

# Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board

## Meeting Summary – June 14, 2023

### Commissioners Hearing Room/MS Teams

#### Members in Attendance

Michael Hughes                      Terry Sapp                                      Michael Trafton                                      Kraig Knutzen  
Murray Benjamin                      Steve Omdal                                      Justin Hayton                                      Steve Skrinde

#### Proxy Designations

Kraig Knutzen for Tim Van Hofwegen                                      Murray Benjamin for Nels Lagerlund

#### Members Absent

John Morrison                                      Steve Wright

#### Others in Attendance

Peter Browning, Skagit County Commissioner  
Jack Moore, Assistant Director Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)  
Sarah Ruether, Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)  
Kim Adams, Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)  
Don McMoran, WSU Extension  
Mark Knutzen, Skagit County Planning Commission  
Sarah Stoner, Skagit County Public Works

#### Call to Order, Introductions

Michael Hughes called the meeting to order at 7:01

Michael Hughes introduced Mark Knutzen, Planning Commissioner. Mark had a question to see if he was able to speak during the meeting and have a group discussion. It was decided that yes, a group discussion was acceptable.

#### Approval of Meeting Summary

Murray Benjamin moved to accept the May Meeting Minutes 2023; Justin Hayton seconded. Motion carried.

#### Guest Speaker

##### **Sarah Ruether, Long Range Planning Manager, Skagit County Planning & Development Services**

Sarah gave an update on Agritourism

- Planning Commission met last night and Sarah presented the definitions. The Planning Commission seemed to all be on the same page with the recommendations. There was a little back and forth regarding the number of events (12).
- Could amend at later time to keep 24 events or change it to 12.
- Next Steps- Sarah will do SEPA and get things together for Public Hearing so the public has an opportunity to comment.
- Terry Sapp expanded on Sarah's comments. The Planning Department presented the AAB documents. Most recent flow chart & definitions. The Planning Commission was asked to consider it for Policy framework. The Planning Commission after exchange and discussion determined they would approve as presented from the AAB Paperwork. At this point, they could change their vote later.
- The AAB work was recognized and considered very impressive by the Planning Commission.
- Sarah will start the process to have the Public Hearing on July 11<sup>th</sup>, but most likely July 25<sup>th</sup>. This hearing is mostly for the public to comment.

- The reason we decided to propose what we did was because the rules already exist in current code. There is currently no wedding event center in Skagit County that is lawful. Two applied for Special Use Permits, both are currently out of compliance. They are required to Annually Self Certify and they have never done that.
- Hope to make code more up to date.
- Skagit County began the process of studying Agritourism and what the policy would look like. The AAB is contributing, but not making the laws. AAB work was done to provide clarity. County needs a flow chart so the public can get a better understanding.
- Need clear codes to be able to enforce compliance. (Don to send AAB six principals the AAB sent to the PC previously)
- 12 events will further separate business that can make it a business event place. More events turn temporary events into a more permanent business.

### **Economic Development- *Don McMoran***

Amazon Facility not being used still. Currently the space is being used for experimental things. Court Building on Peterson Road is being proposed. New Committee starting from scratch.

### **Critical Areas – *Nels Lagerlund***

Department of Ecology came out with new regulations on endangered species. Maps are out now, the main focus in salmon. 800-1,000 ft. off all waterways implemented rules with no discussion. Rules from California animal density interfering with the State Trade Agreements. Any product from out of state (chicken/hogs) need different regulations.

### **Flood, Drainage & Irrigation – *Kraig Knutzen (Chair), Nels Lagerlund, Steve Wright***

Need to get a Relicensing update.

### **Land Use – *Terry Sapp (Chair), Kraig Knutzen, Murray Benjamin, Michael Trafton, Steve Omdal***

Nothing at this time.

### Old Business

- 2023 Docket
  - Commissioners approved Docket and in July starts the Public Comment Period. AAB may want to comment on LR-23-01 in the future.

### New Business

#### **Don McMoran WSU Update**

- Budget due to the County first part of August
  - 7% cut the last three years
  - Will probably need another 7% cut this year (leaving vacant positions as retirees phase out)
- Current Grant with VIVA Farms & the Agrability Grant, three Farm Stress Suicide Grants
- There has been two farmer suicides in Skagit County and two in Whatcom County in 2023
- Currently trying to hire a Translator
- Potato Luncheon is on June 23<sup>rd</sup>
- Working on Workshop Sessions for the next year

**Next Meeting:** July 12<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm.

### Adjourn

Justin Hayton moved to adjourn; Murray Benjamin seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:48 pm.