

Skagit County Conservation Futures Program Advisory Board
Meeting Summary
August 13, 2019

Members in Attendance

Steve Sakuma

Andrea Xaver

Scott DeGraw

Wendy Pare

Jim Glackin

Owen Peth

Members Absent

Keith Morrison

Staff and Others in Attendance

Commissioner Ron Wesen, Drainage District 16

Kara Symonds, Skagit County Public Works

Scott called the meeting to order at 7:00 AM

Member Update

Andrea shared continued concerns with the Assessor's Department auditing enrollments in Open Space Farm and Agriculture. She considers the income and reporting requirements punitive and has concerns that landowners converting to other categories are not aware of the stipulations.

Kara shared that she obtained the 1981 Comprehensive Plan zoning maps from the Planning Department. These maps show the Ag Reserve category. The group discussed an ad hoc committee to research the maps and determine what zoning categories Ag Reserve.

In staffing news, Kara shared that Tara has moved on to graduate school in Portland to take advantage of her GI Bill and she's very thankful for the good work that Tara provided the Program.

August Meeting Summary

Steve Sakuma moved to approve the 8/13/19 meeting summary; Andrea seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

FLP 199 (F2M) Application

Commissioner Wesen shared his background on the FLP 199 property. He had a meeting with the Drainage District Consortium, landowner, and Ducks Unlimited. He shared that the Drainage District has an easement and will continue to maintain their ditch that runs through the center of the property, which ultimately outlets into Edison Slough. It's his understanding that the landowner is improving some private ditches on the property, creating a small berm to retain water in already wet areas, and installing structures in the private ditches which will allow the landowners to drain in time for planting season. Ducks Unlimited shared with him that they are moving away from permanently wetted ponds so that landowners can plant the low lying areas once they're drained in the spring, which should not affect the Drainage District's ability to manage their system. He added that the removal of the poplar trees has

been a benefit to the Drainage District due to the beavers using them to dam up the District's ditch. It's also his understanding that the landowners are going to farm the property.

The group discussed the process from the point forward. The Drainage District consultation will be captured in the meeting summary and Kara will proceed with the landowners. Steve added that his Drainage District was consulted about the new facility on Pulver Road, which came with many detailed engineering and drainage plans. The challenge is receiving the right amount of information to assess the impacts to the District. In the case of the FLP 199 application, the Drainage District does not see a concern with more water. The group agreed that it's appropriate to include the Drainage District Consortium for collective thoughts on developments in Drainage Districts.

FLP Contractors

The selected applicants are waiting on Kara to send a draft monitoring contract. Because of the late start, Kara will complete the USDA forms to ensure they are submitted by the end of the federal fiscal year.

FLP Outreach

Kara reminded the group that all Conservation Easements can now be found on Skagit County's iMap, under Map Categories, Planning and Development, Farmland Legacy Program.

Scott shared that he's had conversations with Darrin Morrison of SPF and they are planning a shared Board function the second week of November to discuss goals. The group discussed that in 2020, they'd also like to meet with the Agricultural Advisory Board.

The group discussed putting together a newspaper advertisement and materials for a booth at future events.

Property Update

The group reviewed the properties in the queue, with a particular focus on the Cook Road property. SPF is commissioning an appraisal after the landowners had reservations with the FLP valuation. The group discussed the need to be transparent in all valuations and potential next steps once the second valuation is received.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 AM