

Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board

Meeting Summary – March 9, 2022

MS Teams

Members in Attendance

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

Proxy Designations

Members Absent

Rachael Ward Sparwasser

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)
Peter Gill, Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)
Don McMoran, WSU Extension
Lisa Grueter, Berk Consulting
Craig Macku, Community Member
Randy Good, Community Member

Call to Order, Introductions

Michael Hughes called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

Approval of Meeting Summary

February Meeting Minutes Amendments- Take Nels Lagerlund off the Absent list since he had a proxy, Second Paragraph, page 3 correct "Sapp" spelling, add "in Skagit County" after 11,000 acres. Murray Benjamin moved to accept the February Meeting Minutes with the corrections, Tim Van Hofwegen seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comment

- Randy Good spoke about the Elk Herd population getting into the crops on the farms and devastating the farms. Need a strong voice to put some pressure on the Governor to help with this issue.

Guest Speaker

Peter Gill, Planning & Development Services & Lisa Grueter, Berk Consulting

Agritourism Update:

- Current Agritourism
 - Activities in Skagit County: Events, roadside stands, u-pick, accommodations, wine tasting
 - Around 70+ operations
 - Requests for: food service, weddings, temporary events
- Currently we are in the Policy Concepts portion of the process

- Goals, uses, options, & engagement
 - Clearly define Agritourism uses
 - Clear and consistent standards (ease of implementation and enforcement)
 - Identify relationship to on-site agriculture
 - Consistency with our Comprehensive Plan Policies and GMA
- Identify AGt Important to the Community
 - Farm Stands, U-Pick, Farm stays, Tasting Rooms, Restaurants, Weddings, Seasonal Events (Festivals, Farm to Table, Farm Tours)
- Based on intensity, consider appropriate location, scale, frequency, conditions
 - Understand Scale, Intensity, & Relationship to Agriculture and appropriate standards
 - Based on business models and available studies/data, or code parameters
 - Consider relationship to AG, temporary or permanent nature, footprint, location, services, etc.
- Permit & Infrastructure Requirements
 - Land Use, Critical Areas, Building & Fire Codes, Health Department, Public Works- Access/Parking, Stormwater, Potable Water, & Septic
- Code Enforcement
 - Clear definitions and rules
 - Programmatic Permit with defined period/owner for temporary or conditional uses
 - Complaint driven + staff resources
 - Self-Certification
 - For intensive uses or uses that could inadvertently evolve
 - Adhere to code criteria and permit conditions
 - Regular renewal
- **Farm Stands**
 - Definition
 - Seasonal roadside stand
 - Vague “seasonal”
 - Majority: Products or value?
 - Scale
 - 300-5,000 sq ft
 - Relatively lower level of visitors (-500)
 - Open half a year on average (180 days)
 - Infrastructure/Permits
 - Building/Fire: Permits for large tents, structures
 - Land Use: Unclear if no parking, perm structure
 - Relationship to Ag- Direct
- U-Pick & Farm Tours
 - Definition
 - Referenced as agricultural accessory use
 - No specific definition
 - Scale
 - 400-2000 annual visitors depending on acres
 - Infrastructure/Permits
 - Land Use: Required, parking area – consider best practices for parking size/type/location
 - Building/Fire: None if no structures

- Relationship to Ag
 - Direct
- Farm Stays
 - Definition
 - Bed & Breakfast
 - No specific definition for temporary farm stay, like Harvest Host
 - Scale
 - Permanent B&B – 1 per farm, up to 5 bedrooms. Must be in existing home.
 - About 520 visitors approximately (5 x 2 x 52)
 - Infrastructure/Permits
 - Land Use: Required special use permit; parking required. Directly address temporary; clarify RV Standards
 - Building/Fire: Permit for construction
 - Relationship to AG- Indirect
- Tasting Rooms, Restaurants
 - Definition
 - Skagit County does not define restaurants or wineries, breweries, or tasting rooms
 - Scale
 - Up to 3,500 square feet
 - Nearly 925 visitors per month for tasting rooms or 11,300 per year
 - Infrastructure/Permits
 - Land Use: Permit required for use, parking, stormwater
 - Building/Fire: Permit for construction
 - Health Department: Food
 - Relationship to AG
 - Potentially direct (e.g., serving food made from onsite products), potential for higher intensity
- Seasonal Events- Festivals, Farm to Table
 - Definition-Not currently defined
 - Scale
 - A Farm to Table event can average 130-200 people per event.
 - Festival of farms ~20,000 attendees and the Tulip Festival ~300,000
 - Infrastructure/Permits Land Use: Permit (temporary), parking could affect soils, allow offsite
 - Building/Fire: Permit for construction or membrane
 - Health Department: Food
 - Relationship to Ag
 - Direct/Indirect, may be large though temporary
- Policy Options
 - No Action Option- Current Code
 - Option A- Accessory Agritourism
 - Option B- Agritourism Overlay
 - Option C- Rezone: Small Scale Recreation & Tourism
- Summary Allowances

