

Skagit County Conservation Futures Program Advisory Board
Meeting Summary
January 12, 2021

Members in Attendance

Steve Sakuma	Scott DeGraw	Keith Morrison
Jim Glackin	Andrea Xaver	Owen Peth

Members Absent

Margery Hite

Staff and Others in Attendance

Kara Symonds, Skagit County Public Works
Kai Ottesen, Belle Bean Services
Allen Rozema, Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland
Michael See, Skagit County Public Works

Scott called the meeting to order at 7:00 AM

Members Update

The group discussed Skagit County new Commissioner, Peter Browning and his background in county government, the hospital board, and the CEO of Burlington chamber of commerce.

December Meeting Summary

Jim made a motion to approve, Andrea seconded, all were in favor.

2020 Revenue Summary

Kara reviewed the 2020 Conservation Futures revenues, as follows:

Personal/Real Property Tax	\$936,556
DNR PILT	\$1,249
State Land Timber Sales	\$39,484
Leasehold Excise Tax	\$6,052
Timber Excise Tax	\$11,110
Investment Interest	\$4,199
Private Contributions	\$36,560

The group discussed a full time position for the Farmland Legacy Program. The Program will stay in Public Works, as the Department can provide the legal, accounting, and administrative support. The Board approved the proposal and after it gets ‘tooled’ by Human Resources, it will be posted. The job title is Agricultural Lands Coordinator. The staffer will coordinated the Farmland Legacy Program, support the land division easement preparation, and coordinate amongst local and regional farmland preservation programs. This person will also have the ability to help landowners on the development of

lot certifications and early actions in the application process. A growing need of the Program is responding to real estate agents and landowners on questions about what can and cannot be completed on Conservation Easements, and any issues identified by the ongoing monitoring. Andrea noted the recommendation in founding resolution of having 1.5 full time employees working on the program.

Property Ranking

The group ranked FLP applicant 226, which totals 211 acres and 5 development rights, and is located at the intersection of Bay View Edison Road and D'Arcy Road. The final scores were 41 (original criteria), 70 (core criteria), and 36 (edge criteria). The group noted the interesting components of this property, including the private runway, availability of utilities, and exceptional views. The group asked that when Bob appraise this (and other) properties, we ensure the maximization of the offer. For instance, ensure Bob looks at this as whole vs individual lots. There could be a lot of interest in a home site over the farm as a whole. This may incur more expenses in the appraisal process but ensures the Program is maximizing the specific site and the offer, especially in regards to the availability of water. The group concurred that COVID is accelerating the problem of development pressure as more people are able to work from home and are seeking space.

The group discussed the merits of a pricing formula vs. appraisals and the administrative determination, which requires landowners to show farm income in order to build a home. This process supports residential as an accessory or subordinate to farming. The group requested Kara put together a summary of appraisal values from the past three years for the next meeting.

Marketing/Application Process

Kai presented an update to the outreach brochure. He shifted the emphasis to a landowner perspective that may be interested in the Program. The group gave feedback on the updated version. Kai will get some quotes on production for the next meeting.

Property Update/Financial Summary

Kara reviewed the properties in the queue and the financial report for year ending 2020. The financial report will be revised beginning in February with the removal of properties closed in 2020.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 AM