

Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board

Meeting Summary – July 10, 2024

Commissioners Hearing Room/MS Teams

Members in Attendance

Michael Hughes Michael Trafton Terry Sapp Steve Wright John Morrison
Kraig Knutsen Steve Omdal Will Honea Kim Mower Don McMoran
Cindy Kleinhuizen Justin Hayton Steve Skrinde
Nels Lagerlund

Others in Attendance

Jack Moore, Director Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)

Malia Agpawa, Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)

Will Honea, Skagit County Prosecuting Attorney

Sarah Stoner, Skagit County Public Works (PW)

Jenna Friebel, Skagit County Drainage & Irrigation Districts Consortium

Amy Frye, Community Member

Call to Order, Introductions

Michael Hughes called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Approval of Meetings Summary

Justin Hayton moved to approve the May-June minutes, Nels Lagerlund seconded, motion carried.

Guest Speaker

Sarah Stoner, Farmland & Agriculture, Skagit County Public Works

Sarah announced that the Farmland Legacy Program has received a grant from the American Farmland Trust of \$100,000, over the course of four years (2024-2028). She mentioned one of the possibilities

being to subcontract out the money to further the possibilities. While advancing the program, Sarah suggested that the best route to take would be to put together a list of resources, listen to the needs of the community, and get farmers connected with support systems.

- Announced American Farmland grant, that will be used to further the Farmland Legacy Program
- Sarah reported an update of the program that included, surpassing 15,000 acres of agricultural land in Skagit County
- Presented the 2024 Farmland Legacy news article, featuring local farmers

Jenna Friebel, Executive Director, Skagit County Drainage & Irrigation Districts Consortium

Jenna presented the Skagit County Integration Plan. She proposed forming a natural resource board to accommodate climate change. She suggested setting a meeting up with planners and tribe members.

- Tribal land agreement history
- Pivoting into taking control of natural resources and developing a plan considering; fish and tribal use
- HDM/ERSA connects to advancing program
- Proposed forming a Natural Resources Board
- Climate change; threats and identification
- What threats do we want to address

Will Honea, Skagit County Prosecuting Attorney

Will had informational additions to Jennas Integration Plan, including the importance of climate change in our County. He spoke about the uses of Riparian Buffers, relating to climate change our streams and wildlife. Will also suggest that a rational approach to climate change that includes the tribes, would be in the best interests of the program and county.

- Planning involving sea level rising, considering dike districts
- The concept that with facts and science, we can prepare for climate change and start adapting our farmlands to that change, now.
- Moving forward, one of the first steps would be for both tribes to come to an agreement

Don McMoran WSU Update

Don spoke to the board about the updates for WSU that included information about two new interns that have been hired for summer and fall. As well as the grant that was received for Farmer Suicide Prevention.

- Proposed that Sarah reach out to Ag West and Oregon State University, for support.
- Hopeful that the Forestry program will re-open in 2025

- Agriculture and natural resources are fully staffed again
- Two new interns have been hired
- USDA Farmer suicide prevention grant

Adjourn

Justin Hayton moved to adjourn; Nels Lagerlund seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:58pm.

Next meeting is August 14th, 2024, at 7pm.