

Draft Agritourism Stakeholder Group Notes

Skagit Publishing and via Zoom
August 16, 2023 from Noon – 2pm

Attendees

Mark Knutzen (Interested citizen); Jesse & Jeff Anderson (Maplehurst Farm & Save Skagit Farm Venues); Katie & Brock Clements (Saltbox Barn and Farm & Save Skagit Farm Venues); Tom Shields (Eagle Haven, Perkin's Apples & Manager of Farmers Equipment); Taryn Holmstrom (Skagit Valley Wedding Rentals); Morgan Elton (Country Financial Insurance & Skagit County Farm Bureau); Amy Frye (Boldly Grown Farms); Leo Roozen (WA Bulb Co., & RoozenGaarde); Emma Christianson (Christianson's Nursery); Jamie Crawford and Colton Cummins (Country Cousins Inc.); Terry Gifford (Willowbrook Manor); Jake Buganski (Skagit Tourism Bureau); Kim Rubenstein, Tim Knue, and Holly Del Vecchio and Allen Rozema (SPF); Lyn Wiltse, facilitator (PDSA Consulting)

Action Items

- Lyn: Send out meeting notes (draft and final) along with consensus-approved versions of the letter and recommendations to submit to the Planning Commission along with this group's recommendations.
- Allen: Hand carry and email the letter and recommendations to the County.
- Allen: Continue to update the Agritourism page on SPF's website with final versions of notes from these meetings, as well as relevant County information.
- All: Continue to reach out to electeds to advocate more time for proper public engagement.

Announcements

Many thanks to Jessie and Jeff for fresh blueberries and raspberries. Yum!



Thanks also to Morgan for believing we could come to consensus on our Agritourism-related recommendations to the Planning Commission and bringing a celebratory cake to commemorate the occasion! Lyn was of the same mindset and brought sparkling cider and "Longevity" champagne to celebrate this significant accomplishment.

Recommendations / Letter

Allen explained he has had numerous discussions with County staff and stakeholders within and beyond this group, all the while doing his best to channel the interests and concerns of this group. The County was understandably concerned about the ability to apply any new proposed code/policy concepts on a consistent, fair, and enforceable basis.

We reviewed, edited, and approved by consensus the draft policy recommendations, taking into consideration the interests of stakeholders participating in this group along with the position papers received by Western Washington Agricultural Association, Skagit County Farm Bureau, the Agricultural Advisory Board and Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland. To the greatest extent possible, the proposed recommendations refer to existing code as much as possible where relevant. Approved recommendations included:

- Definitions: Adding new proposed definitions for *Agritourism* and *Farm Event Venues* to SCC 14.04.020 and amending existing definitions *Agricultural Support Services* and *Farm-based Business* definitions.
- Recommending the inclusion of *Agritourism* as an *Agricultural Accessory Use* subject to rigorous criteria.
- Recommend establishing a new *Limited Entry Permit with a cap on total number of permits available for Farm Venues* that is subject to renewal.
- Established criteria under Permitted Uses for a *Farm Event Venue* that is focused on education directly tied to agricultural production.
- Proposed criteria for an Administrative Special Use Permit and Hearing Examiner Special Use for *Farm Event Venues*.

For the accompanying letter, we left the text as edited at the last meeting and added Skagit Valley Wedding Rentals to the list of supporting organizations.

Next Steps

Submit the consensus approved proposed recommendations to Skagit County.

Wait for Skagit County to announce next steps. Stay tuned!