

**Skagit County Planning Commission  
Deliberations: Agritourism Proposal  
December 12, 2023**

**Planning**

**Commissioners:** Kathy Mitchell  
Vince Henley  
Amy Hughes  
Tim Raschko, Chair  
Joe Woodmansee  
Tammy Candler Vice Chair  
Martha Rose (absent)  
Jen Hutchison

**Staff:** Jack Moore, Planning Director  
Robby Eckroth, Senior Planner

Chair Tim Raschko: (gavel) Good evening. The December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, meeting of the Skagit County Planning Commission is now in session. We do not have Commissioner Rose. Can you note that, please? And I'd ask for approval of the minutes from November 28<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Joe Woodmansee: I'll make a motion to approve the minutes.

Commissioner Vince Henley: I second.

Chair Raschko: It's been moved and seconded to approve the minutes. Is there discussion on that?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: If not, all those in favor, say "aye."

Multiple Commissioners: Aye.

Chair Raschko: Those opposed?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Okay. We have time tonight for Public Remarks. This is an opportunity for anyone to speak to the Planning Commission about any topic except items scheduled on the agenda for a public hearing the same day or items that have had a public hearing and are still under Planning Commission deliberation. That means that Ag Tourism would be out of bounds if you wished to speak to the Commission. Public Remarks, which is not part of the formal public participation process, for any development regulation or Comprehensive Plan amendment project is limited to three minutes per speaker and up to 15 minutes total.

So does anybody wish to speak to the Planning Commission?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Nobody? Is there anybody Zooming who wishes to?

Robby Eckroth: If you'd like to speak and you're on Zoom, please raise your hand or unmute and you'll have an opportunity to speak. And just to remind you, this is only for matters unrelated to Agritourism.

(silence)

Mr. Eckroth: I'm not seeing any response.

Chair Raschko: Okay, so we will end Public Remarks. That brings us to Deliberations on Agricultural Advisory Board Proposed Agritourism Code Changes. Mr. Eckroth, please.

Mr. Eckroth: Good evening, Commissioners. My name is Robby Eckroth. I'm a senior planner with Skagit Planning and Development Services. So I was planning on giving you a quick presentation just to give you a sense of where we're at in the process as far as the discussion on the Agricultural Advisory Board's Proposed Agritourism Code Changes.

So the process so far: We've had multiple meetings this year, April 25<sup>th</sup> and June 13<sup>th</sup>. We've had two work sessions on the Ag Advisory Board's agritourism recommendations. And then July 19<sup>th</sup> through August 17<sup>th</sup> there was a comment period. July 25<sup>th</sup> we had a public hearing, and then September 26<sup>th</sup> there was review of public comments. Then October 10<sup>th</sup> there was discussion of the public comments on the Ag Advisory Board's agritourism recommendations.

So right now or today we're going to have deliberations and a potential decision on a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners. So just so everyone knows, the Board of County Commissioners is the legislative authority for any code amendments pertaining to Skagit County Code, and the Planning Commission makes recommendations to that body.

So the date for the Board of County Commissioner review is tentative, so please just pay attention to any notifications for future meetings if you would like to watch or participate in those meetings. And that is all I had. Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Are there any questions for staff before we begin?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Eckroth: Yeah, thank *you*. And I do have – this aids the discussion – a template for a proposed recorded motion, so while we talk through this I can put this up on the screen to aid the process.

Chair Raschko: Okay, so the floor is open.

Commissioner Kathy Mitchell: I have a motion, Chair.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Mitchell.

Commissioner Mitchell: I move that we accept the Ag Advisory Board's recommendations as proposed, as written.

Commissioner Henley: I second.

Chair Raschko: It's been moved and seconded to recommend acceptance of the proposal by the Ag Advisory Board. I think I got the essence of that, did I not? Okay, is there discussion, please? Before we start discussion, I'd just like to remind everybody that after somebody has the floor, everybody else on the Commission has the opportunity to speak before they get the floor back again. So if we could please pay attention to that, I'd appreciate it.

Vice Chair Tammy Candler: Do we need to start with Mitchell because she moved?

Chair Raschko: Pardon me?

Vice Chair Candler: We'll just start with Commissioner Mitchell \_\_\_\_\_.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Mitchell?

Commissioner Mitchell: Okay. The reasons for the motion: The Ag Advisory Board was appointed in 2002 in April specifically to advise the Board of County Commissioners on agricultural lands and uses and policies, and it's also in the Comp Plan where they also advise the Board and the Planning Commission on such. So the beginning point is that's important. They've spent – I don't know – quite a long time now and several reiterations reading through, rehashing, discussing, and all kinds of discussions back and forth between them on that to come to the proposal that they had. And the thing that strikes me, that's extremely important at this point, is to understand that the way the current code and the policies are written – non-temporary – I'm going to phrase it in my words – non-temporary events – if I'm wrong, tell me – non-temporary events like tasting rooms and restaurants and weddings and those kinds of things are not allowed and have not been allowed. And the exception is when there's special use permits for those kinds of things. So that's always been on the books so it's not like something's taken away – anybody's taking away from anything else.

The proposal also reads to define what ag tourism is and isn't. And back at the joint meeting, for those that attended, there was a definition which I thought was pretty important – that the Pennsylvania State Extension Office, they defined what "ag tourism" is and they defined what "agritainment" is. And the basic thing is agritainment is allowing things to be, you know, different uses and things on agricultural land, whether they're attached or not. Our County code and policies don't say that. GMA was put in place in 1990. We've got RCWs and policies – and I've got all of them we can read later if we need to – that support that decision, along with different court cases that also support that decision. And so for that standpoint for beginning, that's why I think that we should support what was proposed, because it gives a basic definition for what it is and isn't and it hits some of the basic uses for it. So that's a good place to start.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Hutchison?

Commissioner Jen Hutchison: I would have made the opposite recommendation. I feel like we need to start somewhere, but going backwards on current code is not really the finest position to put ourselves in when we're trying to work wholeheartedly with the community to make sure that all of the aspects that need to be met are met as a community. I understand that there's code in place and – just – it's so hard to recommend moving forward with a proposal that we had a

*thousand* comments come in as nay, against, and less than two dozen in support. I mean, you just have to really consider the community as a whole and let them be heard, and for us to recommend that these changes are made now, it just – it seems a little too soon. It obviously needs attention. There's obviously a need to look at the code and make sure the definitions are accurately portrayed in writing so that there's guidelines that are enforceable. Obviously enforcement's come up in this conversation a lot. I just don't think this is the right way to start. Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Anybody else?

Commissioner Woodmansee: I can go.

Chair Raschko: Go ahead, Joe.

Commissioner Woodmansee: I find myself in the intimidating position of arguing to the opposite of Kathy Mitchell because she's so well-spoken when she does these things! But I feel like that we should not make any change right now. I feel like that over the last 20, 25 years there's been a lot of businesses that have come or been started. The process of that happening I don't think is worth getting into right now, but they're there and there's a lot of them. And I think for the vast, vast majority of the situations that have grown that there's really good communication and there's not a lot of problems between farmers and the venues and stuff like that.

I feel like that we're half fixing the problem here and that we should wholly fix it in the future. The half-fix is we go backwards. We define what I think is a very definitive thing that says many of these places are not legal to be here. And then we create this – what are we going to do about that? And there's even – if I recall properly a Commissioner said, Well, you know, we're not going to just, you know, start shutting people down. But what the code says is you're not allowed to do those things. And this is an attempt to reinforce that we're not allowed to do those things. We're already doing them, and so that's oil and water for me.

I think that – let me make this statement too because I don't want anybody to get the wrong idea. I *don't* think that we should take ag land currently being farmed or that *can* be farmed and turn it into a venue and take acreage out of production, the ability to produce. That's not something that I would support. And in the whole of this I would make sure that that was protected in some way or manner in a new code. But then this code needs to get changed to address the entire situation, not just well, it should have been saying this, and we're going to redefine it now so it's even stronger saying you can't do all these things. But we've got all these things out here being done that I think – I honestly believe it's undeniable that they're not a benefit to our community. Because they are. Thousands and thousands and thousands of people spend their time and money and bring their families to and – these venues. And to be honest with you, quality time with family and friends is, you know, got to be pretty darn high up on the list of life. And so – so for me, we're going a step backwards saying well, we're going to go two steps forward in the future and really fix the problem because of the venues that we have out there. I think that we need to consider things like a venue pad within an ag zone that creates this area that's obviously existing venues would fall into this thing. But we can build code that talks about the loss of ag land. We can build code that talks about – I'm not sure what word to use other than pad, but a location like a....

Existing venues that we have are all sitting on a certain footprint right now. For 20, whatever years – 30 years in some cases – it's been just fine; nobody's complained. And I know we don't have a high, large complaint volume going on – I'm unaware of it – because we've asked more than once, How many problems are there really? And we've never gotten really a report about oh, here's the

history of problems that we've had to deal with. We can consider a distance metric. In some codes, (if) you want to build a duplex you can't do it if there's already one within so many feet of where you want to do your duplex. Or there could be a distance metric \_\_\_within – maybe it's a mile. Maybe it's 2,000 feet. Maybe it's four miles. I don't know. But we could write into code that you can't have a four-corner intersection and have a wedding venue or other kind of venue on all four of the corners. Stuff like that.

I just feel like that we're just – we started down a road of creating these uses. The Board got invited in to make a recommendation. That recommendation was, I think, pretty one-sided. And I don't think with any amount of ill intent of it, but I don't think that the whole picture got represented in what we're trying to do tonight. And so I think that, you know, that's enough substance, I think, for how I feel. But that's where I'm at. We're taking – / feel like it's a step backwards and it creates a little harder process to get to the other side. And so that's where I'm at.

Chair Raschko: Thank you. Vince?

Commissioner Henley: Yeah. This is not a perfect solution, but an awful lot of people worked on it to put it together to make it as good as they could and I think we on the Commission would be remiss if we didn't take advantage of that work and at least begin the process to solve this problem.

For me, I think there are two major, glaring things missing from this process. One of them is a permanent and well-funded way of enforcement, because I think that's where all of these codes fall down sometimes – because they don't actually get enforced. And in fact, that's why we're here this evening is because it hasn't been enforced for a long time. So I would like to see an enforcement mechanism for dealing with agritourism.

And the second thing I'd like to see is a pathway for compliance for those people who are out of compliance. Now it's pretty easy to see how to do the enforcement part. It's not clear to me that all of the elements for finding a pathway to compliance can actually be done. I mean, there're actually laws and rules, all right, which we would probably run afoul some of those. So I don't think we could do that. But in any event, we can start part of the process and the mechanism for doing that is to get the new proposal, whatever it may be, onto the next docket – all right? – and then we can bring it up again. You can't change what we've got in front of us right now, but in the next docket cycle we could propose new things, we could bring up the enforcement process, and we could also bring up the path to compliance process. And that's what I would like to see.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Hughes?

Commissioner Amy Hughes: I would like to read my thoughts just so they're clear.

First: Agriculture is a unique profession that is characterized by blood, sweat, and debt. It is not for the faint of heart and there are many casualties throughout its history; however, Skagit County agriculture has a future and there is a competent generation currently entering the profession. West coast growth and congestion is agriculture's greatest threat.

We are here today to deliberate on Skagit County agritourism codes on Ag-NRL lands. Currently non-agriculture activities are operating on Skagit County's most prime-zoned soils and in structures built for and reserved for agriculture use. Operations are converting lands and structures valued for agriculture use to commercial use, inflating values for these and similar properties throughout the Ag-NRL zone to non-agriculture values while paying Agriculture Open

Space tax rates. A Skagit County farmers' growing season runs from April through October. This encompasses the time from the first field work to the last harvested product leaving the fields. It is impossible to predict from day to day how this is going to be accomplished. Sites have become, in essence, a stop work order placed on farming activities, creating a land use conflict for working farms. Event centers use requires additional parking, resulting in additional Ag-NRL land conversions, and sometimes they're overtopped with gravel, which permanently destroys the land for future growing operations. The Skagit County Ag Advisory Board, a natural resource advisory board appointed by the County Commissioners in 2002, has presented zoning code amendments to ensure that agriculture land is protected and preserved for future generations, as required by Washington state law. The Board was established in April 2002 to advise the County Commissioners and Planning Commissioners. Its charter states its purpose is "to meet the challenges of maintaining and further enhancing commercial agriculture, prevent or minimize land use conflicts between farming operations and adjacent land uses, ensure necessary infrastructure to support agriculture, and encourage farming practices that balance the needs of agriculture industry with soil conservation, best management practices, and the protection of water quality, fisheries, and wildlife."

The presented code enhancements support authentic agriculture activities. I support its passage prior to the 24 farming – 2024 farming season. A Skagit County conversation on what other zones or areas could be used for event center and tourist purposes should be continued.

Second: Skagit County needs to employ a natural resource official such as the fire marshal or noxious weed positions. This person will be responsible for county education, awareness, and code enforcement on all natural resource lands throughout Skagit County. Prior years' conversations have repeatedly asked for this position to be established. This needs to be done to take farmers out of the role of park rangers on agriculture lands.

Although funding solutions are not under the purview of this Commission, the tourism tax is a tax available for local tourism promotion. This should also be used for tourist etiquette, education, and awareness, relieving landowners (the) responsibility of becoming park rangers on area open space lands.

Third: Skagit County needs to have an in-depth conversation on tourism and its effect on local citizens. Worldwide and locally unregulated tourism is interrupting the lives and wellbeing of our communities. An internet search on the Netherlands closing ports to cruise ships; California closing a wildflower super-bloom site; world heritage sites overrun by tourists; as well as the gridlocked traffic from Seattle through Skagit County farmland experienced during last year's tulip festival illustrates the magnitude of this unregulated tourism.

Chair Raschko: Thank you. Go ahead.

Vice Chair Candler: Several things. It seems to me that in Skagit County people talk a lot about preserving farmland. We have to do – I feel like this board has to recommend that the County Commissioners do whatever's necessary to protect farmland and keep it viable and producing, and I think it's difficult because – it's really hard for me to parse out what that means. What is that action that is going to do that? I hear a lot of talk about preserving farmland but without appropriate action and enforcement I don't know how it's not just lip service. We hear all this, you know, vilifying of the Kent Valley and everyone uses it as an example all the time of what we *don't* want. But we cannot not become those places we don't want to be if we do the same thing they've done. And that's, I think, where I come down on this. The County created the Ag Advisory Board in 2002. That's been stated. I think we should heed their advice on this issue. They're in the

trenches. They know things that we don't know and they brought us a lot of that information, which I found persuasive. There are other areas in Skagit County. People seem to – I feel like we're bombarded with people thinking that we're shutting down wedding venues in Skagit County, and that is not the case. We're saying, not on *ag land* in Skagit County, and we're not even saying it! It's already said. It's already there. And I've heard or read a lot of these comments about how we're doing this thing. We're not doing this thing. This thing is *done*. It's already *there*.

Commissioner Woodmansee was talking about taking a step backwards. I kind of think that is what the idea is, is to take a step backwards on the encroachment that's been occurring. And I know that's not everyone's position, but I kind of thought it was the point of this.

Commissioner Hutchison indicated she (sic) seems like this action is too soon, but I think in many ways it's actually more on the side of *late*, if anything.

Again, no one's taking businesses away from florists and caterers. They're just saying don't drive your florist truck to ag land. Take your cater truck to an appropriate, you know, zoned venue.

Once the land is developed – I read in the comments, you know, once it's developed you can't get it back. There's no going backward on that. And that's why I think a step back *is* appropriate.

Since the 1990s, at least we have been looking at the right to farm in this county. It's been up for discussion many times. Skagitonians have supported farmland preservation and agriculture for many, many years. I think the lack of enforcement has the potential to – the lack of enforcement of the *current* code, let alone what we may be recommending tonight, to create confusion. Certainly for people – people get themselves into situations where, as one of the other Commissioners – I think it was Commissioner Henley – talked about trying to get a pathway for people to come into compliance, and maybe having it a little clearer can prevent other people from getting into that situation where they didn't realize what they're doing. And we heard some speakers indicate I've got this great venue; lots of people in Skagit County support it; it's a wonderful venue. And it's not about bad actors. It's about maybe some of them didn't know what they were spending a lot of money getting up and running and not having an appropriate venue for that, or location for that.

Unregulated addition of nonfarm venues can result in interference with our current farms. We've heard testimony about that. We've heard information about that. Nonfarm accessory uses threaten farming and farmland, according to some.

The proposed clarifications are consistent with the Comp Plan and County Planning Policies. And food production is a critical and life-sustaining of that level of importance. And I read something – you know, historically those who lived closer to where the food was produced have survived in some very trying times. I'm not trying to be, like, apocalyptic crazy \_\_\_ person, but I think it is a lesson to be learned from history that we shouldn't ignore completely.

So that's where I come down on it and those are my comments.

Chair Raschko: Has everybody had a chance?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: I want to say that I've actually felt some resentment about being in this position. A quarter century of *laissez-faire*, a quarter century of laws not being enforced led the County to

a position with these good people that are going to get hurt or might get hurt. And, you know, I resent having to sit here and decide on that. But the fact that it was laissez-faire doesn't mean we just throw the whole law out and everybody can keep doing what they want to do. Because then after time, more people get hurt. So, you know, it's not a simple thing. But, as people have said, there are basic laws already in place and we cannot recommend something that is not within the current law. Is that correct?

Commissioner Mitchell: Mm-hmm.

Chair Raschko: Okay. And the other thing – you know, I even knew somebody got married in a church! And there are other places besides farmland to do it. If you cannot have a wedding on a farm, you'll have it somewhere else and the caterers and the florists and everybody else will just drive to a different location. I know I'm oversimplifying it there but basically I can't see what we can do legally but support the position that we currently have on the table.

Anybody else?

Commissioner Mitchell: Yeah, I've got some comments.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Mitchell?

Commissioner Mitchell: Everybody's making good points. Thank you for all the homework and input. I think everybody's looked at this backwards and forwards.

We could do whatever we wanted and say whatever we wanted based on feelings because we like our neighbors or other kinds of people. But the brass tacks is if we get caught speeding going down a county road somewhere, we get caught speeding. Anybody that's running these businesses in these places, good business people do business plans. They know what the zoning is. They know what the local laws are. They know what they need to be held to for water, electrical, and everything else that they need to do. And if they don't, then that's a bad thing too. I mean, ignorance of the law – how many times have we heard that? For forever. Ignorance of the law is not an excuse. Well, that hits any of us. I can say the same thing if I get caught speeding. Well, I didn't know. Well, too bad, right? You get the ticket. And I think every single person here feels very badly for anybody that has been running a venue somewhere and making it part of their livelihood. But whether they knew it or not, it was wrong on Ag-NRL or Rural Reserve – there was a third one I could read to you, but the general gist is that the laws have been in place. GMA made those laws. There's RCWs with state laws and, in fact, here's a decision from January '22 – versus King County, who tried to put an ordinance in that let tasting rooms and restaurants do their thing, and they really got slammed for it. The decision says that they can't. The synopsis is this: The Growth Management Hearings Board concluded the County's action failed to comply with RCW 43.21C and GMA requirements to ensure protection of agricultural lands, rural character, sufficient public infrastructure, and consistency between the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations.

There's a slew of other RCWs and policies that say the same thing and the County is covered. That's just the way it is and has been for decades now. And so whether people realize it or not, despite what any personal feelings are here, we've all got friends that have gotten married or we've attended ourselves weddings in barns or different kinds of places, and they're lovely. Beautiful events and great locations. But there's nothing anywhere in this universe that says a wedding has to be used on Ag-NRL, and that's the whole point. All of the laws and stuff, and with GMA, and they come back time and time again between there, the Right-to-Farm act, the required



disclosures on the right to manage natural resources land also in the county. Several different laws and policies – as a matter of fact, I've got two pages of them at least and that's *barely* scraping the surface of it – that says we can't do that.

Now we can continue with going down the road of noncompliance and more problems because collectively – the County: us – we've turned a blind eye for so long. As many other people have pointed out, that's why we are where we are. And the discussions have been all along in the last two years what to do about it and how to do enforcement and compliance. We've had staff legal come to us. We've had staff letters come to us and those kinds of things, too, about the topic. And I think the Ag Board themselves, when they touched on that they came up with some suggestions and they suggested a two-year – I'm going to call it a grace period; I don't know what the correct term is, but two years to come into compliance. And in my mind that's one of those things – two years for any businesses and stuff to have notice and to get things corrected and action for whenever, if this were to go into place, is plenty of time to do that. If you go much longer than that, then you've got a problem with staff turnover and everything else, plus continued noncompliance.

Everybody knew that they weren't supposed to be doing this. If they didn't, it's the same as the rest of us. If I didn't know what the speed limit was going down, you know, county road whatever it was, it's my bad. And I'm sorry about that, but that's just the way it is. But people are going to have to come into compliance. And we've got the ability with \_\_\_ if we propose this or don't propose this. In the recommendations and findings of fact, we have the duty to ask the County to adhere to, to find some way for enforcement and passive enforcements because those are the laws that are on the books, whether we like it or not.

The other thing is – this is really hard to say, but there's cumulative impacts too. People say well, look, I was just on the way to the wedding or I was just on the way to the concert. It doesn't matter if I was speeding. I was just, I was just, I was just. Well, it does matter. The cop's not going to care. Well, this is a similar situation. People have been out of compliance for those uses. Many of them already knew it. Some may not have known it. But we can't not do this. Back when there was – December a year ago; I think it was almost really close to a year – there was a symposium with the Farm Bureau and WSU, people up here, and farmers filling the room, and some gentleman – I don't know who it was and everybody laughed and snickered when he said it – he says we're here to bend the law. No kidding. Well, guess what happened to King County. If we were to take the path and to go ahead and say, Don't do this – let it continue – we're going to get smacked sooner or later as a county. And so our best recommendation is to go back and to recommend what is on the books, to strengthen what it says and says not. Because clearly the law says, the RCWs say, the policies say that they have to be soil – connected to the soil, connected to ag accessory uses. And there are definitions for that. I can read you the definitions for every single one of these things. But the point is is they exist and most everybody here knows that, too. But here's the key \_\_\_\_\_ that people are not talking about. Did people know sitting here that farmers, when the instream flow rules came in and got hit and we had some dry months a few years ago, did you know that the farmers were not allowed to water their crops? It happened. Did you know that people got sued by the DOE and other entities because of that – that went ahead and watered anyway? They did and they paid big fines. You can go look it up and find them yourselves. So what happens when farmers have got farm fields out there, when they've invested a lot with their manpower, their work, their years, generations trying to provide food, seed crops, other ancillary things that goes with it. It's a huge industry for all kinds of reason, right? Whether it was hemp or broccoli seeds or whatever it's going to be. Flowers, it could be. Well, what happens when they get stopped from using the water and being able to use it on those lean years? But these out-of-compliance businesses that are running concert events, that are running

– I hate to say it, guys – weddings – I love weddings, too – but other kinds of things, they get to keep going and truckin’ right along because *nobody knows*. That’s a pretty big injustice.

And so I’m with Vince and actually I’m with Joe and Jen on a number of things. It’s bad news that we’ve been out of compliance for a while. And that *is* the reason for taking the step back, because things have to be enforced that are on the books – I know it’s funny – things have to be enforced, for what are on the books. People knew what is and what isn’t. For people to pretend that we got this far not knowing is not true either. All the groups were notified. And it hurts. It’s just like what Tim said. I gotta tell you – it hurts right here in the center for every single one of us. Every single one of us, that we’re forced into making recommendations and taking the stand. But we also have to comply with the law.

And so the gist is that makes the most sense is we’ve gone to the people that know that are the experts. The County has appointed them. There’s been numerous surveys and studies done. There *has* been public input all over the place. As a matter of fact, somebody mentioned all the comments that came in. This is not a numbers game, but we got comments that came in from across the country. Just heard a thing on NPR again last December – on December 7<sup>th</sup>. It was on NPR for our local issue. Well, the gist is is that things have been running amuck and we gotta fix it. And so for whatever the decision comes out for the Planning Commission to go to the Board with – I don’t know where we’re going to be, but part of what should go into the Findings, Facts and Reasons for Action is to recommend that enforcement happen and maybe the suggestion of a two-year time to do that frame, and anything else that would help along those lines, because we can’t let this continue.

Did you guys know that there was one place in 1997 in Rural Reserve that did it all right, and they’re still a wedding venue now? They did everything the way you’re supposed to be and they got all – they’ve been running and they’ve been running fine. They’ve held up their permits and everything else. There were two others that got special use permits and those – I’m going to say around 2013 to 2015 or so, two of them got it. Well, the last I heard they were out of compliance. I don’t know if that’s true to this date right now or not, but they were out of compliance. And so that was three, not counting the 21 to 27 people said when they came to the microphone. Okay? But now all of a sudden we’ve got all these others that were flat out of compliance. What are we supposed to do? Let it continue to happen? Knowing lawsuits are coming and the County has to do – they have to do enforcement because the state laws are the state laws. And they support preserving prime soils for ag lands and all the information is there to make the support – the recommendations for what the Ag Advisory Board did. The Ag Advisory Board *did* do their homework, they *did* do their diligence, contrary to what some people have said. They had their arguments and their fights along with the same as us and it hurt them too, because they are good neighbors. They always want to be good neighbors and they just want to put their heads down and do their farming.

And the last thing that I’ll say that I think’s very important: Weddings can happen anywhere. Again, we love weddings. We’ve said from the beginning the County should figure out where they can and can’t be, and maybe, you know, have their own special thing for how to do the special events and things. But the Ag-NRL’s not one of the places. And Washington state has put out – they put out last March, and I know I had seen it months before that – where the state parks are doing weddings and things. That’s the whole point. Weddings can be done anywhere. You can jump out of a plane and get married. You can have weddings almost anywhere, barring maybe a high industrial area. I suspect that the refinery would probably say no. But you can have weddings almost anywhere, and that’s the point. The County and the State has long looked – and so have the farmers and the people of Skagit County have long looked to preserve Skagit farm soils, the

prime soils, and that's what this is all about. So – and yes, for the people that were smirking, giving me faces just a few minutes ago, this does hurt. This is hard. Because we listened to every single one of you and we know. But this is where we are and we cannot recommend something that's illegal.

Chair Raschko: Okay. Commissioner Woodmansee?

Commissioner Woodmansee: I've gotten a speeding ticket before when I didn't know what the speed limit was – just for the record. And I went to court because it was poorly marked. And I know you're all wondering what the outcome was. I sat there all day and I was the last person they called up and my fine was cut in half just because I sat there all day. But I actually did not know what the speed limit is and my point is is that there's a lot of people in the situation that really didn't know what the speed limit was. That's a real thing.

And so there's other ways. If we're worried about sprawl in this, let's put a moratorium on it – no new wedding venues, period, till there's a new code. Now you don't have to worry about sprawl. You don't have to worry about nude people sneaking in there doing something. If they did something after the moratorium goes in it's clear-cut, you can't do it, we're shutting you down. And we can go back and finish the entire code because – I'm envisioning the vast majority of these venues being told you're illegal or you're out of compliance. And I'm not even sure if the – I honestly don't even know if the Tulip Festival is a legal thing. I'm not sure. I just feel like that we don't have a good grasp on the impact of taking a hard line when we can put a stop to anything in the future, we can – the County staff, the County Commissioners can put together some sort of a commission that makes recommendations at – we're saying that we're not really changing anything. So what are we changing for then, if we're not really changing anything? Why do we need to pass it if we're not really changing anything?

