

Snohomish County Agricultural Advisory Board

Jackson Board Room

December 14, 2010

12:30 p.m.

MINUTES

12:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order, Introductions, Announcements

- Chair

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mike Bueler (Position 1 - Dairy)

Mike Harnden (Position 2 - Nursery)

Gerald Labish (Position 3 - Livestock)

Brian Bookey, Chair (Position 4 - Commodity Crops)

Mark Craven, Vice Chair (Position 5 - Agricultural Direct Marketing)

Dave Remlinger (Position 6 - Diking Drainage & Flood Control Districts in Snohomish River Basin)

Elizabeth Christianson (Position 7 - Diking Drainage & Flood Control Districts in Stillaguamish River Basin)

John Postema (Position 9 - Snohomish County Farm Bureau)

Marv Thomas (Position 11 - Snohomish River Basin)

BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Jackie Macomber (Position 8 - Equine)

Jesse Allen (Position 10 - Stillaguamish River Basin)

OTHER ATTENDEES:

Dan Evans, Dan Evans Consulting/Sustainable Lands Strategy

Nick Harper, Cascade Land Conservancy

Ryan Hembree, Snohomish County Economic Development

Naeem Iqbal, IFF Holdings

Kristin Kelly, Futurewise/Pilchuck Audubon Society

Beth Liddell, Snohomish County DPW

Monte Marti, Snohomish Conservation District

Ed Moats, Snohomish County Farm Bureau

Lew Moore, Dan Evans Consulting/Sustainable Lands Strategy

Tom Niemann, Snohomish County PDS

Peter Ojala, Attorney

Lewis Roane, Citizens for Sustainable Development

Tom Rowe, Snohomish County PDS

John Spoelstra, Diking District #6

Debbie Terwillegger, Snohomish County DPW

Geoffrey Thomas, Snohomish County Council Office

Clay White, Snohomish County PDS

12:35 p.m.

**2. Orientation to Jackson Board Room and GRANICUS Recording System
- PDS Staff**

Board members and attendees welcomed to December Ag Advisory Board meeting.

Review of protocols of Jackson Board Room facilities and GRANICUS recording system, giving us two broadcasting options: live to the web or a tape delay in posting to the website. This first time using the system will be a delayed posting to the web.

12:45 p.m.

**3. Approval of 11/9/10 Meeting Summary
- All**

November 9, 2010 Meeting Summary approved as written/presented to the Board.

12:50 p.m.

4. Public Comment

Peter Ojala, attorney representing Diking District #2, sent a letter to the Board on December 7, regarding a property being considered for annexation. This annexation will take place by election method in February 2011. Copies of the letter, supporting documents, and a map of the annexation area, located at the east end of the Hewitt Avenue trestle, were included in the December mailing to Board members and interested parties; a color version of that map was distributed at today's meeting.

Ryan Hembree announced that his final date of employment with Snohomish County will be tomorrow, December 15. He expressed appreciation for working with the Board over the years. His plans are to purchase product from local providers for his business, *Skip Rock Distillers*, and also to do some consulting, so he will most likely have opportunities to work with many Board members again in the future.

1:05 p.m.

**5. Presentation and Discussion of Sustainable Lands Strategy
- Ryan Hembree, County Agriculture Coordinator
- Dan Evans, Project Facilitator
- Lew Moore, Project Facilitator**

Mark Craven serves on the Conservation District Board, and presented the Ag Board with a copy of a draft letter he would like the Board to send to Council and Executive, requesting a reduction in the County's deduction for the 2010 Snohomish Conservation District Assessment, which is currently in excess of \$142K – more than 15% of the total assessment.

ACTION: This topic was discussed amongst the Board and a motion made to send a letter to Council and Executive. The Board voted in favor of having PDS staff work on re-drafting Mr. Craven's draft letter, including a request that a representative from the County attend January's Board meeting to provide more insight into those special administrative costs and to promote further discussion.

