

MEETING SUMMARY

PDR Oversight Committee

April 23, 2010, 8:30 AM

Planning and Development Services – Northwest Annex Office

Voting members present: Veronica Wisniewski, Allison Aurand, Paul Schissler, Mark Harting, Others: Chuck Antholt (Farm Friends); County PDS Staff: Samya Lutz, Dean Martin

1. Public Comments/Announcements/Agenda Review: There were no public comments.
2. Review of Minutes: The March 26, 2010 meeting minutes were reviewed and approved (Motion: Mark, Allison).

3. PDR Applications

The committee discussed the new application from Tom and Diane Funk, located in both the Stein Target Area and Loomis Trail Rural Study Area. There was general support of pursuing this application, especially if CREP acreage can be included in the easement. Samya will look into the ability to include this by contacting local and state folks who administer CREP.

4. PDR Program Discussion

Mark made a motion to support Ann's work to complete the farmer interviews (Allison second). Paul abstained. All others in favor.

The group discussed the recommendation for a new valuation process, including the desire for upfront estimation of development rights values to add certainty to the farmer participation process. A suggestion was made to highlight option B2 in the memo as it is likely to be more economical, though the feasibility of this option is uncertain. Veronica noted that this is the most important recommendation, and the other recommendations follow.

The selection criteria is interrelated with the valuation changes, as well as with the application streamlining recommendation. Some discussion took place about the relation also with Transfer of Development Rights sending area identification. The point – noted by Veronica – being to develop a rationale for the best properties to focus PDR dollars on, and move forward efficiently with protection of those properties.

The conservation easement content section was discussed, with the resulting recommendation remaining to stay with the status quo at this time.

The other considerations will stay on the table, but now is not the time to look at changes. Veronica noted that she prefers to rely on economics to determine whether or not land stays in farming. Paul noted that the risk of not addressing these issues is that the program

becomes only a system for open space preservation, as opposed to a system for farmland preservation.

Mark made a motion that the full committee adopt these recommendations as their own; Allison second. All in favor.

5. Draft PDR Presentation

Priority committee recommendations for presentation to Administration will be:

Tier 1 – Ann’s outreach (esp. farmer interviews) & new valuation approach

Tier 2 – other outreach, selection criteria, application streamlining

Also to include general update of the program and current properties for potential easement purchase.

Meeting with Administration to take place May 12; Meeting with Council committee to take place May 25.

6. Other Discussion

Budget issues are an additional ‘other consideration’ – the program needs its own budget in order to add efficiency and predictability for applicants. Resolution in 2001 to have “fair and significant” portion of Conservation Futures dollars to PDR program. It’s very difficult to have measurable results without a predictable budget. There is no way to gauge the performance of the program with so much change year to year. We risk losing our match funding without certainty and consistency within the program.

Next committee meeting: The committee will meet again to conduct regular business on Friday, May 28, 8:30 AM, at the Smith & Northwest Planning & Development Services office.

Agenda to include prioritization of outreach ideas, more info on Skagit & valuation approach

Next steps re: valuation changes. Samya to contact Skagit appraiser who is updating Han Timmer’s work (?Jim Ormiston?). Allison to try to get materials from Skagit, including Han Timmer’s methodology.

Motion to adjourn at 10:15 (Allision; Mark). Passed.

Signed, Veronica Wisniewski, Chair PDR Oversight Committee