And so for me it's just more of a symbolic thing and it's, Okay, we're going to get serious now. And maybe the County *is* serious – they're going to start shutting down businesses. But I think it's a big black eye for Skagit County. Maybe we've got one black eye now because we turned a blind eye, but we're going to have two black eyes when it's all said and done now. Based on – if the sentiment is you can't have a – and, I don't know, for some reason wedding venues is taking the heat for all of this, but it's certainly not just wedding venues that are going to be affected. I don't know. I think it's – I think there's a lack of encompassing the whole situation when there's no reason that we couldn't encompass the whole situation. We started with, Let's change – let's do these definitions and change this. And it was like this whole grandiose thing. And then the whole – the lawsuits and stuff, so we started backing off of that, and we went from "Here's what's being proposed" – in all honesty, by staff – to "Whoa, we're coming all the way back here" and not only we're not going to do any of that, we're going to say all you people are – wrong word. All these businesses are not legal, and unless there's a code change, compliance is going to mean less opportunity and it's going to be less events and it's going to be maybe a lot of places flat out told to shut down. I don't know the answer to that. That's part of my whole problem. We haven't even addressed that. We've alluded to it but we've never addressed it. We've never talked about the elephant in the room – is what are we really going to say to people with or without this code change? What are we going to tell people? What are we going to say to the people that have bought – didn't know what the speeding limit was? How are we going to deal with the people that knew what the speeding limit was and they sped? I mean, this is – it's a bigger – I just think it's – personally I think we've done an incomplete job here. And we could have – a few months ago it was very clear we'd done an incomplete job on the overall situation. Should have stepped back then and said, Okay, let's something put together here, have a task force, all the stakeholders, County people, and try to come up with a here's-how-this-has-to-read, here's-how-we're-going-

to-deal-with-existing. Because what I'm hearing right now is existing's going to get cut in half, as far as legal opportunities, from 24 to 12, and/or none, depending on what their situation is – whether they have a compliance – a facility that complies or not. And health and safety – all that, you know, has to be taken care of whether you're – I don't care what zone you're in. And so that has to be taken care of no matter what. But I just feel like, you know, it's – I think for sure this is going to happen: There's going to be a lot of people that are involved in this industry that are going to be scared to death. There's definitely going to be that. That came out in all the testimony for sure. So I just think that we need to be comprehensive and not *not* be comprehensive.

Commissioner Hutchison: So I think you have incredible ideas. \_\_\_ is that some of the suggestions you make – you know, the pod zone or, you know, ideas around there's opportunities to restrict additional growth while being able to address this pathway to compliance. I hear it said. I don't see it in writing in this code. There's no pathway to compliance being recommended here. And so the suggestion to reduce the operation days that are allowable, even for venues who *are* legally operating, even if it is just one – to reduce it in *half* is so harmful. I mean, the risk to some of the operators that are in the community, it's – especially if there *is* a drought, you know, and that's their fallback. Hey, you know, I can't farm but that's my fallback. That's our income. That's our backup.

There's more that we can do. I agree with Joe. There's definitely more that we can do. It definitely does need to be addressed. It needs to be holistically addressed. If it's a moratorium forever on these types of businesses, I understand – I mean, and you guys keep bringing me back to this current code and how it's always been illegal. I just – it's mind boggling that so many businesses are operating in this way if it's – there's no pathway to actually allowing it.

So I don't know. I don't know. It's really hard to move forward. I feel like the work's not done.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Hughes?

Commissioner Hughes: I'd like to bring this back to what's at stake here. Ten years ago, prior to me even having a vision I would be on a planning commission, I read an article in the *Seattle Times*, and it was Issaquah Valley was losing their last farm. And the community was in an outcry about it. No, you can't do that. What can we do to help you? And the farmer said it's too late. Urban encroachment has pushed us out and we will be developing our ground like all the other farms that were around us. So this is an immediate issue that is occurring in western Washington.

I had found in Exhibit E, Skagit County Code for Home-Based Businesses: "When a business grows beyond the criteria established, the business shall relocate to a zoning classification which permits these activities." That's what's happened a lot on Ag-NRL ground. We have events happening in residential sites, shops, barns owned by residentials, and now they want to make a business. That would be a competing use of land. To own land in Ag-NRL allows you to farm it, rent it to a farmer, or sell it for farm use and reinvest your assets elsewhere. That's what you get to do in Ag-NRL. The rules in the farmland is do not impact your neighbor's operation. Next farmer up, always have your land available for the next generation. And when it's go time, it's go time. It's *impossible* to plan from day to day and you can't plan when you're in the farm environment for what your neighbor needs to do on that day. They need to plan for you. The unintended consequences that will slowly strangle the working ag economy for Skagit County are land price competition that farming can't compete with; traffic safety due to increased congestion; loss of generational knowledge. We've been talking about generational pass-down. It is not whether it gets passed down to the next generation by family. It's that knowledge that's passed down. I know successful farmers, including our own, that became farmers by mentoring. We need farmers to

mentor the next generation. And if they sell out to another use, that generational knowledge is gone.

Urban sprawl, regional food security. They say when you want to shop in the grocery store to shop the outer rim of the grocery store. That's where you're going to find the nutritious foods. Guess what? That's what Skagit County does best. We do fruits. We do vegetables. We do meats. We do dairies. We do cheeses. We grow those nutritional foods that currently are not only sold locally but nationally and globally. I see with our direction continuing towards agriculture that middle farmer has a place and that's in providing these nutritional foods locally and regionally. I saw it done in the '90s and it's just waiting to take off, a little bit like the food hub but to the point where it actually goes – people can use it. Right now the food hub's being used going to restaurants and such. We could have micro-food hubs throughout the county that people could go to and buy local produce during season.

Non-use of agriculture lands shifts agriculture economics. It's a loss of decades of planning and zoning. Most of you can't see these books up here, but this represents 40 years of our work in Skagit County to preserve our natural resource lands, and I'm talking about forestlands too. Other counties have not been as diligent with this and this is our time to reestablish that. NRL grounds buffers between our magnificent wilderness areas and our urban areas, and we can't forget that value. When you come down the **north cross** highway from the parks and you come into farm country, and then you shift into the urban ground and then you go back out into farm ground before you go out of the county, that is an amazing statement for Skagit County.

I've been asked, "We don't understand what is going on." Farming can't compete with 12 months of Tulip Festival. It just can't. And personally for me, food security is more important. We need to make that a priority in our lives.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Candler?

Vice Chair Candler: Just quickly. I read the materials over and over again. The Tulip Festival and festivals like it, many of which were listed – Berry Dairy Days comes to mind – will not be affected by this. I think that's probably accurate. A lot of those activities are happening in the city, for example. Anyway...

But you can't put a moratorium on something that's already not allowed. So I'm not understanding what that would look like. And I think that could be proposed at some point. Somebody might have some ideas about pathways to compliance for those who – I mean, there's the word "grandfathering" has been tossed around. But ignoring the problem exacerbates the problem. To me that is not an option. I'm joining whoever mentioned earlier that part of our recommendation should be for the County to consider some means of enforcement. And by that I don't mean go out and, you know, shut people down. I mean, stop encouraging people to just operate outside the code by not enforcing it. But I don't think a moratorium works. You can't – how would you put a moratorium on don't-do-that-illegal-thing? You know, I don't – that's all.

Commissioner Mitchell: I've got another comment if somebody else doesn't.

Chair Raschko: Anybody else?

Commissioner Woodmansee: Since we're talking about moratoriums, I'll just give an example of it.

Chair Raschko: Excuse me just a moment, Joe.

Commissioner Woodmansee: Oh.

Chair Raschko: Who was first between you two?

Commissioner Woodmansee: Oh, no, if it's not my turn that's fine.

Commissioner Mitchell: He said two and I've had two. There's other people that could have two if they want.

Commissioner Woodmansee: Yeah.

Chair Raschko: Well, Joe, go ahead if you were responding to it.

Commissioner Woodmansee: I'm sorry. I thought I was called on.

Chair Raschko: No. No problem.

Commissioner Woodmansee: You can put a moratorium on just about – my experience is a city can put a moratorium on just about anything they want. You've just to write the paragraphs *right* so that they're saying that this is a problem, we're not going to allow any more of these to happen. They could put – they put a moratorium on building houses under a PUD in Mount Vernon numerous times. And so moratoriums are, I think, a little easier to do than people probably think. Just because – you can put a moratorium – I understand what you're saying. It's not legal already but this is a line that could be drawn that says not only is it not illegal, we're drawing a line right now saying we're putting a moratorium on – make it countywide. No new wedding facilities till we fix the code one way or the other. We're in the weeds now a little bit, I would agree. *I'm* getting in the weeds. Let me say that. But it is a tool that could be helpful.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Mitchell.

Commissioner Mitchell: Okay, just to clarify. The general public probably doesn't know but when something big like this comes before and staff, as good as they are, give us something and some background information, that's just the start of the tip of the iceberg for researching and finding and reading and understanding as best possible for as much time as anybody has. And every person up here does their best every single time, and every single person up here, from my experience, tries to be as informed and openminded as possible. Okay? But what you don't know is that several of us have asked what happened with those special use permits – who got what when and those kinds of things – and found out more information about that. Well, for as many times as I asked, which was several times and went through other phone calls with some of the other planners and things and gathered information, this argument between the 24 special use permits to 12 or zero or whatever, and this proposal suggested 12. People don't understand that most of those people that are out of compliance never used one single special use permit. And so I think it's rather ironic to be debating 24 to 12 or anything in between down to zero and back up the board, when those people in compliance didn't use those. Nobody did. But the Ag Board did their research and they asked to bring it back down to 12 so that people can do their things, people can also do their own personal weddings and other kinds of little special things – what they want to do. They always have been, just like they can continue to do farm stands and farm stays and petting zoos, and there's just long, long lists of things that have always been allowed and approved and will continue to be allowed and approved no matter what we recommend here.

