

Snohomish County Noxious Weed Control Board

Meeting minutes for December 9, 2010

In attendance

Steve Russell, Keith Sarkisian, Louis Stangland, George Ohlsen, Roy Scalf, Mel Reitz, Sonny Gohrman, Geraldine Saw

Approval of minutes from September 9, 2010

The minutes for September 9, 2010 were unanimously approved.

Public Comment

There was no public comment

Old Business

Public Works-new ordinance-coordination between Road Maintenance and the Weed Board

The Board moved to this agenda item due to time restraints.

Roy talked about the new ordinance approved by Council, effective December 1, 2010. The goal of the ordinance is to meet the needs of the Board, Public Works, and the requirements of the Weed Law.

Keith made a motion that the board is not in favor of any assignment that is not described in the job description. Louis seconded the motion. The motion was made in reaction to the Big Tree Project which Sonny and Gerry were asked to participate. The assignment is not in the job description. Steve believed that if the funds are limited and if the board does not have enough work for Sonny to do, it is up to Sonny if he wants to take on the assignment offered by Public Works. The Board's role is to ensure that Sonny does his job as coordinator. Sonny thought that the big tree project is a good tie for him and Gerry, as long as the job does not involve high risk of injury. However, there is no job description that mentions other project assignments. Roy said that it is a short window after the council passed the ordinance and he needs have an ongoing conversation on ways to implement the ordinance with the board and union. George proposed that amendment should be added on the motion that it is up to Sonny and Gerry's discretion. Roy said that Gerry and Sonny are not asked to dig holes and plant trees and it's not up to the employee discretion. Mel added that Sonny and Gerry will most likely place bareroot trees in containers at the native plant nursery in Machias. Steve said that the Board does not have the funds to employ Sonny and Gerry full time and the additional work from budgets outside from the Weed Board would allow them to work more hours and keep their benefits. Curt said that it will help preserve the general fund because the benefits are coming out from other budgets. Keith thinks that an amendment to the motion should be added to restrict these other job assignments to January, February and March. They should focus on what their job description requires them to do for the rest of the hours of the time. Sonny thought that a motion is unnecessary at this point. Keith withdrew his motion.

Motion: Keith made a motion that the Board is not in favor of any assignment that is not described in the job description. Louis seconded the motion. Keith withdrew his motion.

Roy passed out draft copies of the Noxious Weed Control Crew (NWCC) discussion topics such as operations and accountability in reference to the new ordinance. Steve recommended that the Board read the document at home, highlight any questions and forward comments and questions to Steve. He can discuss the questions with Road Maintenance. Mel apologized for passing out the document the day of the meeting. Sonny responded to Keith's comment on time spent on

nuisance weed control. Steve said that the conflict of the lack of time and enough people to kill weeds has to be resolved in the work plan. Roy mentioned that Road Maintenance can supplement the work crew and that RM has crew members with public operator's licenses. Steve said that we can show the Council what they bought for the budget they approved and what they could potentially purchase if more money is allocated to us. If we show them the plan, they might give us more funds. Steve plans to appear in front of the Council this year. Roy said that Public Works will not be doing enforcement as stated in the document. Steve would like any feedback or comments on the draft document be given back to him by January 15, 2011 so that he can work it out with Road Maintenance. Roy will send all Board members an electronic copy of the document.

Action item: Roy will send updated electronic copies of discussion topics to Board members and staff.

New Business

2011 Weed Conference and Coordinators Conference Travel

Sonny suggested a motion for approval to attend these two functions without yearly updates by the Board. Board approval would allow submitting an advance request for travel made to Road Maintenance early in the year. Attendance at these conferences provides Sonny and Gerry continuing education credits, updates, networking and keeps staff from operating in a vacuum.

Motion:

Steve made the motion that the Board delegates to the weed coordinator the Board's approval to initiate requests for travel and expense reimbursement for training that is required of weed board staff to keep applicator licenses current. This would authorize the Coordinator to initiate the request without seeking Board approval prior to submitting. Keith seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Steve proposed that all motions made during the Weed Board meeting is recorded in a book for future reference. Sonny will keep a separate file of motions and action items. Sonny thinks he could comb through the past minutes using a search command to find for motions made in previous meetings if time allows.

Action Item: Sonny will keep a separate file of motions and action items.

2011 Weed List and Rules and Regulations

The Public Hearing to accept comment on the 2011 Snohomish County Weed List and any changes made in the Rules and Regulations will be scheduled is scheduled for February 10, 2011. Sonny feels that Gordon Sively should go through the Rules and Regulations to make sure they are in agreement with the new ordinance. A new weed list will need to be passed for 2011 at the regular meeting after the public hearing on the weed list. The only required addition is hairy willow-herb as a Class B designate. The addition does not need council approval. Sonny suggested removing thistle from the Class C list. It has become a nuisance weed and has moved towards an urban interface problem. Two years ago, a request to remove thistle from the list was rejected. The council said that they would allocate more funding for that year, but the funds failed to materialize. Steve said that we have to show a work plan on what they could buy with more funds. Sonny said that it is hard to enforce on a Class C compared to a Class A weed.

Sonny suggested that the Board meet 6 times a year instead of 7, with a 3 hour time commitment. Sonny feels that some of the meetings have been rushed. Using committees to research and report back should help to eliminate a meeting. Eliminating one Board meeting would free up

mileage money for committees to meet or attending Council meetings, etc. Sonny would also like members to participate in a weed tour in their own district. Steve suggested meeting every other month. Steve requested that the rules and regulations are sent to each member.

Action item: Sonny will send copies of the current Rules and Regulations to board members.

Strategic Plan for 2011

Sonny asked if the Board would want the same strategic plan or something different. What does the Board want to do with the limited amount of general fund? Steve brought up the idea again of showing what the County gets for the current budget and what they could be getting with increases.

Budget

Sonny gave a power point presentation of the budget, current as to the end of October. The budget will be sufficient till the end of the year because the early resignation of two crew members and late hiring of seasonals in the spring. In regards to one of the early resignations Sonny proposed a requirement that anyone from the layoff list should finish the current assignment before moving to the next full time position. This probably isn't possible, but it is an issue in replacing staff on short notice and when the weed season places limits on time. Sonny does not have budget figures for next year yet. He will share the budget figures as soon as he gets them. Curt said that council had passed the budget the week before Thanksgiving.

Sonny passed out a copy of the King County Report which was written by a King County staff member dedicated to working with Federal and State agencies on noxious weed control. Sonny would like a 1 full time inspector that makes owner contacts and follow-ups, does inspection report paperwork. If the property owner fails to comply then Gerry or Sonny will get involved in the action with the property owner. The position could be full time or a 7 month position with some incentive to return if it is a seasonal position. It would cost approximately \$25,000 for a seven month seasonal position. In 2011, we need to put forward a 2012 budget that covers this position and funds the two FTE's the Board currently have. If the board commits to this without a budget increase, Sonny and Gerry would need to put in more hours on projects and grants or the general fund will be deplete by the end of the season.

A cost share program would give property owners incentive to participate in the control work instead of either ignoring the law or going to enforcement. Owners could be offered some level of cost share if they agree to a plan to control noxious weed on their property. Steve suggested showing the council what they could buy with the proposed budget. Sonny said that he had presented the proposal to the council in 2008 and 2009 what they could have bought. There was virtually no input from the Board in the 2011 budget. He urged board members to take the budget back or Public works will decide on the Board's budget. Keith said that we have to present the cost share program to Executive Reardon.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:00 pm

Respectfully submitted by Geraldine Saw and Sonny Gohrman.