

Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board

Meeting Summary – March 10, 2021

VIA MS TEAMS

Members in Attendance

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

Proxy Designations

Kraig Knutzen for John Morrison

Members Absent

Rachael Ward-Sparwasser
John Morrison
Steve Wright

Others in Attendance

Peter Browning, Skagit County Commissioner
Hal Hart, Director, Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)
Peter Gill, Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)
Kim Adams, Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)
Don McMoran, WSU Extension
Karen DuBose, Skagit County Public Works
Michael See, Skagit County Public Works
Daniel Hasenoehrl, Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)
Craig Macku, Community Member

Call to Order, Introductions

Michael Hughes called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm.

Approval of Meeting Summary

Kraig Knutzen moved to accept the February 10, 2021 Meeting Minutes, Barbara Cleave seconded. Motion carried.

Guest Speaker

Karen DuBose – Skagit County Public Works

Karen DuBose is the Pollution Identification & Correction Coordinator from the Skagit County Public Works Department. She came to speak to the Agricultural Advisory Board regarding the interest in the Microbial Source Tracking in the Samish & Padilla Watersheds (aka DNA Analysis).

- Goals:
 - Identify human, cow, ruminant, dog, or “other” sources
 - Focus on areas with high fecal coliform but no obvious problems
 - Target storms
- Costs
 - EPA covers the cost of sample analysis (roughly \$81,000 for a private lab)

- Skagit County provides sampling labor & overnight shipping
- Making sure the data is good
 - Analyze “reference samples” – poop from the animals we’re looking for
 - Goat
 - Dog
 - Dairy cow
 - Beef cow
 - Edison Treatment Plant
- Swede Creek Results
 - Overall:
 - Cattle & human upstream
 - Human downstream
 - Dog throughout
 - Focused Area:
 - Previously cleared septic system
 - Remnants
 - Dog
- Thomas Creek Results
 - Overall:
 - Cattle at one site
 - Ruminants lower in the watershed
 - Human throughout, but more consistent downstream
 - Dog throughout
 - Mystery summer sources
- Joe Leary Slough Results
 - Overall:
 - Cattle markers at east & north sites
 - Cow but no ruminant markers suggest calves at Gear 9.5
 - Human markers at all sites, especially eastern sites
 - Dog markers at west and north sites; intermittent at eastern sites
- Samish River Results
 - Overall:
 - Dog & Ruminant is most consistent
 - Cow & human, November through March
- How the data is being used:
 - Dog poop campaign
 - Working with farmers in select areas
 - Septic system investigations in select areas
 - Deploying sensors to look for illicit discharges
- Questions, contact Karen DuBose- kdubose@co.skagit.wa.us 360.416.1460

Peter Gill- Skagit County Planning & Development Services

Peter gave an update on Agritourism. They gave a presentation to the Board of County Commissioners, attended the Ag Summit at WSU, they are currently working on the Situation Report and asking for help getting the word out to everyone that wants to be a part and give input.

The Skagit County Agritourism Situation Assessment is available at: <http://www.skagitcounty.net/SkagitAGT>

Skagit County Agritourism allowed:

- Permanent Uses
 - Permitted: Farm-based businesses and accessory agricultural uses, e.g. farm tours, U-pick, value add sales
 - Special Use: Bed and Breakfasts, accessory
 - Conditional Use Permit: Outdoor outfitters enterprises (e.g. hunting, fishing, bird watching) incidental to agriculture, resulting in no conversion of agricultural land
- Temporary Uses
 - Admin. Special Use: Temporary events in the Ag-NRL zone provided the events are related to agricultural production, no agricultural land is converted, and no permanent structures are constructed. Maximum 24 per year
- Coming up- Discussion Groups
 - Reach out to producers, commodity groups, agricultural interest groups
 - Share situation assessment and early findings
 - Hear farm and agritourism stories, concerns, ideas

Hal Hart, Director, Planning & Development Services

Hal gave a quick Planning Update:

- Updates- Implementing the plan one project at a time
 - Our Agriculture land/economy makes us unique in Western Washington
 - Washington this week was just declared the best state of all 50 to live in
 - **Changing Conditions**– County Permitting – Picking Up
 - In December we had some 50 new permits above a normally quiet month
 - January was also very strong as builders were racing against the new energy code changes that improve energy efficiency but also add cost to projects
 - We have been contacted by industrial developer who are now wanting to restart their projects stalled out by COVID 19. Look for more project starts near the airport this year
 - Staff and process changes are being worked on to improve permit timeframes
- Current Projects:
 - Commercial Air Hanger
 - Legends Brand
 - Vikama & Sakata Seed Companies
- Other Commercial Projects
 - Hexcel Corporation (Phase one delayed due to COVID issues)
 - PAC Car Corporation (Phase one already permitted but delayed due to other issues)
 - Various Processing Facilities
 - Westland Barrel Rooms (in progress)
 - Maverick Marine La Conner (just finishing fire inspections this week) working on a line of passenger ferries
- Looking South (Arlington)
 - Snohomish County rapid growth expected to continue
 - Millions of square feet of tilt up concrete business park construction- found three under construction this morning
 - Hundreds of New residential housing/townhouse/apartments/62 plus communities
 - Infrastructure needs have not kept up
 - Now infilling at higher densities

New Business

Don McMoran, WSU Update:

- Budget will need to cut additional 10% in the future, they are managing on the backs of the retirees
- Grants: Cover Crops, Water Systems, Agrability, Farm Stress, & Suicide Prevention
- Funding WSU trying to expand, outreach on Farm Stress/Suicide Prevention
- Berry Workshop has two open spots for credits
- Kate Smith- Spanish License Course to get licensed

Committee Reports

Economic Development- Don McMoran

- Bakery at the Port
- Chuckanut Brewery to expand with wholesale
- New restaurant to the old Flyers Restaurant- grab and go breakfast & lunch with dine in dinner
- Amazon Article stated 737 can't land on the Skagit Runway
- Island Grown Food Operative breaking ground
- Ag Overtime 5172 Passed through prohibits three years back lawsuits, phased in rules for all of Ag January 2022.

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

None

Adjourn

Steve Omdal moved to adjourn, Kraig Knutzen seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8: pm

Next meeting is April 14, 2021 at 6 pm