



SAN JUAN COUNTY

LAND BANK

MEETING MINUTES

Land Bank Commission Meeting
January 17, 2020
San Juan Island Grange
152 First Street, Friday Harbor, WA 98250

Commission Members in Attendance:

Jim Skoog, District 1, position 1
Miles Becker, District 3, position 3

Doug Strandberg, at large, position 5
Christa Campbell, at large, position 7

Commission Members Absent: Sandi Friel, District 2, position 2, Brian Wiese, at large, position 4, David Meiland, at large, position 6

Land Bank Staff in Attendance: Charlie Behnke, Lincoln Bormann, Judy Cumming, Peter Guillozet, Eliza Habegger, Erin Halcomb, Kayla Seaforth, Amanda Wedow, Tanja Williamson

Land Bank Staff Absent: Sarah Benson, Carlton Burns, Doug McCutchen, Eric Nelson

County Council Liaison: Bill Watson, Council Member, District 1. **Public in Attendance:** 8

| Topic | Key Discussion Points & Agreements |
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| Call to Order 8:32 am | Chair, Christa Campbell, called the meeting to order. |
| Public Comment 8:32 am | Christa asked for public comments. There were none. |
| Adoption of Minutes 8:33 am | The December 13, 2019 minutes were reviewed. There were no corrections. |
| | ACTION: Jim Skoog moved to accept the December 13, 2019 minutes. Doug Strandberg seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. Motion passed unanimously. |
| Chair and Commissioner's Reports 8:36 am | Christa asked for comments from the Commissioners. There were none. |
| County Liaison 8:37 am | Bill Watson reported that Rick Hughes will be the council chair for 2020 and Bill will remain the liaison to the Land Bank. Bill noted the legislature is back in session in Olympia after taking a break for the holidays. He said council members Rick Hughes and Jamie Stephens will split their time representing San Juan County |

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| | <p>interests in Olympia. Bill noted the county road crews did a great job in keeping the roads cleared during the icy and snowy weather. Three cheers for the road crews!</p> |
| <p>Director's Report 8:40 am</p> <p>Lopez Island</p> | <p>Spencer Spit Addition – Background: The two parcels of this 20-acre high bank shoreline property are north of the State Park and have exceptional views across Lopez Sound. There are also highly visible to travelers on the ferry. This is a “bargain sale” with the owner donating proceeds to the Lopez Community Land Trust (LCLT). Current: The Land Bank has closed on one parcel and Washington State Parks is working toward acquiring the other with \$300K in funding from the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP). It is currently being appraised. Neighbors are concerned about water use by State Parks. The Land Bank has assisted in starting conversations between neighbors and State Parks regarding Parks future plans.</p> <p>Ritchie (RR Bar Ranch) CE – Background: This 130-acre property is in the Center Valley of Lopez, which is a core focus area. It has significant wetlands and upland fields and hosts a bevy of winter waterfowl. The CE reduces the number of potential residences from 10 to 2. Current: Lincoln reported the CE is progressing and a final payment plan is being structured with an initial payment of \$300K.</p> <p>Davis Bay Farm Property – Background: This is a 20-acre parcel on the east side of Richardson Marsh on Lopez. The San Juan Preservation Trust (SJPT) has been working on a project to protect the marsh in its entirety and currently holds CE’s on surrounding properties. Current: The SJPT hopes that the Land Bank will purchase a 20-acre piece on the southeast corner. Lincoln said the corner parcel is a great spot for birding, and would be a good general viewpoint for cyclists. The purchase price is \$75k, which is below market value. Lincoln said the project is moving along.</p> <p>Hunter Bay CE: Background: This 4-acre parcel has 600 feet of beach shoreline and is in an area with a high priority for protection to assist with salmon recovery. Current: Lincoln will apply for grant funding for the acquisition. The CE would extinguish a development unit and limit activities on the shoreline.</p> <p>Smith Property – Background: This 112-acre parcel north of Lopez Hill Preserve has high conservation value and is under contract to a buyer who is willing to make the purchase and hold the property if the Land Bank, SJPT and LCLT were willing to partner. Current: Lincoln has met with both organizations (and the buyer) and tentatively each could contribute one third to the project. If successful, the Land Bank would take ownership of roughly 60 acres with the SJPT holding a CE. The northern acreage would be retained by LCLT and leased for farming. Lincoln asked the Commission for approval to proceed.</p> |
| | <p>ACTION: Jim Skoog moved to approve proceeding with the conceptual approach to acquiring the Smith property as Lincoln explained it. Doug Strandberg seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.</p> |
| <p>Orcas Island</p> <p>Director's Report continued</p> <p>Orcas Island</p> | <p>Crescent Beach Preserve property trade – Background: Orcas Island Parks & Recreation (OIPR) currently manages the off leash area dog park which is on the northeast corner of the Land Bank Crescent Beach Preserve. Current: However, as active recreational facilities are typically beyond the scope of the Land Bank mission and the divergent ownership precludes running water to the site, a land trade is being proposed. This would involve OIPR receiving the off leash area in exchange for a more natural area of their property farther to the south. The Land Bank would split the cost of the survey.</p> <p>Olga Store HPE - The group that bought the Olga Store would like to put a historic preservation easement on the property. Boyd Pratt will be researching the historical</p> |

