



## MEETING MINUTES

**Land Bank Commission Meeting  
February 21, 2020  
San Juan Island Grange  
152 First Street, Friday Harbor, WA 98250**

**Commission Members in Attendance:**

Jim Skoog, District 1, position 1	Doug Strandberg, at large, position 5
Sandi Friel, District 2, position 2	David Meiland, at large, position 6
Miles Becker, District 3, position 3	Christa Campbell, at large, position 7
Brian Wiese, at large, position 4	

**Commission Members Absent:** None

**Land Bank Staff in Attendance:** , Lincoln Bormann, Judy Cumming, Peter Guillozet, Eliza Habegger, Erin Halcomb, Amanda Wedow, Eric Nelson, Doug McCutchen,

**Land Bank Staff Absent:** Sarah Benson, Carlton Burns, Tanja Williamson, Kayla Seaforth, Charlie Behnke

**County Council Liaison:** Bill Watson, Council Member, District 1

**Public in Attendance:** 10 individuals over the course of the meeting.

Topic	Key Discussion Points & Agreements
<b>Call to Order</b> 8:30 am	Chair, Christa Campbell, called the meeting to order.
<b>Public Comment</b> 8:30 am	Christa asked for public comments. Eileen Drath asked if the Land Bank Commission would comment on what effect the proposed Better Place memorial forest might have if it were to be located adjacent to the Mount Grant Preserve. Lincoln had attended the information meeting that Better Place Forests held with nearby property owners. He explained that they will need a Conditional Use Permit to proceed with their plan. While there are still a lot of questions to be answered, it should not have an impact on Mount Grant. The trails on the parcels being sold slope away from the Preserve and users of the memorial forest would not use the Preserve easement access. Christa indicated to the public that the Land Bank Commission (LBC) would follow the development of this potential neighbor to the Preserve.

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	<p>Ron Whalen commented that the agenda on the Land Bank web site for this meeting had an incorrect date on it. It was explained that this error occurred during the planned absence of the staff member familiar with posting corrections to the web site. He also suggested that LBC meetings be recorded. Sandi Friel commented that she is in support of recording LBC meetings. Christa Campbell and other members of the public commented on various practices of other elected and appointed committees in San Juan County who record meeting minutes for the convenience of the minute taker. The recordings are destroyed after the minutes have been approved. The SJC Council videotapes their meetings. It was noted during the discussion that the LBC minutes are comprehensive so that members of the public whose work schedules would not allow them to attend meetings should have a clear idea of matters discussed at the meetings. Christa invited members of the public to record meetings themselves, but to notify the LBC when doing so. Ron Whalen indicated that he was currently recording the meeting.</p>
	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Christa asked the staff to plan cross training for web site maintenance.</p> <p>Judy Cumming will email the link to the Open Public Meeting Act training to all members of the Land Bank Commission as a refresher.</p>
<p><b>Adoption of Minutes</b> 8:45 am</p>	<p>The January 17, 2019 minutes were reviewed. There were corrections.</p>
	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Miles Becker moved to accept the January 17, 2020 LBC meeting minutes as corrected. David Meiland seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. Motion passed with Brian Wiese abstaining due to his absence at the January 17, 2020 meeting.</p>
<p><b>Chair and Commissioner's Reports</b> 8:50 am</p>	<p>Christa asked for comments from the Commissioners. There were none. A draft of 2020 LBC meeting dates and venues, including the LBC Annual Retreat had been provided to the LBC members in their meeting materials. LBC members were asked to let Judy know if there are conflicts on any of the dates and to indicate a preference for the December meeting date.</p> <p>Sandi asked if the meeting materials distributed to the LBC members was made available to the public. Judy answered that once the materials became a final work product instead of a draft work product, they would be available to the public.</p>
<p><b>Terry Turner – OPALCO Presentation</b> 9:00 am</p>	<p>Terry Turner, OPALCO engineer for over 30 years, gave a presentation on the proposed power line clearance activities OPALCO would like to undertake at Turtleback Mountain Preserve. Terry and Peter Guillozet, Orcas Island Preserve Steward, have been in contact to coordinate work on the power line corridor to address issues with steep inaccessible access and fir trees shading Garry oak trees. There has been slow encroachment of conifer forest since the 1930's as evidenced by historical photos included in Terry's presentation. The prime objectives of this project are fire safety, reliability &amp; efficiency. OPALCO was granted an easement in 1957 by previous owners of the property to operate and maintain the electrical system. Terry's presentation outlined the goals and timeline for the project. Peter commented that the project fits in with the Land Bank's broader plan for the area. Christa asked for next steps. Terry indicated that the easement may need to be updated to acknowledge the access and that OPALCO needs the consent of property owners before proceeding. There was discussion from members of the LBC. Doug Strandberg expressed concern with the 100-foot wide area, and asked how this would look visually. Peter responded that the area is</p>