Lew Moore and Dan Evans are co-facilitators of the Sustainable Lands Strategy process, which has provided an opportunity for representatives from the restoration and agricultural communities, and tribal governments, to form a coalition that will benefit both agriculture and salmon-recovery programs and move them forward. A 20-page draft document was provided for the Board's review, which included major components of the package and a summary of their recommendations. The SLS has also asked the County to help put together a layered GIS system that will show where we are right now with agriculture/salmon recovery/watershed issues.

Executive committee members sitting on the SLS Board expressed concern that the final document needs to accurately reflect impacts on adjacent property owners and farmers that are not currently being addressed with the existing reach level approach in the strategic plan. It was suggested that the January Ag Board meeting agenda include further discussion that addresses limited federal funds available and a net benefit enhancement to both farming and fish habitat.

The SLS hopes to send out a cleaner version of this document, through PDS staff, prior to Christmas. The review process will follow (county, state, and the tribes); feedback will then be incorporated into the final document, with delivery expected sometime in January. The final document will be available for review at the January 11 Ag Board meeting, during which the Board will be prepared to vote on it.

Gerald Labish brought to the Board's attention that, on November 17, 2010, Governor Gregoire issued an Executive Order directing state agencies under her jurisdiction to suspend non-critical rule development and adoption activities until the end of 2011. PDS Director, Clay White, acknowledged this directive, but we have not yet been able to determine how this will impact the County and DOE mandated compliance with certain rules.

2:05 p.m.

6. Update from Cascade Land Conservancy on Purchase of Development Rights Study

- Nick Harper, Cascade Land Conservancy (CLC)

Nick Harper, CLC, provided an overview of high-level draft recommendations on a CLC study requested by the County. This study looked at PDRs and TDRs (Transfer of Development Rights), to ensure that we've aligned our outreach for state and federal funding, and that resource landowners and the ag community collaborate toward the most efficient use of public resources and available funds. The CLC is

suggesting that the County allocate additional conservation dollars toward future PDR transactions, targeting those properties at greatest risk for development.

Mr. Harper will follow up in the next week with something in writing. In addition to discussion time reserved on the agenda, the CLC will provide a complete written summary at the January 11 Ag Board Meeting. Nick Bratten, also with the CLC, is scheduled to present CLC findings to the Council sometime in February.

2:35 p.m.

7. Update on Permit Activities

- Permit Subcommittee

- PDS Staff

PDS called Henderson Farming, so no grading violation has been pursued. A couple of new code enforcement actions are forthcoming, under grading violations.

Recent media releases inaccurately depicted PDS as holding up the Del Fox permit. The pre-application process is complete, but an application has not yet been submitted.

WDFW has contacted PDS about an emergency exemption to replace the dikes on South Leque Island, so this is still under evaluation and conversations continue to take place.

Clay White, Tom Rowe and Howard Knight met with Monte Marti at the Snohomish Conservation District office on December 8, to discuss what they can do to help move Low Impact Development proposals forward and how we would use farm plans when required with permits.

Land Disturbing Activities regulations became effective September 30, but no Ag related applications have yet been submitted.

2:50 p.m.

8. Discuss January 2010 Election of Board Officers

- All

Most Board positions are in place through mid-April 2012. January's meeting will include the election of Board officers for 2011 – Chair and Vice Chair. Brian Bookey would like to remain an active member of the Board and continue to be part of the process, but his preference is that others be given an opportunity to serve. Please contact him if interested in taking on those duties.

John Postema expressed that, in the context of the SLS process and the prospect of possibly losing Smith Island, we need to be more proactive with a strategic farm

plan. Maybe a committee needs to be formed to address this issue and report back to the Board in January or February.

Naeem Iqbal spoke of his concern at hearing discussions of losing Smith Island and isn't sure what that means for the 58 acres he wants to farm. He thinks the County and SWM should take measures to ensure that ag land isn't damaged further and that, if the Diking District isn't going to improve drainage, he could lose agricultural production on his land. He also questioned whether boarding horses is considered farming.

Mr. Bookey responded that any statements about losing Smith Island were inaccurately conveyed. The County is committed to the SLS process of balancing farm interests with habitat restoration; we will be watching any diking projects very carefully. He also pointed out that Jackie Macomber is the equine expert on the Board, and that equine falls under agricultural activities in Snohomish County.

3:00 p.m.

9. Closing