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| | <p>elements of the structure and staff will determine next steps following the assessment. Lincoln will report back when we have more details.</p> |
| <p>Old Military Road Trail Committee (OMRTC) – Presentation 9:03 am</p> | <p>OMRTC members, Dave Zeretzke and Todd Kaden, gave a powerpoint presentation outlining the project and asked for the Land Bank’s endorsement/support.</p> <p>Doug S. asked Dave and Todd to define what support they wanted. Dave noted support would mean: 1) sharing the Land Bank’s expertise in trail design, construction and stewardship; 2) Obtaining easements from private land donors and providing insurance on specific sections, similar to the American Camp Trail process, and; 3) Providing a continuity of trails already on Land Bank properties.</p> <p>Doug commented that the Land Bank would need to follow the provisions of its management plans for each Preserve. Jim supported the project, noting that it would celebrate peaceful resolution of conflict which was the impetus behind creation of the National Park on San Juan Island. Dave said the process for the Land Bank would be similar to the American Camp Trail. Dave said he knows the project will take a long time to make one contiguous trail. Miles recognized that the project would take time but would be a great asset.</p> |
| | <p>ACTION: Jim Skoog moved to confirm support of the OMRT project concept in ways that are consistent with the Land Bank mandate, without committing any Land Bank preserves or projects at this time. And that Land Bank participation would be reconciled to the existing Preserve Management Plans. The Land Bank gives support in spirit and will evaluate how the project works with existing management plans when the OMRTC reports back with future plans. Doug Strandberg seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.</p> |
| <p>Zylstra Lake Preserve Management – Comments 9:32 am</p> <p>Zylstra Lake Preserve Management – Discussion 9:41 am</p> <p>Zylstra Lake Preserve Management – Discussion continued</p> | <p>Ron Whalen, a neighbor who lives adjacent to the Zylstra Lake Preserve, asked the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the responses to the questions from the November 7, 2019, public scoping meeting be used in management planning? • Will the preserve be used for recreation or agriculture? • Was the agricultural resource land designation removed from the property? • Does agriculture need to be completely excluded? <p>His questions were answered by members of the Land Bank Commission and staff. All responses will be considered as the Preserve Management Plan process proceeds. A next step would be to create a draft plan and again share this with the community. The property remains in the agricultural resource designation.</p> <p>Christa reminded the public present that the scope of a pending state grant, which could limit agricultural activities will be the focus of the discussion today.</p> <p>Steve Ulvi noted he is an avid supporter of the Land Bank and he is concerned about the complexity of purchasing terms and management of the Zylstra Lake property. He worries about water quality and the loss of usable ag land.</p> <p>Jim Skoog noted that the property could have been used for a residential development.</p> <p>Rami Amaro and Ron Whalen asked about the proposed alternate buyer. Jim and Lincoln responded that realtors had informed the Land Bank of other offers. The owners elected to sell to the Land Bank and SJPT in an effort to keep the property undeveloped.</p> <p>Lincoln gave a quick history of the project. When the property came on the market, Lakedale Resort had recently closed public access to its swim lake; a loss felt throughout the community. There was a big push from the community to purchase</p> |