But I do think it's rather hypocritical for us to argue 24 to 12 or zero when the people weren't using them anyway. So that's why if you'd like to know why I'm recommending going with what the Ag Board had suggested. They live it and breathe it. It was in the newspaper where one of the guys out there, one of the farmers – he wasn't complaining, by the way, because he was a very good neighbor and he tries to make do. There were five events going around him *at that time!* They happened to have been weddings. That's not picking on the wedding industry. They could have been concerts or other special events. That's really difficult to continue to do that when that keeps happening. And so when I want to come back to focusing on the cumulative impacts of things that happen with people, there's water, there's sewer, there's health codes, there's all kinds of things that matter. And, of course, the County can do what it wants to do and it will do. We're hoping that they get more enforcement people to do that and direction to do that. And the Board of County Commissioners are the ones that decide that. We merely make recommendations. We do appreciate every single person that put information in. I know we all read that stuff backwards and forwards and sometimes two and three times to try to figure out what was there. But if you want to know why I'm going to go back and recommend what the Ag Board did, it's because they are the experts. They live this and breathe this. They are good neighbors. They've researched these things for a very long time. And they pulled back and made minimal recommendations because they did not want to step on other people's ability to do things and to be able to run different businesses. They do believe that's very important. And anybody else that's exceeded their things – Commissioner Hughes, I didn't know that. Thank you for reading that part about if you've exceeded certain things you're supposed to move. Well, that sits for other zones too. And the reason zoning is what it is – and I'm not particularly fond of it sometimes. I want to do whatever I want to do! But we can't. That's not how things are done.

And so the final reminder is: A lot of this was put in place back in 1990. Some of the stuff was put in place before that. And the County has fortunately put the stuff on the dockets, paid for the surveys, paid for the experts, and had multiple meetings. There were joint meetings, there were other meetings and focus groups and all those kinds of things. A lot more than most of us ever wanted to attend or know about. Trust me. And that's why it came down to this little nutshell of something. And it's basically saying enforcement's there. Find some pathways to move forward, and so we'll suggest to do that. And, honestly, the dickering between the 12 and 24 is absolutely hilarious to me because the people that were out of compliance didn't use a single one of those anyway. None of them.

Chair Raschko: Vince?

Commissioner Henley: Yeah. In the past I have always claimed that what I understood best was what tourism was but I had a hard time sometimes seeing in this venue sort of world that we have what the agricultural part was. And most of the time, all right, it seemed like the venue and the event planning took control over agriculture. And agriculture, \_\_\_\_\_ a matter of fact, has nothing to do with weddings. As I understand it, the reason of moving from 24 days a year to 12 days a year was to be able to at least give a push towards keeping agriculture as the dominant part of the event. It wasn't there to punish anyone. It was there to make sure that we had a dominant factor of agriculture in the phrase "agritourism." And I think that that's one really good reason for moving from 24 to 12. And like Kathy says, they didn't use them all anyway.

Vice Chair Candler: Call the question?

Chair Raschko: Anybody else?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: So then, are we ready for a vote?

Vice Chair Candler: Mm-hmm.

Chair Raschko: All those in favor of the motion, please raise your hand. You got it all?

Mr. Eckroth: Yes.

Chair Raschko: All right. Those opposed?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: And there are no abstentions. Okay, so the motion passes. Is there any other comments or business related to the deliberations in agriculture and tourism?

Commissioner Mitchell: Findings of Facts and Reasons?

Unidentified Commissioner: Yeah.

Chair Raschko: I do need to do that. All right.

Vice Chair Candler: Should we invite Robby up to type for us?

Mr. Eckroth: Okay, so what I have up is a template from the docket, and I realize there was the titles – titled incorrectly. So I will go back and fix that. So how would you like me to go through this? Would you like me to go through the summary and read that to make sure you all agree, and then we'll go through your Recommendations, Findings of Fact and Reason for Action?

Commissioner Mitchell: Read the summary. We should read the summary.

Chair Raschko: That'll be fine. \_\_, please.

Mr. Eckroth: So I can read through this. So:

The Planning Commission held sessions on the proposed code amendments on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023, prior to the public hearing on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023. On July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the Planning and Development Services Department published a Notice of Application, including a SEPA Determination of Non-Significance and a Notice of Written Comment Period and Public Hearing, and staff report, and transmitted a 60-Day Notice of Intent to adopt to the Washington State Department of Commerce. The staff report published on July 6, 2023, and supplemental staff reports contained additional findings related to process, public notice, and department recommendations. The public comment period was open from July 6, 2023, until August 17, 2023, in which the County received 1,367 comments. All written comments and hearing testimony were provided to the Planning Commission in a supplemental staff report dated October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023. On October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, a work session with the Planning Commission was held to discuss the public comments. The Planning Commission deliberated on the proposed code changes on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023. After considering the written and spoken comments and considering the record before it, the Planning Commission enters



the following Findings of Fact, Reasons for Action, and Recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners.

Chair Raschko: Everybody fine with that?

(affirmative sounds from Commissioners)

Mr. Eckroth: So what I have here is – I think I’m going to have to delete some of this because I wasn’t sure if the Planning Commission was going to make a motion on certain items or not.

Vice Chair Candler: Do you want to take a minute to –

Commissioner Mitchell: Go ahead and take your time, Robby.

Mr. Eckroth: Thank you.

(silence while Mr. Eckroth edits document)

Mr. Eckroth: Would the Planning Commission like to make specific findings and recommendations relating to each individual section of the code amendment? I guess I should ask. Or do you just want to do an overarching –

Okay. So right here I’ve written “to adopt the Agricultural Advisory Board’s recommendation to amend Skagit County Code relating to agritourism in the Agricultural NRL zone.”

Commissioner Mitchell: And if you would add “as written in the proposal,” please.

Mr. Eckroth: Yeah, so it says “The Planning Commission recommends that the Board of County Commissioners approve the request to amend Skagit County Code to adopt the Agricultural Advisory Board’s recommendation to amend Skagit County Code related to agritourism in the Agricultural-NRL zoning district as written. “

Chair Raschko: Is that what we’re approving – is a request?

Vice Chair Candler: “We are *recommending*...”

Commissioner Mitchell: Recommendation.

Vice Chair Candler: “...that they...”

Commissioner Mitchell: We can request all we want!

Chair Raschko: “...recommend the County approve the request.”

Mr. Eckroth: We could simplify it by just saying we recommend they adopt the – I don’t know.

Commissioner Mitchell: Does it matter if it’s “approve” or “adopt”?

Vice Chair Candler: No, but it seems repetitive. I see what Tim’s saying. We’re recommending *they* approve a request to amend that to adopt the Ag Board’s – I mean, it technically is correct. I think it’s fine, just a little bit –

Jack Moore: We can certainly work on the specific language. We did hear your motion. We did hear that you are making a recommendation to the Board. So –

Vice Chair Candler: Thank you.

Mr. Moore: – we can certainly polish that up a bit.

Chair Raschko: Okay, so who wants to start?

Vice Chair Candler: Are you putting the Findings right there under (A), starting with –

Mr. Eckroth: Yeah, that was my plan if that's okay with the Planning Commission.

Vice Chair Candler: Okay, I have a few things. I don't know if anybody wants to start.

Commissioner Mitchell: I do too but you've got – go ahead.

Chair Raschko: Why don't you go ahead?

Vice Chair Candler: Okay. Probably there might be some repetition, but...“Skagitonians have supported farmland preservation and agriculture for many years.”

Mr. Eckroth: Would you mind repeating that one more time?

Vice Chair Candler: Yeah, sorry. “Skagitonians have supported farmland preservation and agriculture for many years. “

Next one would be – and that's – yeah. “Unregulated addition of non-farm venues can result in interference with farms and farming activity.”

Next one will be “Non-farm accessory uses threaten farming and farmland in Skagit County.”

“Agritourism by definition has to start with agriculture.”

The next one: “The proposed changes clarify definitions based on legal requirements and state and local law and policy.”

Next one.

(Chair and Vice Chair exchange some inarticulate comments about verbiage.)

Vice Chair Candler: And then “The proposed clarifications and changes are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and County Planning Policies.”

Next one would be “Food production is of critical, life-sustaining importance.”

And last but not least, “Lack of enforcement of the current and proposed changed code has the potential to create confusion.” That's what I had so far.

Commissioner Mitchell: Okay. “The County adopted Ordinance Number 12815, which is the Right-to-Farm Act’ – or, excuse me, “Right-to-Farm Ordinance for the county to support soils-based farming” – and feel free to wordsmith this, guys. I’m on the fly here.

Vice Chair Candler: Do you want to indicate that that happened in 1991?

Commissioner Mitchell: Yeah. I was looking for the date. You said ’91?

Vice Chair Candler: According to – yes.

Commissioner Mitchell: Yeah, okay, January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1991. Or just say 1991. I thought I had that ready. “The Agricultural Advisory Committee” – is what it was called when it was first formed, which is now the Board – “was formed to advise the Board of County Commissioners and the Planning Commission April 2002.” And that’s – I’ve got the resolution number for you if you need it.

Mr. Eckroth: What was that date again?

Commissioner Mitchell: April 2002. I want to say 4 but I’d have to – it’s resolution number – (are) you ready for that?

Mr. Eckroth: Yeah.

Commissioner Mitchell: “R20020134. That, coupled with Comprehensive Plan policies” – do you guys want those listed out? There’re several of them over several pages. Or do you want it just general?

