

Ag Land Program – Technical Review Committee

Meeting Notes

Monday, June 2, 2008

2:30 – 4:30 pm

Members Attending:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Larry Stoner	<input type="checkbox"/> Dick Yoder	<input type="checkbox"/> Greg Ebe
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Gillies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bill Querhn	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bob Tull
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vicki Hawley	<input type="checkbox"/> Doug Dostal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chuck Antholt

Others Attending:

<input type="checkbox"/> Paul Grey	<input type="checkbox"/> Mary Dickenson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Henry Bierlink
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Samya Lutz	<input type="checkbox"/> David Stalheim	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Martin Blackman

x = attending

o = absent with notice

1. Review agenda, May 19 meeting notes – The committee received both a full and an abbreviated set of meeting notes. No changes were suggested.
2. Follow-up items
 - Review of maps distributed May 2nd – Henry asked if anyone found areas that made them question the data on the maps. Members felt that they were quite accurate.
 - Review of information from the public survey – The committee reviewed the survey results with an eye to discerning clear messages concerning ag land protection. It was noted that only three audiences (farmers, landowners, general public) had enough data to discern a reasonably accurate (+/- 6%) perspective. The committee wondered what the relationship between the survey and work of the TRC should be. It was noted that the survey does not direct the TRC's work but it informs it as to where the public is at and the likelihood of acceptance of the tools that TRC may propose.
3. Prioritization Factors – A review of the priority factors generated at the last meeting and the PDR Advisory Committee's priority factors was conducted. The committee wondered if a GIS map of the County with overlays for the following might be of great benefit. The map should contain – zones, target areas from the PDR program and Rural land study, prime soils, and water rights as best we can determine them. Layers that we might want to help develop include: heritage and conservation opportunities (properties linked to specific families, wildlife corridors, etc.) and highly threatened properties. Henry and Samya will check with the County about this project. Henry also noted that the PDR target areas may need to be rethought as well.
4. Conservation Futures (Natural Heritage Program) Report – Samya distributed information on the status of the County's Conservation Futures program. The fund is

now bringing in approximately \$900k annually and has a balance of nearly \$2.5 million. The PDR program for ag lands has spent \$3.7 million which represents less than 30% of the total expenditures. It was also noted that the fund began with a maximum limit of \$.0625 per \$1000 valuation and has now dropped to \$.04229. The Council recently approved a return to \$.0625 but it was vetoed by the Executive with a note that there was an adequate amount of funds in the program already.

The criteria for applying these funds were also discussed. It is clear that such criteria do not exist although the County has been discussing a more predictable plan for how these funds might be used. The TRC brainstormed a 30% Ag Land Program, 30% Parks, 40% discretionary ratio that would allow for predictable expenditures and perhaps even bonding against these funds.

5. Out-of the box Idea Discussion – Larry brought information from several of his clients where a wise use of lot line adjustments could place allowed development rights in non-ag areas and preserve the integrity of the ag parcels. Current County land use policies prevent this from happening. Larry will propose code changes for us to consider that would make this possible. The TRC recognized that while this would be a move in the right direction it would be even better to move the development rights completely out of the ag area. This discussion again pointed to the need to establish receiving areas for density transfers. It may be that we will need to allow a combination of density transfers and more creative movement of densities within the ag areas.

An exercise in mapping and inventorying parcels in the non-ag areas of the county (minus ag zone and Rural land target areas) was again suggested. It would be a reverse table of the ones we generated at the last meeting. Samya would look into this.

6. Public Involvement and education – the plan to have public forums to follow up the recent survey was briefly discussed. It was suggested that smaller focus groups might be a wiser effort with an emphasis on refining the questions and testing some of the ideas being generated at the TRC with a somewhat larger audience.
7. Resources – Available
 - Natural Heritage Plan – 1991 – copies at 3/3 mtg.
 - Purchase of Development Right Program summary – distributed 2/11
 - AAC Rural Land Study – distributed 2/11
 - TDR Program Market Value Estimates – 2003 – Pruetz report – distributed 3/3
 - Agricultural Transfer of Development Right Presentation: The Snohomish County Experience – available through WFF office – 4/21
 - Proposed Ag Land Work Program – a Powerpoint Presentation by Kraig Olason to the County Council, October, 2006 – 4/21
 - Maps:
 - potential build out in the ag zones
 - open space ag areas

- CAO – Wetlands
- CAO – Frequently Flooded Areas
- CAO – Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas

8. Resources – Needed?

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Meeting Schedule

June 16

July 7

July 21

August 4

August 18

September 8

September 22