

MEETING SUMMARY

PDR Oversight Committee

May 22, 2009, 8 AM

Agricultural Service Center, 6975 Hannegan Road

Voting members present: Rod Erickson, Veronica Wisniewski, John Gilles, Allison Aurand, Paul Schissler; PDS Staff: Samya Lutz, Dean Martin

1. Public Comments: There were no public comments.
2. Review of Minutes: The February 6, 2009 meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.
3. Round VII PDR Discussion

USDA FRPP application – The application for USDA funding was submitted recently, containing information on five of the seven applicants (Eldridge was left out due to committed state RCO funding; Perry was omitted because of decision to be removed from round). Total requested was \$768,132 (50% of estimated easement value) for 478 acres.

The proposed USDA scoring penalizes Whatcom County for losing more than 15% of our farmland, according to their numbers. Whatcom County's statistic was revised to 19% loss (down from 30%) after correcting 2002 data for counting forested land as ag land. Still, any loss over 15% results in 0 points.

John suggested the county should do our own analysis of land in farms to have a predictable way of measuring over time.

Review process – There have been difficulties this year getting timely title and deed information for applicant properties. The committee discussed the possibility of requiring applicants to submit their deed history with their application in the future. There would be a cost to these (currently somewhere between \$50 and \$300, depending on property). This could make applicants more vested in the process, but could also be a deterrent to applicants coming in at all.

John suggested the idea of cost-sharing with applicants for the appraisal. It is information that benefits the applicants as well, that currently the county pays for. Allison mentioned that this is something other jurisdictions do also. Paul mentioned balancing the desire to get applications in, with the need for commitment from applicants during the process.

Preliminary “restricted use report” appraisals – Staff made the decision to get restricted use reports from the appraiser for five properties (all in the USDA app except Henry Tjoelker; and Eldridge). The results were given to the committee (see notebook). The full appraisal for the Eldridge property will go forward soon. The other applicants still have issues to be resolved before moving forward with the full appraisal.

4. Other Discussion items

UGA process – Rod mentioned that Ferndale may be reducing the UGA by a broad area on the west side. Dean gave an overview of the UGA process, including the land capacity analysis (LCA), population projections, and Growth Management Coordinating Council (GMCC) process. In June cities will present to the Planning Commission and Council. Most (all but Lynden) look as if they will need to give up UGA acreage. Related issues were discussed, including water (flooding, stormwater, drinking, ag), density, and commercial floor area ratio assumptions.

5. Next committee meeting: The committee will meet again on Friday, July 31st, 8 AM, at the same location. Note: John Gillies offered to draft a recommendation related to PDR applicant commitment (appraisal cost share &/or requiring Deed History up front). Samya will look at committee recommendations over past couple meetings & potential code change implications.

Signed, Rod Erickson, Chair PDR Oversight Committee