Chair Raschko: I don’t think you need them specifically.

Commissioner Mitchell: Okay. “Those coupled with the County’s policy that’s called” – Jack, if I’ve really botched this, help me, okay? – “ required disclosure of right to manage natural resources land.” Is that right?

Mr. Moore: Do you mind starting that over one more time?

Commissioner Mitchell: I’m sorry?

Vice Chair Candler: Say it for him again?

Commissioner Mitchell: Say it again?

Mr. Moore: Yes, please.

Commissioner Mitchell: “...require disclosure of right to manage natural resources land.” “...supports the right to farm as a strong policy for the County.” If you’ve got better words, then that’s fine.

Chair Raschko: Does that sentence make sense to everybody?

Commissioner Mitchell: No, somebody’s got to fix it.

(laughter)

Mr. Eckroth: If you're okay, we could adjust it.

Commissioner Mitchell: Yeah, would you make that better? You know what I'm trying to say.

Mr. Eckroth: Absolutely. As long as we get your point and your findings. If you're okay with it, we can slightly wordsmith it, as I think you mentioned.

Commissioner Mitchell: Yep. Thank you very much. This is the hardest part, is getting stuff right. RCW 36.70A – I'm going to give you numbers, Robby – .020(8) – when it's 0.20 (sic) it's parenthesis 8.

Vice Chair Candler: Yep, he's got that.

Commissioner Mitchell: Okay. Comma “.060(1) and .170, Evidence of legislature (sic) mandate for the conservation of agricultural land.”

Mr. Eckroth: Do you mind repeating that one more time? Sorry.

Commissioner Mitchell: All right. “Evidence of a legislative mandate for the conservation of agricultural land...” Is that okay? I mean, we could keep going but I think that's enough there.

Mr. Eckroth: Okay.

Chair Raschko: Amy?

Commissioner Hughes: Going back up to the top, if I could add something to number A?

Mr. Moore: Sure.

Commissioner Hughes: “...have supported farmland preservation and agriculture for many years, protecting the agricultural land base and preserving its farmers is of community interest.” And again, if someone has a thought, enter in.

Mr. Eckroth: So “protecting the agricultural base and...”

Commissioner Hughes: “...and preserving its farmers is of community...”

Vice Chair Candler: Is that backwards? Are we preserving the land and protecting farmers?

(sounds of assent from Commissioners)

Mr. Eckroth: Okay, so “preserving the agricultural land base and protecting farmers...”

Commissioner Hughes: “...is of community interest.” Now I have two more statements that I'd like group to think on this. “Skagit County's efforts to protect and conserve farmland traces back to the 1960s when land use plans, policies, regulations, and programs were first adopted and implemented by the Board of County Commissioners. Today Skagit County's Comprehensive Plan protects and conserves agriculture lands of – “

Chair Raschko: You need to slow down.

Commissioner Hughes: I know. I'm just listening for flow because it may –

Vice Chair Candler: Everything up to “today” I thought sounded good and was complete and you should let him type that part.

Commissioner Hughes: Okay.

Chair Raschko: Okay.

Commissioner Hughes: So now we'll go slow.

Mr. Eckroth: Okay.

Mr. Moore: Sounds great. So “Skagit County's efforts to preserve farmland...”

Commissioner Hughes: “Skagit County's efforts to protect and conserve farmland traces back to the 1960s when land use plans, policies, regulations, and programs were first adopted and implemented by the Board of County Commissioners. Today, Skagit County's Comprehensive Plan protects and conserves agriculture lands...”

Vice Chair Candler: She's saying “conserves” and you're typing “preserves.”

Mr. Eckroth: Oh, thank you.

Vice Chair Candler: Is that right, Amy?

Commissioner Hughes: Oh, there you go.

Commissioner Mitchell: Do you want “preserves”?

Commissioner Hughes: Well, I had “conserves” – yeah, let's do “conserves.” “...agricultural lands of long term significance and seeks to continue their viability now and into the future.” And then one more if you all will listen and see if you concur. “Skagit County must continue to meet the challenges of maintaining and further enhancing commercial agriculture, including steps to limit land uses which adversely affect commercial agriculture, prevent or minimize land use conflicts between farming operations and adjacent land uses, and ensure necessary infrastructure to support agriculture.”

Vice Chair Candler: I definitely like the first part.

Commissioner Hughes: Okay, let's do the first part and we'll see where we go with it.

Vice Chair Candler: Yeah. He's at “challenges of.”

Commissioner Hughes: Okay, “...maintaining and further enhancing commercial agriculture, including steps to limit land uses which adversely affect commercial agriculture...” And then I have a comment behind “agriculture,” if I may: “...prevent and minimize land use conflicts between farming operations and adjacent land uses...”

Mr. Moore: That's between "agriculture" and "adjacent land uses"?

Commissioner Hughes: Yes. Does that work with a period? Okay.

Vice Chair Candler: Actually I would have put – yeah, yeah.

Commissioner Mitchell: That's good.

Commissioner Hughes: I'm done.

Commissioner Mitchell: You got something?

Vice Chair Candler: I don't. I don't.

Commissioner Mitchell: I want to add this and it might not be a good idea to do it, so I'll bounce it past you or not. That court case that I referenced where there was a final decision and an order that came out January 2022. What it said, again – I'm going to read this part again because what I want to do is put the RCW and GMA thing that they failed on, and if we take that same road we would likely get hit with the same ruling. It said "The Growth Management..." – this is the synopsis for the court case decisions, and it says "Final Decision and Order." It said: "The Growth Management Hearings concluded that the county's action failed to comply with RCW 43.21C and GMA requirements to ensure protection of agricultural lands, rural character, sufficient public infrastructure, and consistency between the comprehensive plan and development regulations." So the spirit I understand, but is that necessary to include any of that? Anybody?

Commissioner Henley: I think shorter is better.

Commissioner Mitchell: Got it. Thank you.

Vice Chair Candler: I agree with Vince.

Chair Raschko: Okay.

Commissioner Mitchell: Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Has anybody any other suggestions?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Okay. What I recommend, we go to the top of the list now and just go through them one-by-one. And I have to say everything behind the Number 1 I still don't understand totally. And I'd like to before we leave here.

Vice Chair Candler: Okay, what if we just put –

Chair Raschko: I didn't know we were approving your request. I'm sorry.

Vice Chair Candler: What if we just wrote it like this: "The Planning Commission recommends the Board of County Commissioners adopt the changes to the code proposed by the AAB? Or spell it out.

Commissioner Mitchell: That works.

Chair Raschko: That works for me.

Vice Chair Candler: "...changes to code proposed by the Agricultural Advisory Board." And you could put "Skagit County Code," if you wanted. I don't know how detailed you guys want to get.

Chair Raschko: I'd take the comma out after "Code."

Mr. Moore: Mm-hmm.

Commissioner Henley: I think that's better.

Chair Raschko: Everybody satisfied with that?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Okay, number 1: Any comments or –

Commissioner Mitchell: Would you just read them out loud so we can all hear them and see if they make sense?

Chair Raschko: Who would you like to read it?

Commissioner Mitchell: Robby.

Mr. Eckroth: Sure. So a., "Skagitonians have supported farmland preservation and agriculture for many years. Preserving the agricultural land base and protecting farmers is of community interest."

Chair Raschko: Is everybody fine with that?

(sounds of assent)

Mr. Eckroth: b., "Unregulated addition of non-farm venues can result in interference with farms and farm activity."

Chair Raschko: Okay?

(sounds of assent)

Mr. Eckroth: c., "Non-farm accessory uses threaten farming and farmland in Skagit County."

Chair Raschko: All right.

Mr. Eckroth: d., "Agritourism by definition has to start with agriculture."

Chair Raschko: How's that? Okay.

(sounds of assent)

Mr. Eckroth: e., “The proposed changes clarify definitions based on legal requirements based on state and local law and policy.”

Vice Chair Candler: There’s too many “bases” in that sentence. “The proposed changes clarify definitions and are based on...”

Chair Raschko: Why not say “defined by state and local law,” or something like that?

Vice Chair Candler: Hold on. \_\_\_\_\_ – just take the first “based” out.

Mr. Eckroth: Okay.

Vice Chair Candler: And I think “of legal requirements based on state and local law and policy.” I mean, I don’t know. I don’t even like it. You can take it out. What do you think?

Commissioner Mitchell: I like it.

Chair Raschko: Take it out.

(laughter)

Commissioner Mitchell: You could say “Comprehensive Plan policy,” but that –

Vice Chair Candler: That’s repetitive.

Commissioner Mitchell: Okay.

Vice Chair Candler: We got the – I think it’s repetitive from e. and f. I mean, do you want to just take it out? We could just add – we just add to the next one?

Commissioner Henley: You don’t actually need that. It doesn’t add anything.

Vice Chair Candler: Yeah, let’s take it out.

Commissioner Mitchell: Okay.

Vice Chair Candler: We could add the RCW in here if we wanted, but – nah, let’s just leave it out.

Chair Raschko: All right, e.?

Mr. Eckroth: “The proposed clarifications and changes are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and County Planning Policies.”

Chair Raschko: Okay.

Commissioner Henley: Yeah.

Chair Raschko: Okay.

Mr. Eckroth: “f., Food production is of critical life-sustaining importance.”



Chair Raschko: Any problems with that?

Commissioner Mitchell: No. And if we can add something here, unless I've already missed it. Did we already say that Skagit County has prime soils?

Chair Raschko: I don't believe we have.

