

**Agricultural Advisory Committee  
Meeting Summary  
January 14, 2015**

Start Time:	3:40 p.m.
Location:	Whatcom County Northwest Annex

**Meeting Highlights**

There were 21 people in attendance (9 of the 13 voting members; 2 ex-officio, contributing, 5 staff members and 5 others).

<b>Attendees – Members</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Present</b>
Bayer, John	Farmer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blok, Ed	Whatcom Farm Friends	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Boxx, Lesa	Consumer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Buys, Dave	Farmer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hawley, Vicki	Processor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helm, Larry	Farmer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Finger, Mike	Farmer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Kentch, Wesley	Farmer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Overson, Leighton	Farmer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plagerman, Leroy	Farmer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Vander Veen, Debbie	Farmer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Van Dyk, Landon	Farmer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Yoder, Richard	Conservation District Board	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Quorum Present</b>	<b>YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/></b>
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<b>Attendees – Ex-Official/Contributing</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Present</b>
Antholt, Charles	Chair Emeritus	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Bierlink, Henry	Whatcom Farm Friends	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Boggs, George	Conservation District	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gillies, John	Farm Expertise	<input type="checkbox"/>
(vacant)	FFA Youth	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hall, Alex	NRCS	<input type="checkbox"/>
Benedict, Chris	WSU Extension	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Attendees - Staff</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Attendees - Staff</b>	<b>Present</b>
Beringer, Karin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Boxx, Becky	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Elder, Chris	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cliff Strong	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mark Personius	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

<b>Others Present</b>		
Erica Strobel-Public Works	Chuck Timblin	Albert DeBoer
Corina Cheever	Andrea Hood	

**Approval of Meeting Summary**

The October 8, 2014 meeting notes were approved with the following corrections: The ~~May 14, 2014~~ June 11, 2014 meeting notes could not be approved due to the lack of a quorum. Larry Helm motion, Debbie Vander Veen second.

The November 12, 2014 meeting notes were approved with the following corrections: Marty Mayberry. Larry Helm motion, Debbie Vander Veen second.

The December 10, 2014 meeting notes were approved as written. Landon Van Dyk motion, Wes Kentch second.

**Open Session for Public Comments**

There was no public comment.

**Old Business**

- ★ Pollution Identification and Correction Program (PIC) Presentation by Erika Douglas from Public Works.

Erica introduced Corina Cheever and Chuck Timblin from the Whatcom Conservation District; Andrea Hood from the Washington State Department of Health; and Albert DeBoer from the Portage Bay Shellfish Advisory Committee.

What is driving this program is people want clean water in the community for themselves, shellfish, fish, animals, agriculture, etc. The reason this program is ramping up in Whatcom County is because of the high fecal coliform levels being seen. Kalebsiella is another type of bacteria that is of concern to the members of the committee. Whatcom County has approximately 90 routine fresh water sampling sites. They are tested on preset dates on a 6 to 12 times per year. They are not sampling around storm or dry events. Less than 20% of these sites are meeting water quality standards for fecal coliform bacteria. This has resulted in closures of shellfish areas. The state has taken the lead on trying to clean up some of these areas at the request of the Lummi Nation. The committee was concerned with the state takeover. They would like to see cleanup efforts locally controlled. Erica stated everyone needs to work together to make that happen.

They have been working with the landowners in areas that have high bacteria counts to identify sources and solutions. A lot of them interconnect with other areas.

High bacteria counts can come from animal waste, both domestic and urban wildlife. Regarding the urban wildlife they are working with landowners to control their unnatural food sources.

Members of the committee stated the agricultural community is bearing the brunt of the regulations because they are the easiest group to regulate. There were poor human decisions made in the past that have led to this. Erica stated the programs are driven by data, which comes from many sources, which they act upon. Erica told the members to keep track of things they may see, such as waterfowl in the fields. Members asked what would be done with that information. Erica stated they would analyze the information and

try to take samples in the area. If the issue is birds, that is not a human impact so there is not a lot that can be done. The members stated it is hard to find the data. Where is it? Public Works is working on a website to display the data. Members asked if DNA studies are being done. Erica stated DNA will state a source of the bacteria but not how much is coming from that source and it is very expensive.

Erica showed photos of violations that are happening such as animals in streams, manure being sprayed near a river, etc. Committee members stated most farmers are trying to do everything right. That is never expressed.

Committee members asked Erica to return with the following information:

- Dates of sampling shown on graph.
- Cost of all this and breakdown for each program.

★ Comprehensive Plan Chapter 8 Final Review

Karin stated the draft contains all the changes staff and the committee recommended. At the next meeting she will need a final okay from the committee. Committee members will review the draft and email comments to Karin. The final will then go before the Planning Commission.

### **New Business**

★ Committee member attendance and terms

Dick Yoder's term has expired. He did not reapply. There are no applications for the vacancy at this time. Committee members will do outreach to try to find interested parties to fill the vacancy. The attendance rules were reviewed.

- ★ Debbie thanked Ed for his presentation at the County Council Natural Resources Committee meeting.
- ★ Karin announced that at the next meeting she will present a training video regarding open government. This is a mandatory training for all committees and commissions. If members will not be attending the meeting to view the video there are other ways to receive the training.

<b>Closing:</b>	
End Time: 5:45 p.m.	
Next Meeting Date/Time/Location	February 11, 2015/3:30 pm/Northwest Annex