

Skagit County Conservation Futures Program Advisory Committee
Draft Meeting Summary
October 10, 2017

Members Attendance

Scott DeGraw	Mike Hulbert	Keith Wiggers
Owen Peth	Steve Sakuma	Jim Glackin

Members Absent

Wendy Pare
Andrea Xaver

Staff and Others in Attendance

Kara Symonds, Skagit County Public Works
Jeff Richardson, Skagit County Public Works

Scott called the meeting to order at 7:00 AM

Member Update

Skagit County recently hired Jeff Richardson, Natural Resources Technician. Jeff will be working on the Farmland Legacy Program and Voluntary Stewardship Program.

Eric will attend the November meeting to provide an update on monitoring. He shared he is about 85% complete with this year's tasks.

Meeting Minutes

Owen moved to approve the 9/12/17 meeting summary; Steve seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Property Rankings

The group ranked one new FLP application, FLP #203, which consists of approximately 45 acres and 1 development right, located adjacent to SR-20 to the east of the Avon Allen intersection. The property received a rank of 65.

Newspaper Insert

The newspaper insert will come out in the Skagit Valley Herald in October. The group suggested soliciting feedback from various interests groups, such as SPF and PCC Farmland Trust, and suggested places the insert should be available at, including but not limited to, the tulip festival, farm stands, snow goose produce, chamber of commerce, the Seattle Times, and legislators.

Appraisals

Bob Suttles attended the meeting to discuss the current market conditions for the valuation of FLP Conservation Easements. Bob completes a full before and after easement appraisal when valuing Farmland Legacy Program properties. He's noticed the before values are steady around \$10,000 - \$10,500 an acre and that the market is consistent in that value, whether a buyer is purchasing 40 acres or 100 acres. He noted that the after values are rising faster than the before values, and that's why the differential between the two is declining. He commented that there is readily available sale information for both the before and after markets. He noted that the market is sensitive to development right density, for example, if an 80 acre parcel has only 1 development right, the market starts to show parity in before values. The group discussed the market outlook for development rights and items such as the ability to irrigate. Bob noted that he hasn't seen the Skagit County market recognize the ability to irrigate as it has in other places.

Keith Wiggers' Service

The group expressed gratitude for Keith's service on the Committee. The group was especially thankful for Keith's efforts to champion the program's monitoring component, and being an advocate for budgeting for monitoring annually.

Property Update/Financial Summary

The group reviewed the Program's fund balance and property's in the queue. The current applicant list includes 1,135 acres and 27 development rights.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 AM