

**Skagit County Conservation Futures Advisory Committee**  
**DRAFT Meeting Summary**  
June 13, 2023

**Members in Attendance**

Audrey Gravley      Andrea Xaver      Jim Glackin      Margery Hite      Scott DeGraw

**Members Absent**

Keith Morrison  
Owen Peth  
Trisha Logue (ex-officio)  
Jack Moore (ex-officio)

**Staff and Others in Attendance**

Jenn Johnson, Skagit County Public Works  
Kai Ottesen, Belle Bean Services  
Sarah Stoner, Skagit County Public Works

Scott called the meeting to order at 7:30AM.

Jenn Johnson, Natural Resources Division Manager for Skagit County Public Works, is in attendance with group introductions and a welcome.

**Review Agenda**

Agenda approved.

**May 9 Meeting Summary**

Jim made a motion to approve minutes as is. Audrey seconded. All were in favor.

**Subcommittee Discussion:**

**Valuation Process Review Subcommittee (Members: Scott, Margery, Audrey, Jim)**

**Purpose:** make recommendations, if needed, to improve the overall valuation process (versus use only of the appraisal process, which is simply one tool for valuation). Evaluate barriers to participation: Is it appraisal amounts that are the issue? Or does FLP need to have our appraisals approached differently? See below including a review of the FLP Property Ranking/Scoring Process Review—how the scoring process relates to valuation.

Subcommittee chair: Scott.

**Five Year Review of FLP Scores: Core, Edge**

Scott provided a summary of the FLP score data that Sarah compiled from the last five years of FLP applicants. The scores ranged from 55 to 85, in both Edge and Core categories.

Scott proposes breaking the score ranges into three tiers, with a ‘multiplier tool’ formula that applies different percentage increases to each tier. For example, properties scoring in Tier 3 would have 10% applied to the valuation offer; properties scoring in Tier 1 range would have 20% applied to the valuation offer.

The group considered aspects of the proposal, including annual reevaluation of the tier ranges, and when the tool would be applied.

## **Marketing & Application Process**

### **New Applicant Review, Property Scoring: FLP 250**

The group scored FLP applicant #250, comprising 40 acres and 1 lot certified development right. This applicant sits north of existing FLP easement #118.

The property scored as follows: *Core Criteria 79, Edge Criteria 41.*

The group noted that the location of applicant's land correlates to its scoring value: it scored highest in Core Criteria, scoring criteria developed to emphasize the preservation of a critical mass of farmland.

Jim suggested that the parcel numbers with a map and scoring sheet be sent to the group members ahead of time for review prior to coming to the scoring session.

### **FLP Annual Report 2022**

Sarah discussed continued follow up for distribution of the 2022 Farmland Legacy Annual Report. Andrea and Audrey volunteered to share copies around their areas, including visitor centers. The [Skagit Valley Herald featured the annual report](#) in its May 28, 2023, Sunday online edition.

### **Viva Farms Guest, July 2023 Meeting**

Sarah suggested that based on the recent presentation to the Skagit County Agricultural Advisory Board by Viva Farms staff Anna Chotzen, that the group invite her to an upcoming Conservation Futures Advisory Board meeting. The group agreed that Anna will come as guest to the July 11 meeting.

### **Easement Status, Property Updates**

The group discussed updates on the six properties currently in queue for agricultural conservation easements. The queued applicants encompass 730 acres and 15 development rights.

The group also discussed applicants on hold, including one applicant who had a change in application terms. FLP will need a revised appraisal offer due to the change in application/protected property terms.

Sarah reports that the second appraiser now on assignment is still pending. Delays due to unexpected distractions from the assignment request. Sarah touched base with appraiser last Friday; he committed to have the appraisal assignment complete by June 14.

### **Subcommittee Reports**

Tabled due to time constraints.

Sarah made a quick share regarding programmatic changes with the King County Farmland Protection Program (FPP) from the recent Quarterly Roundtable hosted by Washington State Conservation Commission on Farmland Preservation. Ted Sullivan of King County FPP shared that they, too, are beginning to consider land not currently developable under current regulations. They concur that the easements stipulate additional restrictions beyond the building right, including restricting land use to only ag and ag-related.

Recently, they protected a 30-acre property with an existing house. The easement valuation offer on those 30 acres with no development right to extinguish valued at \$145,000 in King County. This is compared to recent 30 acre easement in Skagit County with no development right to extinguish valued at \$25,000. The group concludes that the time is now to protect these parcels, with values that only increase.

**Monitoring Report**

Tabled due to time constraints.

**Member Updates**

Tabled due to time constraints.

**Financial Summary**

The financial summary is updated for 2023.

**Administrative**

**CFAB 2023 Meeting Dates**

July 11	September 12	November 14
<del>August 8 (cancelled)</del>	October 10 (tbd)	December 12

The group discussed schedules; suggested to cancel the August 8, 2023, CFAB meeting. All were in favor. The group will meet July 11, then September 12.

Sarah shared that the Conservation Futures Advisory Board (CFAB) ordinance is currently being revised to reflect current operational aspects of the program. The ex-officio roles of the Skagit County Planning Director and Skagit County Finance Director were written into ordinance at inception of program, prior to establishment of a program manager. A new ordinance is being drafted to reflect the FLP program manager’s role. Ex-officios are a standing membership position (vs. appointed) with no voting rights.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 AM