

Skagit County Conservation Futures Program Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary
September 12, 2017

Members Attendance

Scott DeGraw	Mike Hulbert	Keith Wiggers
Owen Peth	Steve Sakuma	Andrea Xaver

Members Absent

Wendy Pare

Staff and Others in Attendance

Kara Symonds, Skagit County Public Works
Jim Glackin, Skagit Land Trust

Scott called the meeting to order at 7:00 AM

Member Update

Andrea highlighted two articles in the September issue of National Geographic. One article is an overview of overfishing in the Gulf of Mexico and a case study on limiting catches in Mexico's Baja California. The other article discusses farming in buildings in Holland.

Scott noted that the SPF fundraising dinner is coming up. Kara added that Viva farms recently purchased a property that has a development right and will be applying to the Farmland Legacy Program in the near future; she believes this will be highlighted during the dinner.

Later in the meeting, as part of the member update, Keith introduced Jim Glackin. Jim will be taking over as the Skagit Land Trust's representative on the Conservation Futures Advisory Committee. Jim shared his background; he works as a realtor for Windermere.

Meeting Minutes

Mike moved to approve the 8/8/17 meeting summary; Andrea seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Property Rankings

The group ranked one new FLP application, FLP #219, which consists of approximately 18 acres and 1 development right, located adjacent to the Mount Vernon city limits off of Britt Road. The property received a rank of 52. Kara will look into the strange property boundary to ensure accuracy. The group also discussed some of the nuances of the scoring criteria, including economic productivity. The group will review the founding ordinances at the next meeting for context on the criteria. Kara will send out a link prior to the next meeting.

Newspaper Insert

Kara thanked Andrea for obtaining additional testimonials for the publication. The group reviewed and commented on the current version; these edits will be shared with Communications Coordinator and the insert should hit the newspapers in the fall. The group discussed that it would be good to obtain additional copies for handouts at events.

Appraisals

The group reviewed the main components of a Farmland Legacy Program appraisal. Mike was surprised to see a recent appraisal come in less than he expected. The group discussed inviting the Program's appraiser to the next meeting to discuss current market conditions. Scott was also curious if an appraisal for 160 acres and 4 development rights would be a different value than if it was completed as 4 – 40 acre easements each with one development right.

City of Burlington Agricultural Heritage Program

The Farmland Legacy Program recently received a check in the amount of \$24,000 from a City of Burlington developer that utilized the City's Ag Heritage Program. In the City of Burlington, in certain receiving areas, a developer can increase the density by purchasing ag heritage credits. In this specific example, a developer is a 56 units complex, the maximum density allowed for that zone, but purchased an addition 24 units (at \$1,000 per unit), for a total of 80 dwelling units. Kara has prepared a news release to share the news.

USDA Easement Monitoring

The Farmland Legacy Program recently submitted all 59 USDA easement monitoring worksheets to the local and regional USDA staff. These are due each year before the end of the federal fiscal year. No issues arose during the monitoring. Kara will bring an update on the rest of the monitoring to the next meeting.

Property Update/Financial Summary

The group reviewed the Program's fund balance and property's in the queue. The current applicant list includes 1,156 acres and 28 development rights.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 AM