



Skagit County Planning Commission

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Chair Tim Raschko **Vice Chair** Tammy Candler
Members Vincent Henley, Amy Hughes, Jennifer Hutchison, , Kathy Mitchell, Martha Rose,
Joe Woodmansee

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Skagit County Planning Commission's Recorded Motion regarding 2023 Agricultural Advisory Board (AAB) Proposed Agritourism Code Changes

Proposal July 6, 2023
publication
date:

Proposal name: 2023 Agricultural Advisory Board (AAB) Proposed Agritourism Code Changes

Documents available at: <https://www.skagitcounty.net/departments/planningandpermit/agtourismmain.htm>

Public hearing body: Skagit County Planning Commission

Public hearing date: Tuesday, July 25, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

Written comment deadline: Thursday, August 17, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.

PC deliberations: December 12, 2023

The Planning Commission held work sessions on the proposed code changes on April 25, 2023 and June 13, 2023 prior to the public hearing on July 25, 2023.

On July 6, 2023, the Planning and Development Services Department published a Notice of Availability (including SEPA determination of non-significance and notice of written comment period and public hearing) and staff report and transmitted a 60-day Notice of Intent to Adopt to the Department of Commerce.

The staff report published on July 6, 2023, and supplemental staff reports contain additional findings related to process, public notice, and department recommendations.

The public comment period was open from July 6, 2023, until August 17, 2023, in which the County received 1,367 comments.

All written comments and hearing testimony were provided to the Planning Commission in a supplemental staff report dated October 10, 2023.

On October 10, 2023, a work session with the Planning Commission was held to discuss the public comments.

Planning Commission deliberated on the proposed code changes on December 12, 2023.

After considering the written and spoken comments and considering the record before it, the Planning Commission enters the following findings of fact, reasons for action, and recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners.

Findings of Fact and Reasons for Action

- a. Skagitonians have supported farmland preservation and agriculture for many years. Preserving the agricultural land base and protecting farmers is of community interest.
- b. Unregulated addition of non-farm venues can result in interference with farms and farm activity.
- c. Non-farm accessory uses threaten farming and farmland in Skagit County.
- d. Agritourism by definition has to start with agriculture.
- e. The proposed clarifications and changes are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and County Planning Policies.
- f. Food production is of critical life sustaining importance. Skagit County is considered to have prime agricultural soil which has been set aside and protected as Agricultural-NRL zoning.
- g. Lack of enforcement of the current and proposed changed code have the potential to create confusion. **We further recommend** the Board of County Commissioners consider options of enforcement and pathways to compliance for those businesses that are presently operating.
- h. The County adopted Ordinance #12815, the Right-to-Farm ordinance, to support soils-based farming January 1991.
- i. The Agricultural Advisory Committee was formed to advise the Board of County Commissioners on April 2002 (and later the Planning Commission) under Resolution #R20020134. That coupled with Comprehensive Plan Policies *Required*

Disclosure of Right to Manage Natural Resources Land supports the right-to-farm as a strong policy for the County.

- j. RCW 36.70A.020(8), RCW36.70A.060(1), and RCW 36.70A.070 are evidence of legislative mandates for preservation of agricultural land.
- k. Skagit County’s efforts to protect and preserve farmland traces back to the 1960s when land use plans, policies, regulations, and programs were first adopted and implemented by the Board of County Commissioners. Today Skagit County’s Comprehensive Plan protects and conserves agriculture lands of long-term significance and seeks to continue their viability, now and into the future.
- l. Skagit County must continue to meet the challenges of maintaining and further enhancing commercial agriculture, including steps to limit land uses which adversely effects commercial agriculture; prevent and minimize land use conflicts between agriculture and adjacent land uses.

Vote on the contents of the Findings of Fact and Reasons for Action:

Commission Vote	Support	Oppose	Absent	Abstain
Tim Raschko, Chair	X			
Tammy Candler, Vice Chair	X			
Kathy Mitchell	X			
Vince Henley	X			
Amy Hughes	X			
Martha Rose			X	
Joe Woodmansee				X
Jennifer Hutchison				X
Total	5	0	1	2

Recommendation

The Planning Commission recommends the Board of County Commissioners **Adopt** the Agricultural Advisory Board's proposed agritourism proposed code modifications as presented.

This recorded motion **Approved** on this 12th day of December, 2023.

Commission Vote	Support	Oppose	Absent	Abstain
Tim Raschko, Chair	X			
Tammy Candler, Vice Chair	X			
Kathy Mitchell	X			
Vince Henley	X			
Amy Hughes	X			
Martha Rose			X	
Joe Woodmansee		X		
Jennifer Hutchison		X		
Total	5	2	1	0

SKAGIT COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON



Tim Raschko, Chair

12-13-23

Date



Jack Moore, Secretary

12-13-23

Date