Vice Chair Candler: We have the word "soils" down below.

Commissioner Mitchell: But it's prime soils that it's been protecting. Because it's got "soil" everywhere but, for instance, we've got clay and rock where we are.

Vice Chair Candler: I mean, I'm not opposed to – yeah, here we go. Wait. \_\_\_\_\_.

Commissioner Mitchell: Wherever that is, if you could add "prime" before "soils-based" because that's part of the importance for Skagit. If that's okay. Does that change what you want to say?

Vice Chair Candler: Well, that's in the Right-to-Farm ordinance one. Were they talking about it being prime soils or are we talking about that *now*?

Commissioner Hughes: Prime soils are under the Comprehensive Plan.

Chair Raschko: I think in the Right-to-Farm ordinance it doesn't matter what the soil is if it's a farm.

(sounds of assent)

Chair Raschko: I think that that \_\_\_ should go up above.

Vice Chair Candler: I agree. Put it up in f.

Commissioner Mitchell: Thank you.

Vice Chair Candler: What do you want it to say exactly?

Commissioner Mitchell: I'll let you take a whack at it.

Vice Chair Candler: "Skagit County is considered to have prime agricultural soil." Does that sound right, Amy?

Commissioner Mitchell: And they've already been set aside and protected as Ag-NRL, too. That was the –

Vice Chair Candler: "...which have been set aside and protected as Ag-NRL."

Commissioner Mitchell: Does that make sense, Jack?

Mr. Moore: Mm-hmm.

Commissioner Mitchell: Okay.

Vice Chair Candler: I don't think this – sorry, I'm not sure.

Chair Raschko: What?

Vice Chair Candler: Well, we're going through them one and one and maybe – we're now at this lack of enforcement thing. I don't think that we did enough here to –

Commissioner Mitchell: No.

Vice Chair Candler: – explain our recommendation is – so under g., “Lack of enforcement of the current proposed changed code have the potential to create confusion we further recommend that the County – the Board of County Commissioners consider options of enforcement and pathways to compliance...”

Commissioner Mitchell: \_\_\_ pathways to compliance.

Vice Chair Candler: “...and pathways to compliance for those businesses presently operating.”

Chair Raschko: Is everybody satisfied with that?

Commissioner Henley: So far.

Commissioner Mitchell: Okay.

Chair Raschko: Okay.

Mr. Eckroth: Okay, so h., “The County adopted Ordinance Number 12815, the Right-to-Farm ordinance, to support soils-based farming in January 1991.”

“The Agricultural Advisory Committee was formed to advise the Board of County Commissioners and the Planning Commission on April 2002 under Resolution Number R20020134. That coupled with Comprehensive Plan policies” – oh, is that wrong?

Vice Chair Candler: Oh, this is the one that we didn't –

Commissioner Mitchell: Get rid of “the”?

Mr. Eckroth: So that coupled with Comprehensive Plan policies required disclosure of Right-to –

Vice Chair Candler: I think the problem is – I'm sorry to interrupt you. “Required Disclosure” is the title of the document. Is that right?

Commissioner Mitchell: The whole – I'll show it to you.

Mr. Moore: Yes. It likely should be capitalized and possibly be italicized.

Commissioner Mitchell: Yes, right. Thank you.

Vice Chair Candler: And “right-to-manage” should probably be capitalized as well?

Commissioner Mitchell: Yes, I think so.

Vice Chair Candler: And it ends on “land.” So the italics should end on “land.”

Commissioner Mitchell: I do have a point of clarification I need to ask staff. So literally –

Vice Chair Candler: And I think he needs to take the word “which” out.

Commissioner Mitchell: Okay.

Vice Chair Candler: Sorry.

Commissioner Mitchell: That’s fine. So literally, guys, the ordinance that forms the Ag Board says they’re to report to the Board of County Commissioners, and it doesn’t mention the Planning Commission there. It says both the Board of County Commissioners and the Planning Commission is who they advise in the Comprehensive Plan. What’s the best way to address that? Right now it’s – technically it’s lumped, which is technically incorrect. So what do we do?

Vice Chair Candler: Where are you at?

Commissioner Mitchell: Back to the one where the Ag Board was formed. Yeah. So technically –

Vice Chair Candler: Well, let’s just see if this is accurate. Were they formed to advise both in April of 2002, or you’re saying they were only advising one?

Commissioner Mitchell: In April 2002, that document literally calls the Board – it calls out to advise the Board of County Commissioners.

Vice Chair Candler: Not the Planning Commission?

Commissioner Mitchell: Right.

Vice Chair Candler: Then take “the Planning Commission” out of that sentence.

Commissioner Mitchell: But we’ll cut that out and paste that under Comprehensive Plan because in the Comprehensive Plan –

Vice Chair Candler: We’ll just say “...on April 2002, and later the Planning Commission...”

Commissioner Mitchell: That’s fine, yeah. Thank you.

Vice Chair Candler: Or in parentheses, “...and later the Planning Commission...”

(sounds of assent)

Vice Chair Candler: I would say “after 2002.”

Commissioner Mitchell: Thank you. Where are we?

Chair Raschko: So is everybody fine with I.?

(sounds of assent)

Chair Raschko: Okay. J.

Mr. Eckroth: RCW 36 – and I’m going to go back and just look at the RCW and make sure the number’s right –

Commissioner Mitchell: Please do.

Mr. Eckroth: And to make sure that I’m citing it correctly.

Commissioner Mitchell: Right. Because the other thing we found out is that sometimes those puppies change.

Mr. Eckroth: That is also true, so I’ll look into that.

Commissioner Mitchell: Thank you.

Mr. Eckroth: So “The RCW cited are evidence” – or “*is* evidence of legislative mandate of preservation of agricultural land.”

Commissioner Mitchell: Right. Well, it needs commas in there because there’re three different pieces to that.

Mr. Eckroth: Oh, I see.

Commissioner Mitchell: So after parenthesis 8, put a comma, please, and then it’s .6 – it’s like they’re only taking the last three numbers out of that same main RCW – and .070. Okay?

Mr. Eckroth: Yeah.

Commissioner Mitchell: So it needs to say .060 and .070. Does that help you? That’s what it said.

Mr. Eckroth: Okay. Thank you.

Commissioner Mitchell: Yep.

Chair Raschko: Do we need an article in front of “legislative”? Like “the”?

Commissioner Mitchell: I don’t know. How about our legal wordsmith sitting next to you?

Chair Raschko: (unintelligible)

Vice Chair Candler: Yeah, I think it’s fine.

Chair Raschko: Okay.

Vice Chair Candler: You could put an “s” on “mandate.” That would help maybe. But I think it should say “for preservation.”

Chair Raschko: \_\_\_\_\_ mandates to preserve...”?

Vice Chair Candler: “...for preservation of farmland.” Does that sound better?

Commissioner Mitchell: Okay.

Chair Raschko: Okay?

Mr. Eckroth: Okay. “Skagit County’s efforts to protect and preserve farmland traces back to the 1960s when land use, plans, policies, regulations, and programs were first adopted and implemented by the Board of County Commissioners. Today Skagit County’s Comprehensive Plan protects and conserves agricultural lands of long term significance and seeks to continue their viability now and into the future.

Vice Chair Candler: I don’t think the commas need to be there after “Today” and “Plan” but that’s okay.

Commissioner Mitchell: Nice.

Chair Raschko: Anything else on k.?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: All right, I.?

Mr. Eckroth: “Skagit County must continue to meet the challenges of maintaining and further enhancing commercial agriculture, including steps to limit land uses which adversely” affect – or “affects commercial agriculture, prevents and minimize land use conflicts between agriculture and adjacent land uses.”

Vice Chair Candler: I think there’s a semi-colon after “agriculture” and it looks good.

Commissioner Mitchell: Yep, I think you’re right. The second “commercial agriculture.” Yeah.

Chair Raschko: Should it be “challenge” rather than “challenges”? What are the challenges maintaining?

Vice Chair Candler: Hmm?

Chair Raschko: That’s what the challenge is maintaining.

Commissioner Mitchell: I think plural’s good too.

Chair Raschko: Okay, plural. \_\_\_\_\_. Okay.

(several Commissioners commenting inaudibly)

Chair Raschko: It’s all right, so that’s that. Is there anything else to be added to this?

Commissioner Henley: No, not for me.

Commissioner Mitchell: Amy, did we miss anything? Tim, did we miss anything?

Chair Raschko: Not that I know of. Do we need to vote to approve these?

Commissioner Mitchell: Yep

Vice Chair Candler: Mm-hmm.

Chair Raschko: We do. All right. So all those in favor of approval of the rhymes and reasons for the vote?

Vice Chair Candler: Findings of Fact and Reasons for Action?

Chair Raschko: Raise your hand.

Commissioner Henley: This is support, right?

Chair Raschko: Yeah. And those against? Please raise your hand. And abstentions? Two. Okay.

So I believe that –

Vice Chair Candler: I'm concerned about this. Do you have two separate voting blocks for –

Chair Raschko: That crossed my mind too.

Vice Chair Candler: Because they voted differently for the motion, Robby, versus the findings. So we probably need another voting block up at the top right after "1" but before "A." Does that make sense? Because they voted differently. The first time they voted "no" and now they're abstaining.

Commissioner Mitchell: Yep.

Commissioner Woodmansee: I can vote opposed if it makes it easier.

Vice Chair Candler: Well, I mean, it makes sense to me that you would have –

Commissioner Hutchison: There's usually two.

