

Ag Land Program – Technical Review Committee

Meeting Notes

Monday, October 20, 2008

2:30 – 4:30 pm

Members Attending:

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

Others Attending:

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

x = attending

o = absent with notice

1. Review agenda, September 22 meeting notes – The notes from the September 22 meeting were discussed. Bob was asked to further elaborate on the density/intensity discussion. He pointed out that there is discussion in planning circles that the “density” approach to zoning which focuses on “use separation” may not serve us as well as a focus on “intensity” which looks at impacts and seeks to manage them. While this discussion presents some interesting new ways of considering countywide land use plans the consensus was to set it aside for now and concentrate on finishing the task before us of presenting recommended agland protection tools.
The September 22 Meeting Notes were approved.
2. Updates – A brief discussion of several related planning efforts took place.
 - “Rural” – what is it and how can the County define it to be compliant with GMA. The MAKERS consulting group is assisting the County in rethinking its rural definitions. This report must be finished by June, 2009. David noted a series of public meetings being planned for November 12 & 13 which would allow for more comments on rural issues.
 - “Whatcom 2031” – feedback from initial public meetings was discussed. It was noted that a rather consistent message from one particular interest group dominated the discussions. There was some discussion about how the recommendations flowing from each of these efforts would merge with the recommendations coming out of the TRC.
 - Whatcom Legacy Project – future direction for this group remains unclear.
 - County Budget – David reported that the anticipated reduction in PDS staffing would be all on the permitting side and would not have an effect on long range planning. The planned shift of Conservation Futures tax funds would have a serious negative effect on the PDR program. Chuck will look

into this issue and may be speaking to the Council on behalf of the Ag Advisory Committee.

3. Public Forum Review – Paul reflected on the October 1st workshop in Bellingham and the October 14th workshop in Lynden. 25 attended in Bellingham and 48 in Lynden. Some new input was received for both the contributions and the threats related to agriculture. The groups began to become familiar with the tools being discussed.
4. TRC Recommendations – A review of each of the tools including the Advantages and Disadvantages and the TRC Comments progressed. A new tool proposed by Kulshan Land Trust was discussed. The TRC saw it as more of a sub-set of the Acquisition and Leaseback/Resale tool than a uniquely new tool. It was suggested we merge the tables into one and work more on ordering the tools as to their potential impact. The TRC would also like to see some effort on anticipating the cost to the public to implement the tools.
5. Public Forum Planning –Upcoming forums will be held November 6th in Bellingham, and November 12th in Lynden. The pertinent question was “What the TRC wants from the public via these forums?” Ideas generated included:
 - Flesh out how the ideas may be applied
 - Identify tools that are helpful and which are not
 - Ask the public “if you had \$\$\$\$ to spend on ag land preservation where would you apply it?”
 - Perhaps providing some examples of how tools would be implemented
6. Fall Ag Committee retreat – November 1st - discussion over ag land preservation strategies with Ag Advisory Committee, PDR Oversight Committee and TRC. Samya distributed some ideas about the agenda. George Boggs will help facilitate the meeting.
7. Conservation Easement/Estate Planning Workshop – Nov. 20th – hosted by WFF and WLT. All TRC members are encouraged to attend.

Aug. – Dec.	Expand public discussion of resource land protection programs
October 20 th	Agree on Internal draft of TRC’s recommendations
November 17 th	Finalize draft recommendations to the County Council, Executive
December 3 rd	Present draft to Ag Advisory Committee, Natural Resources Committee
January 15 th	Present final recommendation package to County Council

Meeting Schedule

November 3 - cancelled
November 17

December 1
December 15