

## Final Agritourism Stakeholder Group Notes

Skagit Publishing and via Zoom

July 31, 2023 from 9am - Noon

### Attendees

Mark Knutzen (former farmer and former Planning Commission member); Kara Rowe and Jennifer Smith (WWAA); Jesse & Jeff Anderson (Maplehurst Farm & Save Skagit Farm Venues); Katie & Brock Clements (Saltbox Barn and Farm & Save Skagit Farm Venues); Tom Shields, via Zoom (Eagle Haven, Perkin's Apples); Taryn Holmstrom (Skagit Valley Wedding Rentals); Amy Frye (Boldly Grown Farms); Emma Christianson (Christianson's Nursery); Hollie Del Vecchio, Tim Knue, Kim Rubenstein, and Allen Rozema (SPF); Lyn Wiltse, facilitator (PDSA Consulting)

### Action Items

- Lyn: Send out meeting notes from this meeting this same day along with agenda for Wednesday and Zoom invites for all future meetings.
- Lyn: Include links to the two reports prepared by BERK Consulting that evaluate the impacts of agritourism in Skagit County.
- Lyn: Invite Jake Buganski (Skagit Tourism Bureau) to join this group.
- All: Look for future communications to come from [lyn@pdsaconsulting.com](mailto:lyn@pdsaconsulting.com).
- Allen: In the name of transparency, will be posting meeting notes on the SPF website along with a list of the meeting participants. Allen will also include meeting agendas.
- All: Post the same on your own websites or direct other interested parties to SPF's website so they can be informed and give you feedback on what is occurring. Engage your stakeholders in discussions between these meetings to the extent possible.

### Future Meeting Dates for this Group

All meetings will be at Skagit Publishing and include a Zoom option.

- Wednesday, August 2 from noon – 2pm
- Monday, August 7 from 9am – noon
- Wednesday, August 9 from noon – 2pm
- Monday, August 14 from 9am – noon
- Wednesday, August 16 from noon – 2pm (Deadline for public comment is now August 17.)

### Announcements

- Mark Knutzen announced that at of this morning, he has resigned from the Skagit County Planning Commission and his resignation has been accepted. He feels the work of this group is paramount and when asked to choose between the Planning Commission and this Group, he chooses this group.
- Kara announced that Terry Sapp informed her that believes his expertise on this issue as a member of the Ag Advisory Board has been sufficiently shared and he will no longer be attending these meetings.
- Kara also announced she would be unable to attend the next meeting and will ask one or two WWAA members to attend in her place.

### Introductory Remarks

In discussing the work of this group, Allen reminded everyone that it is important to emphasize we are participating in the existing public process and will submit our proposed recommendations to the Planning Commission by the new deadline for public comment which is August 17 along with other members of the public that will be submitting public comments for the Planning Commission to consider.

### Agritourism Definition

Starting with the BERK Consulting definition used by the County for the two-year community meetings on the subject, we came to a consensus to use the following definition. Note: We will revisit this from time to time, as we develop other proposed recommendations:

Agritourism is a commercial enterprise at a working farm, ranch, *or other agricultural business* for the enjoyment of visitors that generates supplemental income for the owners. Activities may involve education, entertainment, direct sales, outdoor activities, or hospitality. *These activities link to and support* the primary agriculture activity of the land and its economic viability.

### **How to Proceed**

After considerable discussion there is consensus to proceed by listing what accessory uses would be acceptable, possibly acceptable, and absolutely unacceptable (depending on size scale frequency etc.) Kara kicked off the discussion by suggesting unacceptable uses would include no potential of zero impact. She then mentioned concert venues, motocross, monster trucks, etc. Concert venues include a stage and music with the potential to negatively impact farm animals. It would all depend on how loud and for how long (size and scale). Shotguns were also brought up as an example of noise that could negatively impact farm animals. Allen brought up the point that any use or activity has the potential to impact - that very rarely does an activity has zero impact. Allen asked if it would be appropriate to start evaluating uses/activities on the basis of whether or not impacts can be addressed/mitigated in order to determine if they would be an appropriate or acceptable use the ag. zone. The group will discuss this further at our next meeting.

It was suggested that once we identify uses, we could then proceed by defining criteria. A question was asked if we should propose big picture concepts/ideas to Skagit County and let professional code writers fill in the detail or do we want to proposed specific code language and amendments, similar to the AAB. Allen suggested that if we pursue drafting specific code language it's important to be as clear as possible so that County staff – from permit techs to the County's prosecutors office can easily interpret for implementation and enforcement. The more clarity that can be achieved, the easier it will be for Skagit County to implement and enforce. It is also important to keep in mind that the code should be written with such clarity as to disallow any "nibbling away" over time. There was also consensus that it will be helpful to use the two-column format developed by WWAA and displayed by Kara at the last meeting.

### **August 2 Meeting Topics**

- Introduce any new members / Review, revise as needed, and approve these notes and action items.
- Continue listing which accessory uses would, might and would not be acceptable, keeping in mind the common goal of preserving farmland.
- Begin review of and suggestions regarding proposed code.