

**Agricultural Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary
January 11, 2017**

Start Time:	3:00 p.m.
Location:	Whatcom County Northwest Annex-Central Conference Room

Meeting Highlights
There were 21 people in attendance (8 of the 13 voting members; 4 staff members and 9 other).

Attendees – Members	Affiliation	Present
Bayer, John	Farmer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Beanblossom, Ashton	Whatcom Family Farmers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Boxx, Lesa	Consumer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Buys, Dave	Farmer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hawley, Vicki	Processor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Helm, Larry	Farmer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hento, Barb	Farmer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Kentch, Wesley	Farmer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gunst, Jamie	Farmer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plagerman, Leroy	Farmer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Martin, Anna	Farmer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Van Dyk, Landon	Farmer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yoder, Richard	Conservation District Board	<input type="checkbox"/>

Quorum Present	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
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Attendees – Ex-Official/Contributing	Affiliation	Present
Bierlink, Henry	Whatcom Family Farmers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Boggs, George	Conservation District	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gillies, John	Farm Expertise	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elea VanWeerdhuizen	FFA Youth	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hall, Alex	NRCS	<input type="checkbox"/>
Benedict, Chris	WSU Extension	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Attendees - Staff	Present	Attendees - Staff	Present
Beringer, Karin	<input type="checkbox"/>	Boxx, Becky	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Elder, Chris	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gary Davis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mark Personius	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paula Harris-PW Flood	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Others Present		
Jaime White	Charmae Scheffer	Kyle Stone
Dannon Traxler	Denise Zuidmeer	Cal Bratt
Larry Davis	Matthew McDermot	

Open Session for Public Comments

Denise Zuidmeer commented on the issue of dog kennels in the Agricultural zone. She lives near the proposed kennel and is opposed to the it. Currently there are 13 other kennels in Whatcom County. All of them are in the Rural zone. This is the only one that wants to be on agricultural land. The proponents did a study comparing Whatcom County to other counties in the state. The study was not like comparing apples to oranges. Agricultural land should be left for farming not kennels. This is spot zoning.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from November were approved. John Bayer motion to approve. Wes Kentch seconded. The motion passed.

Announcements

Chris stated PDS recently sent out the Natural Resources newsletter. It has been expanded to include items other than agriculture.

Old Business

- Flood Plains by Design: Paula Harris from Public Works River and Flood Division gave the presentation. They currently have a grant application in with the Washington State Department of Ecology for work on deficiencies in the county. Flood Plains by Design is a new term which came from a partnership between the Nature Conservancy, State of Washington, Army Corps of Engineers and U.S.G.S. It was a concept to try and develop a program that would have the objectives of reducing flood hazards, restoring salmon populations, improving water quality and outdoor recreation. Increasing agricultural viability is one of their goals. Another part of the program is working on sediment control with U.S.G.S.
- Dog Kennels in the Agricultural Zone: Gary Davis reviewed the request to allow dog kennels as a conditional use in the Agricultural zone. The issue is schedule to be heard by the County Council on January 24th. The Planning Commission recommended denial in September. The Hearing Examiner recently granted a conditional use permit for a related use for the boarding of U.S. Customs and Border Patrol Dogs. This permit did not permit private dog kennels which is the issue before the committee today.

Jaime White, land use consultant, spoke on behalf of the applicants. In the Whatcom County Agricultural code there are a lot of uses, that are not just for farming, that are already allowed. There are also cottage industries that are allowed in the agricultural zone that are not ag related. There is a lot of discretion by staff and a lot of gray area about what constitutes a cottage industry. Allowing kennels in the agricultural zone, as a conditional use, is compatible with many other uses and arguably less impactful than many of those uses. The agricultural zone makes sense in that it keeps animals with other animals. Whatcom County has typically allowed farmers to section off one to five acres for them to live in after they quit

farming. This leaves a lot of small parcels not available for farming. These small parcels make sense for these other businesses.

Dannon Traxler spoke as the attorney for the applicants. Kennels are already allowed in the Rural zone which has smaller parcels and a denser population. This creates more likelihood that they would disturb people. The Rural zone does not have the type of restrictions on kennels that are being proposed here.

Charmae Scheffer, applicant, stated that when this process began there was a lot of confusion on behalf of PDS about what could be done in the agricultural zone and as a cottage industry. They were initially told they could have a kennel.

Leroy Plagerman moved to support the proposal. Lesa Boxx seconded. Roll Call Vote: Ayes-John Bayer, Ashton Beanblossom, Vicki Hawley, Barb Hento, Wesley Kentch, Leroy Plagerman; Nays-Anna Martin; Abstain-Dave Buys. The motion carried.

New Business

- Agricultural Strategic Plan review

Chris gave a brief overview of the plan to date. Because several members will be leaving the committee staff will give a more detailed overview at the next meeting after new members are appointed.

Medium Term Priorities are:

- PDR program
- Review of the Rural Study Area-Agricultural Designation Process
- Right to Farm improvements
- Parcel Reconfiguration
- Coordinate with other agencies to reduce overlapping jurisdictions
- Water system planning and agricultural planning coordination
- Expedited permit review and other incentives for commercial ag
- Mitigation for the loss of ag land
- Natural Resource market place development

TDR's will be a short term priority.

Closing:	
End Time: 5:00 p.m.	
Next Meeting Date/Time/Location	February 8, 2017/3:00 pm/Northwest Annex