtime Law, dairy farmers to pay OT for over 40 hours
 - May need to pay up to 3 years of past OT (lawsuits being filed) Article published today that OT stepped out of Dairy Case
 - Robotic milkers may be used to not have to pay overtime
- Dairies are moving out of State, one has already moved to Oregon
 - Tim to keep Board updated

Critical Areas – Nels Lagerlund

- Padilla Bay TMDL
 - EPA approved plan with no adjustments after the comments that were submitted and they will be moving forward

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
Same as Nels with Critical Areas, going to be rough moving forward

Old Business

WSU Update, Don McMoran

- Grant work:
 - Water Irrigation Systems Efficiency
 - Farm Stress & Suicide Prevention
 - Cover Crops
 - Agribility
- Last week had the Seed Workshop virtually went smoothly
 - Not as good as in person but next best thing
- Ag Summit coming up- Agenda out on that January 29th via Zoom
 - Michael to present at the Summit
- Western Washington Potato Workshop
- Berry Workshop in March
- Spanish Pesticide Workshop
- Dr. Chox- new hire as NW Washington Extension

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 7:36 pm

Next meeting is February 10, 2021 at 6 pm