	<p>generally below the trails and would not be visible. Signage would explain the activity so that hikers would not be surprised by the work happening. Eliza Habegger agreed with Peter that the proposed work appears consistent with the Management Plan for Turtleback Mountain preserve. Christa is in agreement with the spirit of the proposal and suggested that the staff come back next month with details. Peter commented that the concept has been developed jointly. Christa asked for a consensus. Sandi appreciated OPALCO working closely with Land Bank staff and giving the presentation to the LBC. The members of the LBC indicated a consensus with the concept of this project. Christa thanked Terry for the thoroughness of his presentation and expressed appreciation that OPALCO has maintained a good relationship with the Land Bank over the years. Sandi suggested to Terry that the topic of this project would likely be something to be included in the OPALCO monthly newsletter and that the Land Bank staff might produce a press release.</p>
	<p><b><u>ACTION:</u></b> Land Bank staff will work with OPALCO on a press release on this project. This item will be on the March 20, 2020 LBC Agenda for an update.</p>
<p><b>County Liaison</b> 9:34 am</p>	<p>Bill Watson reported that the connector road on San Juan Island is complete and will be chip sealed soon. The connector road connects Turn Point road to Pear Point Road and came out of an agreement between the Town of Friday Harbor and San Juan County. Due to an expected revenue reduction as a result of I 976 being passed, the County is offering voluntary early retirement to Public Works employees. Bill will not be seeking re-election. He has not heard any formal announcements from possible candidates.</p>
<p><b>Finance Report</b> 9:40 am</p>	<p>Doug Strandberg reported on the December 31, 2019 financial statements. Ending cash for 2019 was lower than budgeted. The budgeted amount of \$500K was transferred to the Stewardship Fund from the Conservation Area Fund, which amounted to 15% of Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) collected. At the end of the year, the interest rate for the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP) had declined to 1.78%. Both funds maintain balances in the LGIP. Comparing the analysis of real estate sales the number of annual sales has dropped since 2015 and the average price per sale has doubled. Jim Skoog commented that it would be his recommendation that the annual amount of the transfer to the Stewardship Endowment Fund not decrease. Miles spoke about the possible opportunity for revenue for the sale of carbon credits. Lincoln responded that the Land Bank has been looking at carbon credits as a source of revenue since 2009. The forest at the Turtleback Mountain Preserve has been Certified by the Forest Stewardship Council annually. However, the primary market for credits is the California Air Resources Board and they will not purchase from public entities.</p>
<p><b>Break</b> 9:43 am</p>	<p>The Chair called for a 7-minute break.</p>
<p><b>Director's Report</b> 9:50 am</p> <p>Lopez Island</p>	<p><b>Ritchie (RR Bar Ranch) Conservation Easement (CE) – Background:</b> 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. <b>Current:</b> Lincoln reported the transaction is in the final stages and a final payment plan is being structured with an initial payment of \$300K. This project should close by the end of February 2020, after 10 years in the making.</p>

<p><b>Director’s Report</b> continued</p> <p>San Juan Island</p>	<p><b>Westside Preserve to Mt. Ben Preserve Trail Easements</b> – Lincoln has continued working on the access to connect the Westside Preserve and Mt. Ben via trail easements across private property.</p> <p>Lincoln asked for questions. Sandi asked how the trail easements would burden staff. Lincoln responded that trail construction would take some time, and that staff would have to figure out when to schedule it.</p> <p>David Meiland asked about implications for the neighbors to the trail easements. Lincoln responded that the trail wouldn’t be visible from neighboring home sites, and because it ascends steeply from the Westside, only a limited number of people would continue up to Mt. Ben.</p> <p><b>Ihiya Biological Reserve CE</b> – This 30-acre parcel is adjacent to the Town of Friday Harbor’s Trout Lake property and near the Kings Sisters Preserve. It features wetlands, fields and forest. The proposed CE comes in under market value at \$200K. It would allow public access and eliminate at least five development rights. Details of the CE are still being negotiated.</p> <p><b>Alderman Property</b> - Doug Strandberg asked about the Alderman property on Bailer Hill Road owned by the Land Bank. Lincoln responded that the property situated between Alderman and the False Bay Creek Preserve was recently purchased by Thor Black who has expressed interest in purchasing the Alderman parcel from the Land Bank in exchange for CEs on both of parcels. Resale of the Alderman property has been a long-term project.</p>
<p><b>Stewardship Report</b> 10:10 am</p> <p>Conservation Agricultural Resource Team (CART) – Coffelt Farm Update</p>	<p>Eric Nelson reported on recent activity of the Conservation Agricultural Resource Team- Coffelt Farm (CART) meetings regarding Coffelt Farm. There was a discussion about the name of the group and the importance for clarity and consistency. The group is working toward making recommendations to the Commission about long-term management. Eric reported that at the last meeting presentations were made by three team members: Bruce Gregory presented on soils and possible treatment options; