

AGENDA

Conservation Easement Program Oversight Committee

Planning and Development Services – Northwest Annex

5280 Northwest Dr, Bellingham, WA 98226

Annex Conference Room

or

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83517926824?pwd=SnVUOVRKbVBQekdrUnVzNDIySTJQZz09>

Passcode: cepoc

Friday, July 22, 2022

8:30 – 10:00 AM

1. **Welcome, announcements, public comments, & agenda review (10 minutes)**
2. **Approval of previous meeting minutes (5 minutes)**
3. **Updates since previous meeting (5 minutes)**
4. **Discussion items/business (60 minutes)**
 - Program Acquisition Update
 - Meeting with County Executive
 - Utilize Buy-Protect-Sell Strategy
5. **Public comments (5 minutes)**
6. **Next meeting (5 minutes)**
 - September 23rd, 8:30-10:00 AM- Online and In-Person Option
 - Future agenda items

Included in the meeting packet (or provided at the meeting):

- June Meeting Minutes

Community members who require special assistance to participate in a committee meeting are asked to contact the meeting facilitator at least 4 business days in advance. Please contact meeting facilitator, Becky Snijder van Wissenkerke, at 360-778-5956 or rsnijder@whatcomcounty.us.

Determination of a Quorum/ Welcome

We have a Quorum for the meeting.

Public Comments

No public comments at this time.

Announcements

No announcements at this time.

Approval of Minutes – May

Heather moved to approve the meeting minutes. McKale seconded. **The motion passed with all in favor.**

Updates Since Previous Meeting

Paul announced he has requested a meeting with the County Executive. Becky shared that County Council approved the budget supplementals for three conservation easements.

Discussion Items/BusinessWhatcom Food System Plan

Ali gave an overview of the five goals of the Food System Plan and asked the committee for feedback. The committee discussed issues concerning local food viability and land access. Issues identified included not all food can be grown locally, the local market is not profitable enough for farmers, the need for crop diversity, and the need for a processing and distribution facility. The committee expressed interest in having the Conservation Easement Program expanding its buy-protect-sell strategy to help with land access.

Whatcom County Staff Coordination

Becky recapped the past discussion regarding staff coordination between departments that utilize Conservation Futures Funds. She shared that PDS management suggests the committee make the request for staff coordination to the County Executive's Office. Chris recommended the committee follow up with an email to the Executive after their meeting to restate their requests. It was also recommended to mention the Climate Action Plan's support for conservation easements. The committee and staff generated a list of departments and programs that utilize conservation easements:

1. Planning & Development Services
 - a. Conservation Easement Program- only uses easements
 - b. Buffer Mitigation Bank- potential to use easements, program not started
2. Public Works
 - a. Natural Resources Watershed Management- uses easements and fee title acquisitions
 - b. River and Flood- uses few easements, mostly fee title acquisitions
3. Parks- uses fee title acquisitions
4. Executive's Office- Climate Action Plan- potential to use easements, program not started

Direction for Acquisition Strategy

Becky asked the committee for direction with the program's acquisition strategy. The committee suggested targeting timberland in priority areas and farmland in Rural Study Areas. Becky stated she would work on a landowner mailer focused on these areas.

Closing Comments

Sean stated he would like to join Paul and Heather in their meeting with the County Executive.

Future Agenda Items

- Meeting with County Executive
- Program Acquisition Update
- Utilize Buy-Protect-Sell Strategy

Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for Friday, July 22, 2022, 8:30-10:00 AM. This will be a hybrid meeting with an in-person and remote option.

Meeting adjourned at 9:43 AM.