Commissioner Henley: I don't see the separation here.

Commissioner Mitchell: It's – one of the things for –

Vice Chair Candler: Because they're saying if – they didn't agree with the motion. But since the motion was what it was, the Findings seem appropriate. Am I – or they're not saying whether or not it sounds appropriate. But they're not saying they're *not* appropriate.

Commissioner Henley: I see what you're saying. You're saying bring in the nay votes on the Findings.

Vice Chair Candler: Right. They're not bringing their nay votes to the Findings. They're abstaining. So it's a subtle difference.

Commissioner Mitchell: May I add something? Per tradition, no matter what the vote was, outcome nay, yay – no matter what it is – the group is supposed to work on the language together. And so they don't have – people don't have to agree with it, you know.

Commissioner Henley: It seems like we've been down this road before.

Mr. Eckroth: Just so the Planning Commission knows, I do write a transmittal memo to the Board of County Commissioners which summarizes what happened today and will also summarize the vote.

Commissioner Mitchell: And you'll send that to us as soon as you –

Mr. Eckroth: Oh yeah, I could send it to you as well.

Commissioner Mitchell: Thank you. Make sure we all get that, please.

Chair Raschko: Well, I agree with Commissioner Candler.

Commissioner Mitchell: Mm-hmm.

Chair Raschko: That there are two different results \_\_\_\_ reflect that.

Commissioner Mitchell: Yep.

Vice Chair Candler: So the vote on the motion versus the vote on the \_\_\_\_.

Chair Raschko: (inaudible)

Mr. Eckroth: And I have your votes here so I'll fill those out after the meeting, if that's okay. Or I can get this here. Sometimes the table's a little finicky.

Commissioner Mitchell: Yeah. Percussion.

Chair Raschko: All right. So unless there's anything else, that completes our deliberations.

Commissioner Mitchell: I've got a question, though.

Chair Raschko: Yes?

Commissioner Mitchell: Staff, do you generally have an idea when this will come before the Board? A few weeks or a month or January?

Mr. Moore: I would presume in January. We'll need to get on their calendar.

Commissioner Mitchell: Thank you. And you'll let us know?

Mr. Moore: Yes, of course.

Commissioner Mitchell: Thank you.

Vice Chair Candler: He didn't trust us to be able to finish this in one night.

Commissioner Mitchell: Yeah!

Vice Chair Candler: Neither did I.

Chair Raschko: Okay. We will then turn to our Director Update. Mr. Moore, please.

Mr. Moore: Thank you, Chair. Good evening, Commission. I'd like to just share some happenings in the County, and Planning and Development Services specifically. Some of the things we've been involved in:

The flood activity, obviously. Recent flood activity – you likely knew the emergency operation center was stood up to help respond to the flooding and potential damage and assessment of that – any damage or any emergency operations that needed to occur. We did have people from our Fire Marshal's office and our Building Division staffing up there 12-hour shifts. I just want to acknowledge Bonnie LaCount and Randy Johnson specifically.

Another thing that we've been working on with some of the local engineers that are working on projects is we've been working in conjunction with them on ensuring that we're compliant with the new state requirements for tsunami zone design. So Guemes Island is identified as a location that could be impacted by tsunamis. The state has new requirements for structural engineering for structures that are in that affected zone. So it's been good working in conjunction with the engineers locally to get through those requirements and make sure that the buildings are being constructed – designed and constructed safely.

Happy to announce that we are greatly reducing – we have greatly reduced our backlog of building permits and the timeframe in which we're getting them approved. We did some adjustments – I think I may have mentioned previously – to some of the staffing and prioritizing some of the work from a different portion of the planning team. It's reaped great rewards. We have improved approximately – we've reduced it by about two months, the backlog, so (we're) very happy with that. We're going to continue doing that for the next few weeks to get it really knocked down and in hand. So just very happy with that outcome.

Today a number of staff visited up – did a site visit with the representatives of the Skagit Speedway. They have – had a lot – the new owners up there have quite a few plans, have gotten a little bit of a jumpstart on some of those, and we're trying to guide them and get them to compliance and help them understand what is needed to ensure that they are following all the rules and regulations as any other business might.

Also been working with the Port on the number of regulations related to development up there. There's quite a lot of interest, quite a lot of new businesses coming in. The Port's doing a great job of recruitment and providing places for these businesses to land in Skagit County. So we are trying to be proactive in working with them on what the requirements are, how to make it easier. And they have a few permits they are thinking they're going to be able to get in before next year's state code change, as well as the newer version of the state Stormwater Manual. So they're looking at meeting those deadlines so they can design under the current laws.

Another thing we're doing right now at the end of the year, we're analyzing all of our workload, our fees collected for different services that Planning and Development Services are providing, to ensure that we are accurately representing the amount of work that is going into those projects, and that the applicants are covering that time. So we're doing that right now. We hope to have that done by the end of the month and get that before the Board for any adjustment necessary.

Let's see – oh, code compliance cases. At the end of the year we kind of run back and look at all the code compliance cases – peripherally related to some of the conversation tonight. We're doing a very good job of it right now. We have processed over 250 cases this year and a lot of them



take a little bit of effort to get them closed and processed, but even with the backlog that we have at the start of the year plus the 250 cases we worked on, we're down under – now under 200 active cases at the moment. So that's actually quite good in comparison to past years where they've grown tremendously. So we're able – with our capacity at the moment we're doing quite a good job at being able to handle those cases and looking for, you know, reasonably positive resolutions with those property owners on anything that needs to be addressed.

That's all I have, unless there are questions.

Chair Raschko: Thank you. Are there any questions?

Commissioner Woodmansee: I have a question. Do you know what the estimated cost for building buildings and houses or whatever that might be pertaining to these code changes? Do you have any idea what the cost to the – cost of construction's going to be?

Mr. Moore: You know, I unfortunately do not. I've heard anecdotally from a contractor or two what they thought it might be, but I don't actually know.

Commissioner Woodmansee: Is there not a study that addresses that?

Mr. Moore: None that I have seen. I could look into it to see – often there's a cost of compliance analysis occasionally done on different rules. But I'm not sure if that's been done for this particular modification to state law.

Commissioner Woodmansee: I know in the past, you know, on some of the energy code stuff I've, you know, seen numbers that were anywhere from 15 to 30,000 dollars per house. And so I just kind of want to get it out there in the record that these code changes, while well-intentioned potentially, are – could be pretty harming to housing, to the housing industry.

Mr. Moore: Thank you for that. Just for – since we're talking about it, I do share your concern about that. You know, the Planning Department here, we are also attempting to plan for affordable housing and it's in our directive from the state on our Comprehensive Plan process that we're going through right now, and we do see some challenges, given that we have, you know, another portion of the state regulations requiring these upgrades. So three of them that I think are definitely going to have an effect are the energy codes, as you point out; the wildland urban interface codes that will be in place this year; as well as the new Stormwater Manual that will – at our, you know, preliminary analysis, it appears to push more projects toward needing an engineer. So I do share your concern there in trying to keep costs low and provide housing for our community and what that's going to look like.

Chair Raschko: Anybody else?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Okay. Well, thank you.

Mr. Moore: You're welcome.

Chair Raschko: Okay, we have time now for Commissioner Comments and Announcements.

Commissioner Hughes: I just want to compliment you and staff for the accomplishments you've made this last year.

Mr. Moore: Thank you.

Commissioner Hughes: It's a good year-end report and you should feel proud of that.

Mr. Moore: Thank you.

Commissioner Mitchell: Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Kathy?

Commissioner Mitchell: Yeah, I'll co-sign that, and thank you guys for all the efforts that you guys have done to help support us and the public the way you have to make sure we have all good, solid information. Thank you.

Vice Chair Candler: Good work. I don't have anything else.

Chair Raschko: Vince?

Commissioner Henley: Yes, I'd like to wish everyone here a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year. Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Yeah, thank you. Joe?

Commissioner Woodmansee: Well, likewise thanks to the staff. And we've had a little rollover this year and so I'm anxious to see how the next year flies. Actually we've had a *lot* of rollover this year! And I just want to say this: That to my fellow Commissioners, how much I respect your hard work and your efforts in everything. Tonight I was on the short side but it doesn't change my respect and my admiration for your commitment to the Commission. And I appreciate all the hard work *all* of you guys put in.

Chair Raschko: Jen?

Commissioner Hutchison: I could ditto that. You guys do good work and it's nice to be a part of your Commission. Happy New Year.

Chair Raschko: Thank you. I'd just like to say in talking about this process tonight, I do mean it. I found this to be the most difficult thing almost that we've had to deal with. It's something that just didn't seem to have an answer. It seemed to be something that landed in our pocket. And, you know, knowing coming into this that not everybody's going to agree, but I appreciate the respect everybody shows each other and acceptance of the result. I want to thank staff for all the help and good work you've done and everybody here. I mean, there was a mountain – a *huge* amount of work that my fellow Commissioners did to be ready for tonight. So thank you all.

And everybody have a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and all that. And what am I missing?

Vice Chair Candler: We should thank the Ag Advisory Board for their work too.

Commissioner Mitchell: Oh, absolutely.

Chair Raschko: Yep. Well, we all should have.

Vice Chair Candler: I know, but I just remembered.

Chair Raschko: Don't just thank me! And so I want to thank, too, the Ag Advisory Board for the work that they did. Thanks.

Commissioner Mitchell: Yeoman's work plus.

Chair Raschko: Yes. And with that then, we'll stand adjourned (gavel).