

**Skagit County Conservation Futures Program Advisory Board
(CFAC)**

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday August 9, 2016

Members Attendance

Scott DeGraw	Mike Hulbert	Wendy Pare
Owen Peth	Steve Sakuma	Andrea Xaver

Members Absent

Keith Wiggers

Staff Attendance

Kara Symonds, Skagit County Public Works
Linda Christensen, Skagit County Planning & Development Services

Scott called the meeting to order at 7:00 a.m.

Member Update

Mike spoke with enthusiasm about the agriculture growth in Eastern Washington. Several thousand acres are being converted into usable farmland, notably vineyards. Farmers are developing water and trellis systems to grow more apples and grapes. These high value producing crops are an economic boost for this area.

Steve mentioned the work coming from the Innovation Partnership Zone (IPZ) group. Local partners include: WSU, Northwest Ag Business Center, The Port of Skagit, City of Mount Vernon, Skagit County, Skagit Valley College, and EDASC. These partners come together to discuss the Skagit Valley's agriculture vision. More information about IPZ and their work can be found by inserting this link into your browser: <http://www.portofskagit.com/skagit-advantage/innovation-partnership-zone/>

Agenda Review

There were no changes to the agenda.

July Meeting Minutes

Steve moved to approve the July minutes and Wendy seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Property Update

Kara reviewed the color-coded applicant list. On August 24 she will make a final presentation to the Washington Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) grant panel for the pending applications. The RCO application round is highly competitive this year. Unlike the previous grant round, all Skagit County submittals will move forward as separate applications. Previously, the applications were submitted as one group.

The CFAC discussed the Nelson (Koetje) application. What is the process and priority for this property?

Kara mentioned which applicant's easements have closed recently and which ones are pending. Two easements are awaiting subordination finalization and another three easements are waiting for RCO signatures.

The CFAC discussed how financial partners associated with the pending applications will play out. Kara said she is unsure until we know how RCO, Skagitians to Preserve Farmland, and USDA will respond to secure their funding part. Soon the picture will be clearer. A discussion continued to bring these funding players together to discuss funding possibilities.

Other Business

Bronlea Mishler, Skagit County's Communications Coordinator, is working with staff to begin the Farmland Legacy Program newspaper insert. Staff has provided information and will work closely with Bronlea. Education should be included or start an ongoing program separate from the insert.

Steve suggested conversation should begin with farmers not participating in the program, informing them about the program, or if they already are familiar, ask for their perspective.

Mike suggested Bronlea attend a future meeting to serve as a meet and greet. The CFAC wants her to know what the CFAC priority topics are. Kara will invite her to the September meeting.

Wendy and Steve announced they will not be at the September meeting.

Financial Update

Kara summarized the monies spent on easements so far and what is left to spend. Exact numbers will be discussed at the September meeting, once more easement money is disbursed and grantor money is received.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 a.m.