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| <p>Zylstra Lake Preserve Management – Discussion continued</p> | <p>the property for water access, which is why the Land Bank applied for the \$1M state water access grant. (Project funding received to date is via a \$1M federal Coastal Wetlands Conservation grant and the sale of the adjacent “October Farm” property). The water access grant hit a snag due to the CE held by SJPT, which required the property to be re-appraised. The new value is \$625k, and is eligible for half that amount if the Commission chooses to proceed with the grant and the ag restrictions that come with it. Lincoln offered an alternate concept and presented a mock-up that takes about half the property out of the recreation grant, allowing for agricultural activity. Approximately 100 acres would be available for agriculture with 140 acres serving for water access, 60 of which are the lake itself. He noted that water quality tests showed some issues with the lake. Additionally, he said the Land Bank would retain the water rights for the property. There was discussion.</p> <p>Doug asked how much of the 140 acres in water access has been used in ag? Lincoln said there has been some haying, but there was also significant area in riparian vegetation. He said the Land Bank will increase the buffer around the lake to attract and help species that use the lake.</p> <p>Christa asked, if the Commission were to embrace this reduction concept, does it reduce the grant another 50%, to \$150k? Lincoln said yes.</p> <p>Jim said he was encouraged at the effort staff is making in preserving agriculture.</p> <p>Christa commented that when the project first came around it was great for a variety of constituents and she was concerned the Land Bank would be too restricting.</p> <p>Miles noted that there are other ways to offer water access, aside from a swimming hole, such as bird viewing.</p> <p>Doug liked that staff is continuing to try to meet both goals and he sees this as a positive step in doing so.</p> <p>Christa asked if the bottom line, monetarily, is \$150k, and did Lincoln need approval today?</p> <p>Doug asked if this concept is the staff’s recommendation. Lincoln replied yes.</p> <p>Nancy Greene commented how this concept illustrates tradition in the community, farmers as neighbors. She believes it is a great community project.</p> <p>Lincoln was asked about the liability issue of use by the public. He made reference to the state recreational immunity statute and also stated that the County is insured.</p> <p>Jim suggested hosting another public scoping meeting to present this concept to the community.</p> <p>Christa noted three Commissioners were missing at the meeting, but she also doesn’t want to wait another three meetings to come to a decision. Eliza suggested forming a sub-committee to bring a recommendation back to the Commissioners at the February meeting in order to make a final decision.</p> <p>Ron Whalen, neighbor to Zylstra Lake Preserve, requested that what is currently used as a parking area be moved to a different location, because it is in his view.</p> <p>Steve Ulvi thanked the Land Bank staff and Commission for their transparency and flexibility in a public forum.</p> |
| | <p>ACTION: Staff will form a sub-committee to bring a recommendation back to the Commissioners at the February meeting in order to make a final decision regarding Zylstra Lake Preserve funding.</p> |

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| Break 10:21 am – 10:31 am | |
| Financial Report 10:32 am | Judy Cumming and Doug Strandberg presented the December and year-end reports for the Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) collection and the year-end cash balance for the Conservation Area Fund, pending year end journal entries to be made by the auditor’s office. REET revenue was approximately \$500K higher than budgeted and slightly exceeded 2018. Pending revenue and pending acquisition expenditures were detailed. |
| | <u>ACTION:</u> Printed reports will be mailed to Land Bank Commissioners not in attendance. |
| Stewardship Report 10:35 am Kellet Bluff Preserve Access – Discussion Conservation Agricultural Resource Team (CART) - Update | <p>The 80-acre Kellett Bluff Preserve is located on Henry Island. The neighbor to the north shares an access parcel with the Land Bank and has an access easement through the Preserve. The neighbor has filed a lawsuit against the Land Bank asking public beach access be moved from the shared parcel. Lincoln presented a picture taken by the neighbor of a group of kayakers on the shared beach access for the preserve and neighbor. The neighbor had asked that public access move to an alternate beach. The neighbor also posted numerous “No trespassing” signs along the shoreline. Lincoln was unclear as to why the lawsuit was filed as the sign designating the preserve as public was moved to the alternate beach location suggested by the neighbor. Someone asked about indemnity for the neighbor and liability issues. Lincoln noted that the Land Bank typically indemnifies land owners against liability when they allow their property to be used for public recreation (typically a trail).</p> <p>Charlie Behnke reported the Conservation Agricultural Resource Team (CART) committee for Coffelt Farm has been assessing the farm and at the most recent meeting it reviewed soil quality tests. Charlie said once the Commissioners are finished reviewing Coffelt Farm Draft Management Plan, CART will then review it. CART’s goal is to wrap up and have recommendations ready for the Commission by Fall 2020. He also mentioned the San Juan Islands Ag Summit will be held February 7-8 on Orcas Island. The Land Bank will host an informational table at the Saturday vendor meet-up.</p> |
| Outreach Report 10:45 am | <p>Tanja reported meeting with the Preservation Trust regarding events and partnering; brainstorming annual report themes, setting up the events calendar for 2020; booking the booth for the County Fair; and rolling out a 30th anniversary county wide summer activity.</p> <p>Christa reported meeting with Tanja and Judy regarding a volunteer/citizen stewards group. She described the idea as a rekindling of monitoring programs used in the past, and has been talking with Asha Lela regarding her successes on Lopez with a similar program.</p> |
| Meeting Adjourned 10:55 am | Chair, Christa Campbell, adjourned the meeting. |
| NEXT MEETING | The next LBC meeting will take place February 21, 2020 at the San Juan Island Grange, 152 First St. N, Friday Harbor, WA 98250. |