

Skagit County Conservation Futures Program Advisory Board
Meeting Summary
February 11, 2020

Members in Attendance

Steve Sakuma	Scott DeGraw	Wendy Pare
Jim Glackin	Keith Morrison	Andrea Xaver

Members Absent

Owen Peth

Staff and Others in Attendance

Kara Symonds, Skagit County Public Works
Michael See, Skagit County Public Works
Allen Rozema, Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland

Scott called the meeting to order at 7:00 AM

Member Update

The group discussed pressures of development and various projects that are seeking to fill housing needs within the town and city boundaries. The group discussed recent tax statements; it was noted that the school funding is raising both local and state taxes due to the McLeary decision.

January Meeting Summary

Steve made a motion to approve; Wendy seconded. All in favor.

BCC Meeting Preparation

Scott, Owen, Andrea, and Jim are meeting with the Board of County Commissioners on Friday, February 14. The group has a half hour scheduled with each commissioner and the meetings will take place starting at 9:00 a.m. The group reviewed the bullet points that were submitted to the Commissioner's office as a read-ahead for the meetings.

CFAC Membership

There are no terms expiring in 2020.

FLP Staffing

Kara shared with the group that she is allocated 0.3 FTE to work on the Program, but believes the Program would benefit from a 1.0 FTE, or a full time staffer. A full time staff person could help advance the Program through additional outreach and would be able to provide excellent customer service for applicants and management of existing easements. Kara will type up a draft job description as a discussion topic for a future meeting. Any budget requests would be submitted in July.

Allen shared that there is a Skagit County Comprehensive Plan recommendations for staff to support agricultural policies and that he'll send the guidance after the meeting. He suggested meeting with Hal

in the Planning and Development Services Department to talk about bringing agricultural related programs together.

FLP Easement Monitoring

The contract for Kai and Jules (doing business as Belle Bean Services) is underway. All the FLP monitoring files are now electronic. Once they contractors have had some time to get acquainted with the files and properties, this board will invite them to a meeting to discuss the monitoring process.

Property Update

The property spreadsheet has been updated; the 2019 completed easements were removed. A column was added to share when the appraisal was completed. The group discussed the shelf life of appraisals; the working policy will be that the appraisal is valid until proven otherwise.

The group discussed the Cook Road property in great detail. Allen has been in discussions regarding the County policy on negotiated sales with a specific interest in how much above appraised value the County is willing to go. The group discussed options on how to quantify the threat to this property and policies that cover extenuating circumstances. Allen again shared that there have only been two ways to value development rights, the pricing formula and appraisals. He will share some SPF information with the group on their research into the subject matter and advocates for a policy review on valuation methods.

Allen shared that SPF is working with a landowner on an application for about 105 acres. He also added that SPF is in discussions to assess new threats and risks which will help inform their priorities, such as interchanges or viewsheds. Finally, he discussed a few items SPF has coming up. They are starting a Conservation Easement valuation seminar to be led by Vicky Adams; Vicky was the appraiser for the Cook Road property. That is tentatively scheduled for April. They are also leading a meeting this Thursday to discuss Skagit specific issues. He also added that SPF developed some marketing materials that he'll share with the group.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 AM