

# SUMMARY

## PDR Oversight Committee Meeting 6975 Hannegan Rd. Bellingham, WA

September 7, 2005

**Members present:** Rod Erickson, Doug Dostal, Jim Dykstra, Barbara Dykes, Veronica Wisniewski; Staff: Kraig Olason, Becky Garney.

1. Public Comments.

There were no public comments.

2. Review of Minutes.

The minutes for the 08/03/05 meeting were reviewed. Veronica motioned to approve the minutes. Doug seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as written.

3. Parks Plan Update.

Kraig met with the Parks Department Director who gave Kraig the impression they want to eventually get all the Conservation Futures money. Kraig stated he doesn't think this will happen. The Parks Plan they are working on is mostly a recreational plan not an open space plan.

The Parks Department sent out a survey on parks. If any of the committee members have comments on the survey let Kraig know.

The Committee discussed the Guide Meridian that is an entry point into the County with a great view to the east. This should be listed as a scenic highway. Is there a way to get this area funded for purchase?

4. Review of appraisals.

Alamwalla - This farm is in the Custer area and is approximately 90 acres in size, 70 acres of which is in raspberries. The appraisal came in at \$270,000.00. The appraiser discounted the forestland that is in the back. There is the issue if the land has enough water. There is debate about the water rights. There are 6 development rights on 60 acres because of the well issues.

The property does not have all prime soils. Approximately one half of the site contains the same soils as on the Paul property.

Doug spoke of water issues. The committee should get appraisals of the real value versus the market value. The Washington State Department of Ecology may start clamping down on water rights. Doug moved to send this appraisal back to the appraiser to review the water rights. Veronica seconded. The vote was unanimous for doing this.

Vander Yacht – Kraig stated he will review the water situation on this property to see if they have enough. There is currently a trailer on the site. We got a total of 12 lots. Kraig stated he was comfortable with this appraisal. The committee agreed and will move forward with this purchase.

Pauls – The appraisal has an error in it. The total lots should be 21 rather than 22. Kraig has spoken to the appraiser about this. The total for the development rights will be approximately \$38,000 to \$40,000 for the development rights. This is approximately \$4,000 per acre. This property was severely discounted and lost a total of 10 building lots. There are two parcels involved that were illegally separated a long time ago but it should be okay because they were done so long ago. We didn't provide water and septic info for this site. It is assumed they can find a place for the septic. The committee agreed the appraisal was acceptable. Kraig will discuss the purchase with the Pauls next week and the committee will continue with this purchase at their next meeting.

If the Pauls property is purchased Kraig would like to pursue obtaining the property next to it that belongs to the Fentons. It may have some water issues that will need to be looked at.

Kraig discussed asking the County Prosecuting Attorney about doing surveys on future and past purchases. The committee agreed this should be done.

5. Staffing and program direction issues.

Kraig stated PDS is very short staffed. Jason has taken another position and is no longer available to work on ag projects. Kraig has lots of other duties and doesn't have the time needed to devote to ag projects. The committee needs to let the County Council know a full time ag person is needed. Doug moved to draft a letter to the County Council stating their staffing concerns. Veronica seconded. Kraig will work with Barbara on a letter.

Veronica brought up the issue of committee vacancies. There are currently two vacancies and Jim will be leaving. The committee members will try to find replacements.

6. Round IV applications.

The committee would like to look at other methods to preserve ag land. There are other options besides just spending money.

Kraig may need to go to the Stein Road area to solicit applications.

The next meeting will be October 5, 2005 at 8:30 a.m. at the Conservation District Office.

**Signed,**

**Rod Erickson, Chair**

**PDR Oversight Committee**

Discussion of Washington State Senate Bill 5396.

Kraig provided handouts describing WA State Senate Bill 5396, which adds two potential funding sources that could be used. One of the funds can be used for conservation of AG land and the other is for the conservation of riparian areas. Applications are submitted to the state legislature for approval. However, there is no appropriation yet for this bill. Kraig stated that it is a positive effort by the legislature to purchase threatened areas.

Update on current appraisal process.

Kraig stated that the county has issued \$20,000 for appraisal services, which is supposed to be complete by the end of August. He stated that he is curious to see how the appraisals come out for Alamwala and Vander Yacht, since those two properties will be losing development rights due to the enforcement of the 6-pac well limit.

Doug stated that the committee should look at the appraisals before they are given to the property owners. The group agreed with Doug.

Update on Round 3 applications.

Kraig stated that Herman Joneli wanted to reserve an area on his property for a future house, but NRCS said they would not accept the application for that reason. Therefore, Joneli's property is not being considered for purchase. For the Tom Fenton property, the NRCS allowed an area to be

reserved for a future home based on the topographic difference on where the proposed area is and the prime ag land. However, purchase of the Fenton property is tied to the purchase of the neighboring Paul property. If the Pauls do not want to sell, then the PDR program should not purchase the Fenton property. The Paul purchase is still pending.

Update on revision to property ranking system.

Jason provided a handout of the most recent revision to the property ranking system. He explained that the changes were fairly minor and concerned only the points that were to be assigned to the land evaluation portion of the ranking system. When these changes were used to reevaluate properties ranked with the previous system, the property ranking came out very close to what it was originally. This ranking system however was developed with the idea that the properties soil characteristics would be expressed more than in the previous system.

Craig stated that the Committee might want to clarify what is meant by available water rights. Kraig stated that the County uses the Department of Ecology's database to assess water rights. That is the only way now to make that decision.

Veronica moved to adopt the new ranking system. Barbara seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous for approval.

Round 4 application process.

Kraig stated that another application round should be initiated. He also stated that a notice should be sent out soon.

**Next meeting will be September 7, 8:30 am at Conservation District office.**

**Signed,**

**Rod Erickson, Chair  
PDR Oversight Committee**