

MEETING SUMMARY

PDR Oversight Committee

July 8, 2011, 8:30 AM

Planning and Development Services – Northwest Annex Office

Voting members present: Veronica Wisniewski, Allison Aurand, Paul Schissler, John Steensma; Guests: Dean Martin; County PDS Staff: Samya Lutz.

1. Public Comments/Announcements/Agenda Review

There were no public comments.

2. Minutes

The April 29th meeting summary was reviewed and approved, after correcting a typo in the first paragraph (Motion by Allison, John S., second).

3. R2A Eligibility Discussion

Committee members and staff reported on the Council Natural Resources committee discussion that had taken place on June 21. The committee asked for a change in the proposed ordinance, to be worded as follows:

3.25A.070 Eligibility Criteria

In order for a parcel to be eligible for a conservation easement, it must be located outside of an established urban growth area and within Rural 2A, Rural 5A*, Rural 5A, Rural 10A or Agriculture zoned land and meet any additional eligibility criteria as defined in the PDR program guidelines.

The asterisk refers to Rural 5A areas depicted on the official zoning maps with an asterisk that are subject to Whatcom County Code 20.36.252 Rural Residential Density Overlay. The original language recommended by the PDR committee eliminated the list of zones, but council committee discussion led to the desire to add the specific zoning districts unlined above so as to not overly broaden the eligibility to areas not intended for agricultural protection. There was general support among PDR committee members present for this change, as it accomplishes the same result as was initially intended by the committee. A public hearing will be held at the evening council meeting on July 12.

4. PDR Round VIII and IX Updates

Staff and committee members reported on a visit from USDA West Area Liaison, Monica Hoover, on June 14th, and a subsequent discussion with her and other local members of the ag community. The issue of substitutions came up, with USDA requiring pre-determination of substitution parcel eligibility at time of application or shortly thereafter. Staff will work on trying to come up with a list of substitute parcels to be included in the current contract, if funding becomes available this year.

The Jensen property is due to close next week. The Funk property appraisal is complete, and staff is scheduled to meet with them next week pending approval of the appraisal by the committee. **Paul made a motion to accept the Funk appraisal (Allison second); all in favor.**

Staff discussed the density determination of the Weatherby property. **Allison moved to accept the Weatherby density determination (Paul second); all in favor.** This appraisal has just been authorized. The Littrell property was discussed. Committee members asked that the appraisal authorization and other due diligence be contingent on the removal of the derelict vehicles on the property. Staff will send a letter to this effect to the Littrell family.

5. PDR Program Development

Bob's pricing formula work was discussed, with a look at the draft correspondence and approach he had sent to the committee via staff. The deadline for completing his work has been moved to November. Committee members agreed with his approach to leave out the scoring from the formula, and instead to try to mirror the appraisal approach of estimating the difference between the 'before' and 'after' values.

Allison passed on a discussion she had with Barbara Brenner about a budget allocation for PDR in the Conservation Futures fund. Paul suggested a memo from the PDR OC could address three points: a 50% availability for PDR, encouragement for restoration of the CF levy to the codified 6.25 cents/thousand (WCC 3.25.010), and a caveat saying that if important priority purchases in either parks or Ag came forward, there would be the opportunity to bond against future CF revenues. Allison and Paul will work on a draft of the memo, with support from staff. Allison can provide examples from Skagit of the ability to leverage additional outside funds with this kind of budget allocation available.

Staff provided a draft of an Ag Protection Prioritization Process, that attempts to move in the direction of biannual target areas as the committee had suggested in earlier months. Committee members discussed this approach, and agreed that it has potential to be a helpful tool. Staff hopes to bring forward a map depicting the results of the suggested scenario in a future meeting.

6. Future Agenda Items

Items to include in the next meeting agenda: Funk response to appraisal, Ag Strategic Plan discussion, and plans for Round X, in addition to follow-up on the above-discussed items if timely.

Next committee meeting:

Tentatively August 12 (if needed). Also September 23. Both will be at 8:30 AM at the Planning and Development Services offices, Central Conference Room.

Motion to adjourn at 10 AM

Signed, Veronica Wisniewski, Chair PDR Oversight Committee