

# Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board Meeting Summary – November 10, 2021 MS Teams

## Members in Attendance

Michael Hughes      Terry Sapp      Tim Van Hofwegen      Michael Trafton  
Kraig Knutzen      Murray Benjamin      Steve Omdal

## Proxy Designations

Michael Hughes for Nels Lagerlund

## Members Absent

Nels Lagerlund      Justin Hayton      Steve Wright      Rachael Ward Sparwasser  
John Morrison

## Others in Attendance

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

## Call to Order, Introductions

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

## Public Comments

None at this time.

## Approval of Meeting Summary

Kraig Knutzen moved to accept the October 13, 2021 Meeting Minutes; Steve Omdal seconded. Motion carried.

## Guest Speaker

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

Hal gave a presentation on Skagit County Growth

- Stanwood has continued growth
- LGI Subdivision adding many new housing units, and apartment complexes are coming online.
- Arlington growth of housing growth of Industrial jobs and commercial space
- Everett/Lake Stevens Retail/Residential growth, Everett – waterfront investment/higher education, Investment in downtown-low to moderate income housing including the YMCA Project.
- Job Creation and Housing Growth Area
- Hot spots include DT Bellevue, Overlake Bellevue, Bellevue’s Spring District Redmond, Microsoft Campus, Kirkland-Totem Lake – Bothell – UW University District.

- Big Job Creation Areas- Amazon, Microsoft, Google, Facebook, Space X, 40 subsidiary aerospace firms, & Health Sciences
- Growth in Sedro Woolley
  - The city started the decade between 2010 & 2020 at 10,540. By 2020 the population had grown to 12,182. That is growth that exceeds 13%.
  - In 2019 the City adopted some urban village guidelines. The height is not to exceed 60 feet.
- Other Projects
  - Several more hangers at the port
  - Next Month FCC – Presentation - Peter
  - Working on Storm Water – Andy Wargo/Mike See Public Works
  - Agricultural Tourism Next Phases - Peter
  - Permitting Finally Appears to be Under Control – Numbers in January
  - More Projects Ahead

## New Business

Land Use Sub-Committee new appointed members-

- Terry Sapp, Chair, Murray Benjamin, Kraig Knutzen, Steve Omdal, Michael Trafton, Michael Hughes, & Don McMoran

The Land-Use Committee would like to have a work session with Lisa Grueter, Berk Consulting, & Peter Gill, PDS regarding the Agritourism Project.

- Write out questions prior to the work session so Lisa/Peter can prepare
- Commissioner Browning would like to be a part of the meeting
- Ag land is not the only thing with the Tourism for the County-promoting all tourism
  - Hiking the Cascade Loop
  - Whale watching
  - Agritourism
- January 1<sup>st</sup> the full time Tourism Position for the County, this has been funded by hotel tax.
- Some questions for Berk or Peter:
  - Assessor tourism activates need to align with farming practices, this should be a very important part. Build value to existing farm does not use farm to promote non-farm activities.
  - Enforcement needs to be more consistent. How will things be enforced the way they are supposed to be? Currently it is non-existing
    - Life safety issues are currently taking precedence over other enforcement needs
  - Needs to be consistent
- After the Land-Use subcommittee meeting the committee will bring all the information back to the Board in the December Meeting, always informs and includes the entire Agricultural Advisory Board in anything that needs to be voted on.
- Kraig Knutzen Motioned to have the land use committee meet with Skagit County & Berk Consulting to peruse a more involved discussion on Agritourism.
- Kraig Knutzen asked the County not to rush changes Agritourism Project. Need to be sure not to negatively impact the existing agriculture that is in Skagit Valley.
- Murray Benjamin Motioned for an amendment to include: Land Use Committee will notify all Agricultural Advisory Board Members of meeting times & location.
- Amendment to Motion by Terry Sapp for AAB Members present for Land Use Committee shall not exceed six members.
- Motion Carries

## Committee Reports

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

Westland Distillery, Amazon, Island Grown at the port starting small and expanding footprint over time, will be a same day processing center. Trans Loading in Conway. They will not do a Hay Press due to cost.

### **Critical Areas – Nels Lagerlund**

Nothing at this time.

### **Land Use –Terry Sapp (Chair), Kraig Knutzen, Murray Benjamin, Michael Trafton, Steve Omdal**

New Land-Use sub-committee members chosen. (See New Business)

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

## Old Business

Docket Dates- Can it spill into next year? Check with Peter Gill on dates for the Docket, Planning Commission Meeting Dates, and the Comment Period.

Redistricting- should the Board provide any input? No wholesale changes, dividing Ag land evenly between commissioners.

Damn Relicensing update, letters submitted, where are they going? Schedule Will Honea to join December Meeting for an update.

### WSU Update- Don McMoran

- Five requests for wanting more funding have been submitted to the County
- Hiring new facility at WSU
- Same grants as usual
  - Water and Irrigation Sustainability Grant
  - Agribility
  - Farm Stress and Suicide Prevention
  - 2022 Potato Research Study Starting-needing survey
- Doing a commercial on Farm Stress/Suicide
- Workshops
  - Seed Western Washington-January
  - Skagit Ag Summit- February
  - Potato- February
  - Berry-March
- WSU Recreation will host Tractor Safety at the end of March/Early April
  - Will have mask mandate and serve food outside

### Nominations for Agricultural Board Chair & Vice Chair

- Michael Hughes, Chair

- Kraig Knutzen, Vice Chair
- Nominations were closed and will reopen for voting in December

### Adjourn

Murray Benjamin moved to adjourn; Steve Omdal seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:03 pm.

Next meeting is December 8, 2021 at 6 pm