

**Agricultural Advisory Committee  
Meeting Summary  
January 10, 2024**

Start Time:	3:00 p.m.
Location:	Hybrid Meeting – Zoom & at Whatcom County Planning & Development

<b>Meeting Highlights</b>
There were 13 people in attendance (Voting members: 5 of 9, Staff members: 5, Ex-Officio: 2 Other: 1).

<b>Attendees – Members</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Present</b>
Chapman, Alan	Whatcom Conservation District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
McDermott, Matthew	Ag Producer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gill, Jagwinder	Ag Producer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hento, Barbara	Ag Producer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kubalek, Roger	Ag Producer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Singh, Gurjit	Ag Producer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Harron, Elli	Consumer of Ag Products	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Welch, Chantel	Ag Programs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Groen, Steve	Ag Producer	<input type="checkbox"/>
VACANT	Ag Producer	<input type="checkbox"/>
VACANT	Ag Producer	<input type="checkbox"/>
VACANT	Ag Processor	<input type="checkbox"/>
VACANT	Whatcom Family Farmers	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Quorum Present</b>	<b>YES</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
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<b>Attendees – Ex-Official/Contributing</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Present</b>
Corina Cheever	Whatcom Conservation District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Benedict, Chris	WSU Extension	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hall, Alex	NRCS	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brooklyn Hallberg	FFA Youth	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<b>Attendees - Staff</b>	<b>Present</b>
Dakota Stranik	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Lauren Templeton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Priscilla Drewry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cliff Strong	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Crig Ostrom	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<b>Others Present</b>
Fred Likkel, Whatcom Family Farmers

**Roll call and introductions**

A quorum was present.

**Open session to take public comment on agricultural issues**

There was no public comment

**Agenda Review and Adjustments**

The Agenda was adopted without any changes

**Review & Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

Minutes for the December meeting (12/13/23) were unanimously approved by the committee.

**Identification of Committee Member Motivations & Objectives**

Each member introduced themselves and their backgrounds as well as why they have chosen to serve on the committee and any specific efforts they are inclined to support through the AAC. It was agreed that preservation of farmland was a high priority. Other priorities mentioned were discouragement of incompatible uses, preservation of prime soils, maintaining enough land base for an economical viable land base for agriculture, maintaining the health of natural resources and water quality by finding common ground with competing industries and expanding cities, supporting the economic viability of farming in Whatcom County. Finding solutions around water availability and land use, as well as cost of farmland.

**Discussion of Possible AAC Code Changes to Facilitate Full Membership**

The committee considered the possibility of adding more seats under the title of "consumer of ag products" in order to facilitate a broader reach for potential members. However, it was decided that this was not a change that the committee wanted to move forward at this time. The committee members agreed instead that prioritization of a large number of Ag Producer seats was critical. It was agreed to make a number of small grammatical changes as well as removing the unfilled ex-officio seat for Whatcom County Planning & Development which is separate from the designated staff support.

Roger motioned, Chantel seconded, and the above changes were unanimously approved.

It was suggested that a sub-committee could be formed to focus on member recruitment.

**2025 Comprehensive Plan Review - Kickoff**

PDS Long Range Planner, Cliff Strong provided information about the upcoming 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update and how the AAC can engage with that process. Cliff asked that all AAC members review the Agriculture section of Chapter 8, Resource Lands and provide a list of comments and potential changes to review at the next AAC meeting in February.

**Discussion of Ag Strategic Plan Priorities**

Presentations were given by Whatcom County PDS staff on ongoing Agricultural Programs. Lauren Templeton presented about the Conservation Easement Program, Priscilla Drewry presented on the Open Space program, and Craig Ostrom presented on the zoning code, Ag Protection Overlay, and Ag Short Plats. The purpose of these presentations was to

clarify current actions and priorities being supported around agriculture in order to clarify what other actions and priorities may need to be addressed in the future to support agriculture in Whatcom County.

**Staff Updates**

No staff updates were presented

**New Business**

No new business was presented

**Action Items & Next Agenda**

Alan, Elli, and Roger will coordinate to form a sub-committee around communications with other related committees.

**Adjournment and Next Meeting**

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m. The next meeting is postponed by one week from the regular meeting date due to scheduling conflicts. The next meeting is therefore scheduled for February 21, 2024 from 3-5 p.m. to be held both in-person and virtually.