

Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board

Meeting Summary – September 13, 2023

Commissioners Hearing Room/MS Teams

Members in Attendance

Kraig Knutzen Terry Sapp Michael Trafton
Steve Omdal Justin Hayton Steve Skrinde

Proxy Designations

Justin Hayton for Michael Hughes Kraig Knutzen for Steve Wright Terry Sapp for Murray Benjamin

Members Absent

John Morrison Nels Lagerlund

Others in Attendance

Jack Moore, Assistant Director Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)
Kim Adams, Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)
Don McMoran, WSU Extension
Rebecca Rising, Skagit County Public Works VSP Coordinator
Keith Higman, Director, Skagit County Public Health
Madeline McGonagle, Community Member
Quinn Estep, Community Member

Call to Order, Introductions

Kraig Knutzen called the meeting to order at 7:02.

Approval of Meeting Summary

Steve Omdal moved to accept the February Meeting Minutes, Justin Hayton seconded, Motion carried.

Guest Speaker

Keith Higman, Director, Skagit County Public Health

Keith gave some information on Public Health's involvement with Agritourism and how individuals may not understand some of the regulations on sewage, water, and food services.

- Washington State Board of Health regulations regarding septic, provision of water, delivery of water to the public, and food services.
- Events (not family gatherings) that sell food, raffle tickets one time only. Food being vended comes from a reputable source (catering)
- Start a business-Storefront building to sell items from the farm (milk, cheese, honey, jam, meat) more than 25 days is not a temporary event
- Need a kitchen license, three compartment sinks, may need commercial kitchen septic sized right for number of people.
- May need Group A or Group B water system approval & restrooms
- If they have PUD water, the process is easier.
- If they are hosting more than 25 people more than 60 days per year, they need Group A Water and would then work with the State Health Department and would need an engineer to do a third-party water quality testing.
- Public Health is not actively seeking compliance on businesses regarding Agritourism
- Public Health is on the same page as PDS regarding the Temporary Permit, Public Works deals with Parking, Traffic, and line of sight, Fire Marshal monitors the capacity and max occupancy

- Jack more mentioned the policy is ten years old on how to conduct Code Compliance. Looking with the Commissioners to update the policy to include everything. Look forward to the next steps with permitting.

Committee Reports

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

- Agritourism- the media reporting has died down but events are still continuing. Terry wrote a letter to the group formed by the Skagitonians to clarify that the AAB is not the villain. The letter was defending the AAB. Need to stay involved with the process of Agritourism.
- Rich Wyrich the Skagit County Prosecuting Attorney wrote a letter with a clear statement from the PA Office that they would not peruse any code violations or enforcement.
- All of the matters may be taken off the table completely, the State Supreme Court case on Growth Management- Hearings Board of Appeals final ruling in District 1, if the Supreme Court took the case, it would put forward what Counties can do regarding non-ag activities on Ag Land.
- Next Planning Commission meeting is on 9/26 at 6 pm to review the comments.

Economic Development- *Don McMoran*

No movement at the Amazon Facility. Island Grown Food Cooperative has its new plant starting. Skagit Malting: all grain is in one silo and Caring Sprins is using the other silos. They will be considering an announcement in the next couple of weeks. The Port has open hours for residents for new Innovation Center, thinking two years to open, but hope less.

Critical Areas – *Nels Lagerlund*

Nothing at this time.

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

Surface water- Rebecca Rising the new Skagit County VSP Coordinator said the State funding for the County is much greater for the VSP. The first Watershed Advisory Board meeting is next week, there are six new board members that group is just starting up again. There is 27 Counties enrolled in the VSP Program and Skagit County received 1 million dollars. The money is for implementation not for policies. Plantings are not used for maintenance, without maintenance, it may not be successful.

New Business

Don McMoran WSU Update

- Budget has been submitted to Skagit County
- WSU enrollment is up this year
- Hiring freeze is now active
- Usual Grants- Puget Sound Partnerships, Agrability, Farm Stress Suicide, & Viva Farms
- Upcoming Workshops- Seed (1/12), Potato (2/23), Berry (March), and the Ag Summit (2/9)
- Received a 2-million-dollar grant for Farm Stress Suicide and 12 partners will continue to run that program. They will be adding a crisis line as well.

Next Meeting: October 11, 2023, at 6 pm

Adjourn

Justin Hayton moved to adjourn; Meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.