

Skagit County Conservation Futures Program Advisory Board
Meeting Summary
September 8, 2020

Members in Attendance

Steve Sakuma Scott DeGraw Wendy Pare
Jim Glackin Andrea Xaver

Members Absent

Keith Morrison
Owen Peth

Staff and Others in Attendance

Kara Symonds, Skagit County Public Works
Joe Holtcamp, Skagit Conservation District

Scott called the meeting to order at 7:00 AM

Member Update

The group discussed how the pandemic could affect rural lifestyles, with more people working from home and moving from urban areas and other states such as California that are dealing with fires and extreme heat. Jim added that he has been fielding calls about second homes. Wendy noted the farmland for sale behind the Edison school, and shared some resources with a mother and daughter that are seeking to move to Skagit to farm.

August Meeting Summary

Andrea made a motion to approve with the noted correction; Jim seconded. All in favor.

Cook Road Property

The group discussed the Cook Road Property and recent conversations. Scott is in discussions with Trillium on the Right of First Refusal. The goal is to extinguish the option before proceeding with the easement, but there are other avenues to pursue, depending on how this works out. Allen shared details on the easement at the Conway interchange that has a septic system drainfield for a nearby gas station, if that could help as an example.

Property Valuation Policies

The group will continue to research how other organizations deal with negotiated sales. Jim took a call from a WSDOT appraiser and got an overview on their manual. Basically they have some level of negotiation on the staff level, but it's elevated up a level when each authority is exceeded.

Property Monitoring / Outreach

The 2020 monitoring is near completion. Kara met with the monitoring contractors to add tasks to their list, such as marketing. This list could include a news release, a program summary to be included in tax statements, and a handout for planning staff. Allen said that his organization would be happy to assist in Education and Outreach and have completed a number of projects on that front.

Property Update

The group reviewed the status of the applicants in the property spreadsheet. Two easements are set to close in October. The Program is currently coordinating two easements with SPF. One appraisal just came in for the Ring Lane property, \$210,000 for 3 development rights. Kara proposed to the group that helping landowners through lot certifications would break down a barrier for applicants. She will explore an agreement with Northwest lot certification services.

Financial Summary / Conservation Futures Fund

The group reviewed the status of the 2020 revenues and expenditures to date. Allen shared that the Puget Sound Partnership is exploring Conservation Future Funds and that Bill Blake (vice-chair of the Salmon Recovery Council and Skagit Conservation District Manager) is taking the lead on the Skagit conversation. Andrea shared that the Farmland Legacy Program goals do include farmland and critical areas and that there needs to be balance.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 AM