AG-NRL, RRc-NRL, RRv

	Current	Option A - Accessory	Option B – Overlay	Option C – Rezone to SRT
Farm stands	Allowed	Continue with improved Definition/Process	Like Option A	Retail allowed
U-Pick	Allowed	Same as above	Like Option A	Same as above
Farm stays	Allowed B&B	B&B + Temp	Like Option A	Allows B&B
Tasting Rooms, Restaurants	Not Allowed	Restaurant: Accessory, no seating, with farm stands Tasting: HEX	Restaurant: Accessory, to farm, small seating with produce of 10 ac Tasting: Size 3,500-5000 SF with num of acres grown onsite. AD	Allowed
Weddings	Not Allowed	Temporary only, in existing barn	In overlay, year-round with minimum size. HEX	Services are allowed
Seasonal Events – Festivals, Farm to Table, Farm Tours	Allowed	Continue temporary permit, improve process	Like Option A	Allowed

- Policy Concepts Report- Policy Goals, Agritourism Uses, Implementation Options
- Next Steps: Public Outreach (March-April), Preferred Alternative (May-June), Planning Commission

Hal Hart, Director, Planning & Development Services

Planning Update:

- Legislative Update – Last Week of the Session
 - Last Day of the Legislature March 10
- Dead Bills:
 - HB117 Salmon Recovery
 - HB 1660 ADUs
 - HB 17670 Energy Code
 - SMP Update Bill
- Legislative Update – Last Week of the Session
 - Large Number of Bills Still Alive as of Monday this week:
 - E2SHB 1099 – Climate change- vastly downsized last week this bill added language to the Growth Management Act incorporating “resiliency as a new goal” that we will have to address moving forward.
 - “Environmental Resiliency” and address “public participation from overburdened communities” - address wildfire, drought, flooding, air quality, and other natural hazards...
 - The land use element must provide special consideration to ow we are achieving environmental justice through our goals and policies.
 - Land Use element must address reduction and hazard mitigation efforts/risks to people and property in the wildland urban interface areas. How are we going to protect existing residential development or planned future development?
- Legislative Update – As of Monday in this Session
 - HB 1241 GMA Comprehensive Plan Updates/Progress Reports/dates
 - HB1717 GMA Tribal Participation
 - HB 2001 Tiny Homes
 - Budget monies for counties is still in place as of Monday
 - SB5818 Housing and the GMA
 - SB 5593 LAMIRD Flexibility B

- Skagit Population Growth Relative to other I-5 Counties

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Name	2022 Population ▼	Growth Since 2010	Land Area (mi ²)	Density (mi ²)
King County	2,326,036	20.00%	2,115.54	1,099.50
Pierce County	938,652	18.01%	1,669.48	562.24
Snohomish County	849,155	18.68%	2,087.25	406.83
Spokane County	550,383	16.59%	1,763.79	312.05
Clark County	508,683	19.21%	629.03	808.68
Thurston County	303,976	20.15%	722.00	421.02
Kitsap County	278,064	10.48%	394.94	704.06
Yakima County	251,806	3.09%	4,295.56	58.62
Whatcom County	241,397	19.77%	2,106.76	114.58
Benton County	213,702	21.10%	1,700.42	125.68
Skagit County	133,315	14.00%	1,731.22	77.01

- Near Wiley Slough Residential Construction, some new Ag buildings here and recreational bicyclists
- Rural Housing in the Bay View Area
- Amazon- trying to be up and running in April. Other big Amazon projects have been announced in the south sound this past week
- Lots of growth in the Sedro-Woolley Urban Growth Area Infill
- Sedro-Woolley Density- Second Building in SEPA Review now

New Business

Elk Population Discussion:

- Michael and Kraig sent a draft letter to the board to review asking the Commissioners to help in any way they can regarding the Elk population issues. The elk are getting into the crops on the farms and devastating the crops and the farms. The Elk are also bringing in Hoof Rot that is being transferred to the livestock.
- This is a State Level Issue, but with the GMA the County needs to assist with Agriculture issues. Need to have a strong voice to bring attention to this important matter.
- Kraig Knutzen motioned to submit the letter to the BoCC regarding the Elk issues
- Murray Benjamin asked Michael to read the letter to the board because not everyone had the opportunity to review. Michael read the letter, Terry Sapp added to amend the letter to include Hoof Rot and then send the letter to the Commissioners.
- Tim Van Hofwegen seconded; motion passed to send amended letter

Don McMoran- WSU Update

- Funding level is good at this time
- Usual Grants
- Workshops continuing- Berry Workshop is Friday 9-3, earn four pesticide credits
- March 21st, (no time set yet) John Driver will be coming to do a workshop- Amazing Economist for Ag.
- Tractor Safety Workshop 4/11-5/14: good for teenage youth, adults, and Spanish speaking
- No April Skagit Ag Breakfast- Need more attendees

Committee Reports

Economic Development- Don McMoran

Nothing at this time.

Critical Areas – Nels Lagerlund

Nothing at this time

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

Agritourism review: the committee will review the presentation from Peter as well as review the Agritourism Report.

Sedro Woolley & Upriver, East of Sedro Woolley is being taken, lot certified and the 40 acre rule is not being followed. Hal Hart commented on the ADU letter sent from the AAB, the Planning Commission really appreciated the letter. Hal Hart offered to meet with Terry along with Brandon Black to discuss land issues.

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

Nothing at this time.

[Old Business](#)

Next Meeting: Land Use Update (Peter Gill will attend to answer any questions)

CJ Jones, Voluntary Stewardship Program Coordinator will attend to introduce himself and give a short presentation with time allowed for questions.

[Adjourn](#)

Murray Benjamin moved to adjourn; Tim Van Hofwegen seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:14 pm.

Next meeting is April 13, 2022 at 6 pm.