

Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board

Meeting Summary – May 11, 2022

Commissioners Hearing Room/MS Teams

Members in Attendance

Michael Hughes Terry Sapp Michael Trafton
Kraig Knutzen

Proxy Designations

Terry Sapp for Murray Benjamin Michael Hughes for Tim VanHofwegen & Steve Omdal

Members Absent

John Morrison Justin Hayton Rachael Ward Sparwasser
Steve Wright Nels Lagerlund

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 7:03 pm.

Approval of Meeting Summary

Kraig Knutzen motioned to approve the April Meeting Minutes, Terry Sapp wanted to amend the minutes to add the letter in full to the minutes prepared by the Land Use Committee. Kraig Knutzen motioned to approve with amendment and Terry Sapp seconded.

Guest Speaker

Hal Hart, Director, Skagit County Planning & Development Services

Hal gave a Planning Update:

- Peter Gill has left the Long Range Management Position at Skagit County, Jenn Rogers, Assistant Planner filling in until we hire a new Manager for that team
- Growth this Year – Housing Areas – infilling at Big Lake and at Nookachamps Continues at least 10 homes currently under construction
- Mount Vernon has three multifamily projects in the works
- **Commercial Growth and Employment Will Continue in 2022 -2023**
 - Lindell Yachts Proposing to Develop a new manufacturing facility of 31,000 plus square feet adjacent to Sakata Seed. This news hit the Seattle newspapers on April 21 2022 and is posted via SEPA at the Department of Ecology now.
- **BOCC will determine what is on the 2022 Planning Docket- Private and Public Nominated Docket Items**
- Requests From the Public include:
 - **Bertelsen Farms rezone** from Rural Reserve to Small Scale Recreation and Tourism – about 69 acres
 - **Fully Contained Communities** – Strongly recommending deferral

- **Critical Areas Review** – amendment would allow residential structures to be replaced, if the footprint does not change, without a critical areas review
 - Public Comment Period is open through May 26th, 2022 but may be extended to June
- **Sea Water Intrusion Monitoring Amendment** – Change health code to require any new wells on Guemes Island to be checked for chlorides prior to approval.
- **Farm Worker Housing Agricultural Accessory Use Amendment** – Proposed by Skagit Valley Farms, Tony Wisdom to allow for some onsite farmworker housing
 - We are evaluating these against our docketing criteria/law/filing requirements/ability to review.
- **Wind Turbine** as an allowed use for net metering accessory to any residential structure – we used to have these as a major utility but we took it out in 2008 and we never put smaller scale net metering back in.
 - Code Fix in CAO referencing a code section that doesn't exist.
 - Guemes Island Side setback calculations.
- **Agritourism Update**
 - Survey Completed- Berk Consulting is working on the report
 - Kim to send out report when it is ready
 - We met with the Skagit Tourism Promotion Advisory Board (Through EDASC).
 - Updated our Planning Commission on the survey results.
 - Over the next month a preferred alternative from the feedback we have seen so far will be developed.
 - Land Use Committee will prepare a response to Planning Commission
 - Send previous two letters to the Planning Commission & BOCC, Michael Hughes will put together a cover letter to send with the letters.

Andy Wargo, Skagit County Planning Department

Andy gave an update of the Stormwater Code Amendments

- Why the amendments are proposed
 - To comply with our NPDES Municipal Stormwater permit.
 - To simplify the stormwater construction regulations for the customer.
 - To incorporate stormwater considerations early in the development process.
- Amendments are due by June 30, 2022 to comply with NPDES Permit Condition S5.C.6.a
- S5.C.6 Controlling Runoff from New Development, Redevelopment, and Construction Sites:
 - Ability to enforce on the updated requirements established in the current version of the Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington and the Western Washington Phase II Municipal Permit.
 - Dates that establish adherence to the mandated code updates, based on the date an application gets submitted.
 - Inspection and enforcement authority for maintenance standards for private stormwater facilities.
- Stormwater Code Updates SCC 14.32
 - Most changes are reorganizing and rewriting for clarity and consistency with updated definitions, NPDES Permit Language, and the Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington (Manual).
 - Substantive changes primarily address single family residential projects outside the NPDES permit area.
- Proposed Updates for Non-NPDES Residential Projects
 - Changes are intended to provide consistency for all parcel sizes:
 - Consistent applications of standards to mitigate negative effects of stormwater runoff to downstream properties and receiving waters.
 - All sites outside the NPDES permit area will have the have the same thresholds.
 - Increased flexibility is provided for selecting methods of managing stormwater onsite – primarily Minimum Requirement #5.

