

South Lynden Watershed Improvement District

Minutes – March 12, 2024

Attendees

“(t)” indicates presence via tele-conference, “(p)” indicates proxy vote.

Board – Present	Board – Absent with Notice
Landon VanDyk (<i>chair</i>) Ed Blok Rod VandeHoef Ed Blok	Pablo Esquivel

Staff and Consultants	
Name	Organization / Affiliation
Gavin Willis	Ag Water Board
Henry Bierlink	Ag Water Board
Frank Corey	Whatcom Conservation District
Elizabeth Hayes	Whatcom Conservation District
Fred Likkel	Whatcom Family Farmers

Other Guests	
Name	Organization / Affiliation
Alan Chapman (t)	Whatcom Conservation District

Proceedings

Meeting called to order at 3:00 pm.

1. Consent Agenda

- a. Agenda was reviewed.
- b. February 13 minutes were reviewed.
- c. Financial reports and voucher in the amount of \$21,050.76 were reviewed.
- d. Rod moved to approve the consent agenda. Ed seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Administration

- a. Jeff moved to approve Resolution 2024-02 – Appointment of Agent to Receive Claims for Damages. Rod seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Ag Water Board / Water Supply

- a. Gavin provided an update on adjudication issues. 26 comment letters were submitted on the draft claims form. The entire review process is new, and showed the value of public review of the document. ECY is turning comment review and finalizing of the form over to AG office, but ultimately the form and summons are a decision of the court, not ECY or AG.
- b. Comments on 2025 Comp Plan update were sent to Whatcom County Planners. Gavin will send comments to board members via email. Expect to see first draft of Comp Plan update in fall 2024.
- c. Streamflow restoration grant is still moving forward in South Fork. Henry is monitoring to ensure ag will not be negatively impacted.

4. Drainage / Habitat / Flood

- a. Fred provided an update on FLIP work. Timelines are concerning: buyouts in the next 5 years, but any other fixes are 15+ years on the horizon. Might be a need to let people know that if they are expecting the county to prevent flooding, the county isn't going to do anything in the near term. May be beneficial to send a joint letter from the WIDs and small cities to the county.
 - i. Board noted concern that if we remove ourselves from the process that it will move on without our input.
- b. Ditch maintenance was discussed. Flood damage cleanup mentioned as a point of emphasis, including Thiel Rd and Abbott Rd.
- c. Was noted that the Conservation District may potentially have a pool of money available for culvert replacement.
- d. Frank provided an update on buffer program. \$25M available this year. Voluntary buffers of any size can be funded, or incentive-based buffers on active farmland (min. 50' width, 35' on intermittent) at \$1000/acre/year. Board members support sending a letter to key landowners in the WID, will include a fact sheet with more info about the program.

5. Water Quality

- a. Elizabeth provided a water quality update. Numbers are looking good across the board, and Noon Rd is back down to normal levels. Sampling events shown on Feb 20 and Mar 5 were not associated with rain events.
- b. Discussion about Dept of Health potentially opening more areas to year-round harvest in Portage Bay.

6. Education / Communications

- a. Water rights info evening on March 27th at 6:30pm at the Northwest Washington Fairgrounds.
- b. Discussion of Losing the Farm documentary produced by Whatcom Family Farmers. Ed moved to contribute \$5000 of WID funds to WFF for promotion and distribution of Losing the Farm Documentary, contingent on legal approval. Rod seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

7. Next Meeting

- a. Next meeting is scheduled for April 9th at 3:00 pm.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:07 pm.

Submitted by Gavin Willis, Ag Water Board

Approved by _____

