

Skagit Watershed Council – Final Notes

Phone Meeting of the Board of Directors – December 1, 2016

(Underline indicates decision point; parentheses indicate attachment #)

(* indicates action item; indicates decision)

Attendance: Richard Brocksmitth, Brendan Brokes, Michael Kirshenbaum, and Colleen McShane, Steve Hinton, and Jon Vanderheyden.

Not in attendance: Carolyn Kelly, Chair Ken Dahlstedt, and Jon-Paul Shannahan

Call to Order at 9:00am

- Introductions, Determine Quorum, and Agenda (#1)
Quorum achieved. In Ken's absence, Richard facilitated meeting. Agenda looked good.
- Board Notes: November 3, 2016 (#2)
Michael moved to approve the November 3, 2016 notes and Colleen seconded. No additions. Vote to approve was unanimous.

Executive Directors Report

- Approve October Financial Report (#3)
Richard indicated financials include nothing unusual or outstanding. He outlined two recent amendments to the sub-award tracking sheet that hadn't been captured in the Board packet yet: 1) Board already approved an increase in the contract award and term extension for SFEG Riparian Phase I project. 2) Board already approved a term extension for the County's culvert inventory work to June 30, 2017, which was signed by both parties late in November.
Homework for the audit is nearly complete; anticipate that for review soon. The same accountant will complete our federal tax statement. An extension was filed for this through February 2017. ***Richard will submit the completed documents to the Board in January for their review.**
Colleen moved to approve the November 3, 2016 notes and Brendan seconded with inclusion of the two changes above. Vote to approve was unanimous.

Committee Reports

Protection Subcommittee, the M&AM Subcommittee, TWG, and Community Engagement Committee all met in November. Richard will have more complete reports for the January meeting regarding committee work.

Old Business

Community Engagement Program Update

- The Board advice expressed at the November Board meeting was extremely helpful in guiding our community engagement planning as well as input from the CEC committee, the

community engagement survey, and the Council of Members. Carolyn and Jon also provided input and ***Colleen will provide thoughts to Richard following this Board meeting regarding the implementation plan.** CEC has embraced the social media approach and team member conversations regarding work planning is building the capacity of our educators and members.

- The community engagement survey yielded input from 21 respondents and will help us to leverage the social media of our members into a broader program. They discussed the role of the Council members to amplify our engagement in the broader community.
- Shared Google calendar with watershed-scale activities, holiday-related, nature-oriented, volunteer-related activities in the watershed.
- The Facebook page has been launched informally under the Skagit Watershed Council name with 'Our Skagit' as the theme. After just a couple days, we already have 60 likes on the page with a linked Instagram.
- The strategy is to stay away from message-heavy content at this time. The message development phase is coming later as to what the SWC will be sharing. Current goals are to increase dialogue, community and knowledge among people. We are trying to be careful to stay on point with community dialogue. Where in the Skagit Wednesdays, Fun-Fact Fridays. Repost member activities. Photo Contest is launching today. Interviews of 3-4 community members will be started this month which is watershed council generated content to match member organization messages and posts. Website is upgraded to be blog capable and integrate with Facebook. We have capacity with Kulshan contract to do up to ten interviews. Skagit Life is the name
- A social media policy which outlines what is appropriate is under development. ***Richard will share the social media policy with the Board for their input shortly.**
- The Seasons of Skagit Photo Contest starts today – December 1 using a Facebook app which features photos and keeps a tally of the number of votes each photo gets. Cross-marketed on the website and on member sites. The Board didn't pose any questions on this.
- The other major tool or engagement is 'Skagit Life' interviews. Richard acknowledged the importance of carefully choosing who to interview to: 1) Represent a broad cross-section of the community and not to leave out or overly focus on any key sector. 2) Bring multiple groups and interests together around people that have compelling stories to broaden our focus. The CEC would like to interview more than 10 people in the community, so we're seeking additional help from our partners for additional interviews. SFEG volunteered Lindsay to assist with this ongoing interview project.
- An educator conference or retreat planned in our work plan and budget has been proposed for Feb 22-23 to be held in partnership with North Cascades Institute at the Environmental Learning Center. ***An agenda is being drafted now and more information will be shared with the Board next month.**
- The Board continued the discussion and asked a couple of key questions:
 - 1) Have there been any thoughts to handle a situation where messages come out in the interview that are contrary to SWC's goals. How does this get included or edited? Our social media policy addresses issues associated with social media; however, Richard acknowledged that policy or at least the program guidance should address the interviews as

well. He also indicated that the current list of questions is pretty open and non-controversial. We are trying to get honest opinions about what makes Skagit and its communities special.

2) Members asked that the social media policy be reviewed and possibly approved by the Board. What is the fuller picture and context regarding what is going to be released to the public? Others on the Board felt that the social media policy development is a good starting point, but didn't feel the need to review every blog prior to publishing. Overall, they felt that it seems reasonable to keep building rationale and approach for how to conduct the interviews in the interim, even doing some of them, but wait until January for them to be released pending further Board review.

- Discussion ensued on how to invite community engagement from diverse sources and set appropriate expectations and policies about what will or will not be transmitted in the final products. Since these are being distributed under SWC's auspices, then the Board wants to ensure that in this new role of online journalism, SWC will strive to create content that drives the goals of the organization. While it is the point to solicit diverse opinions, SWC is unlikely to interview someone if they are completely opposed to what the SWC is trying to do in the Basin. The Board discussed whether SWC could publish the interview as is, then add a caveat about the SWC policy/opinion. It was felt that if there are comments that run counter to SWC, the organization will need to be ready to respond to it carefully and with good intent. Less concern was expressed about social media comments vs these interviews where the stakes are higher. ***Richard indicated that we will take time to address these concerns in more detail in coming weeks in the CEC and Board via the social media policy, list of interviewee names, interview questions, and the methods for presenting the interviews.**
- Richard outlined three press releases he is working on. ***He will share these with the Board for their input, which generally seems like an appropriate method of operation:**
 - 1) SRFB funding projects will be approved next week. State RCO is releasing a press release about this next week. Richard is meeting with the Skagit Valley Herald about this message and try to get stories of the individual projects not that we just got the money.
 - 2) Press Release on the photo contest.
 - 3) Press Release on the engagement program itself.

Consideration of appointing Jeremy Gilman of the US Forest Service to TWG

Steve moved to appoint Jeremy Gilman to the TWG and Michael seconded. No discussion. Vote to approve was unanimous.

Future dates

***Next SWC Board Meeting is January 5, 2017, 9am to noon**

***Richard will get a list of meeting dates for 2017 to the Board for their consideration with preference for the first Thursday of the month.**

Adjourn 9:46 am.