- Stormwater Minimum Requirements- Established in the Stormwater Water Management Manual for Western Washington
 - Small Projects – Engineering Generally Not Required
 - Stormwater Site Plan
 - Construction SWPPP
 - Source Control of Pollution (Developed State)
 - Preservation of Natural Drainage Systems and Outfalls
 - Onsite Stormwater Management
 - Large Project – Engineered Drainage Plan Required
 - Runoff Treatment
 - Flow Control
 - Wetlands Protection
 - Operations and Maintenance
- Current thresholds for Non-NPDES Residential Projects
 - **Less than one acre**
 - Minimum Requirements (MRs) 1-9 required at 4,000 SF impervious surfaces or 14,000 SF land disturbance.
 - **One acre or greater**
 - MRs 1,2,4,8,9 required at 7,000 Sf impervious surfaces or 14,000 SF land disturbance.
 - MRs 1-9 required
 - 20,000 square feet impervious surfaces
 - Conversion of 1.5 acres native vegetation to lawn
 - Conversion of 5 acres native vegetation to pasture
 - Proposed Updated Thresholds for Non-NPDES Residential Projects
 - **MRs 1-5 (non-engineered)**
 - 4,000 SF impervious surfaces (NPDES Area is 2000 square feet)
 - Or 14,000 SF land disturbance (same threshold as current code)
 - **MRs 1-9 required (engineered drainage report)**
 - 10,000 SF of Impervious surfaces (NPDES Area is 5000)
 - 50% or greater impervious coverage of entire lot
 - Conversion of 1.5 acres native vegetation to lawn (not a change)
 - Conversion of 5 acres native vegetation to pasture (not a change)
 - Fill or excavation of 500 cubic yards or more (same threshold as current code)
 - SCC 14.32 Stormwater – Other Changes
 - 14.32.050 Incremental changes in surfacing in the last five years are addressed in the permitting process unless BMPs were installed through another permit.
 - 14.32.150(2) A 20-year sunset date for regional facilities. Stormwater runoff from new development routed to a regional facility that is 20 years old or older must include updated analysis demonstrating the capacity of that facility to meet current standards. The purpose is to prevent negative downstream stormwater effects that could result from stormwater facilities that are not maintained or that do not meet current design standards.
 - Land Disturbance Code SCC 14.22
 - Permit pathway for clearing and grading activities not associated with a building permit.
 - The code will harmonize the requirements for stormwater management, forest practices, septic system installation, critical areas, cultural resource management, and SEPA when land disturbing activities are conducted.
 - Replaces the existing Grading Permit

- Land Disturbance Code SCC 14.22
 - This new code section will not create new review thresholds for land disturbing activities. The existing thresholds and standards will remain:
 - Appendix J of the International Building Code.
 - Portions of Appendix J incorporated into SCC 15.04, which will be moved to SCC 14.22 for ease of use.
 - Land Disturbance/Impervious Thresholds from SCC 14.32 (Stormwater). Land disturbance thresholds will not change with proposed updates to SCC 14.32. Proposed changes affect impervious surface thresholds for certain projects.
 - Critical Areas Requirements.
 - SEPA Thresholds.
 - Class IV/Conversion Forest Practice thresholds
- Land Disturbance Code SCC 14.22
 - The purpose and expected benefits of this code are:
 - Improved clarity for applicants and staff regarding various regulations that control land disturbance.
 - Improve efficiency and sequencing of reviews, which will reduce unexpected requirements when building permits are submitted.
 - Improve efficiency in site planning to better address spatial limitations and requirements for septic drain fields, onsite stormwater BMPs, well protection areas, critical areas, access, and structures.
 - Demonstrate compliance with the NPDES Permit and reduce the amount of unpermitted clearing that could compromise the County's NPDES permit compliance.
- Code update Schedule and Documents
 - Public Comment Period May 5 – 24th
 - Public hearing May 24 at 6:00
 - Posted to web:
 - Staff Reports and Memos
 - Code Amendments
 - Comparison Matrix
 - Public Notice
 - SEPA Determination

New Business

- May 24th 6 pm Public Hearing on Stormwater- Ecology is lead agency
- Docket Items-Do we want to comment on any or wait to see what gets docketed then prepare comment?
 - Waiting to see what is put on the Docket before comment
 - Farmworker housing- Need to discuss/look into more before commenting
 - Only a 9 month occupancy- need to have more enforcement, a lot of people stay more than 9 months
 - Need to make it a priority, compliance is a huge issue, who will provide the enforcement? Needs more checks and balances
 - Peter Browning- The State took over Farmworker Housing
 - Terry Sapp- have there been any studies done that there may be insufficient farmworkers in the County? Worksource puts out that data
 - Mechanical harvesting because labor is not available
 - Don McMoran- Will having to pay overtime help get more workers? Kraig Knutzen- No, haven't seen it yet.
 - H2A Workers- Required to provide housing, always hard to find.
- Comp Plan- two year process, need Agricultural Board to help with that as well

- Hip Camp-New online camping sites on private properties

Don McMoran WSU Update

- Funding level is good at this time- starting to work on the 2023 Budget submitting in July
- Working on some Publications on irrigation three of the five have been published
- Usual Grants- three going smoothly-Puget Sound Partnerships, Agribility, & Farm Stress Suicide
- Hired new Translator (Spanish)
- Emmy Award for Farmland Suicide short video collaborated with Brian Young
- Dr. Charlie Coslor to come on board to do outreach on insects
- Finally, fully staffed at WSU Extension
- June 4th 100 year party- 11 am-2 pm- Bread Lab-pizza oven, truck & Tractor Show, KAPPS Radio, gifts & Prizes

Committee Reports

Economic Development- Don McMoran

Island Grown Food Corporation is moving forward.

Critical Areas – Nels Lagerlund

Nothing at this time.

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

Nothing at this time.

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

Nothing at this time.

Old Business

Next Meeting: Sarah Stoner, Farmland Legacy to present & Jenna to present on Flood Updates, Lisa Grueter, Agritourism Update

Dam Relicensing- Early November- pay attention to draw downs in late summer, dumping in June because of too much, out of water in August.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm.

Next meeting is July 13, 2022, at 7 pm.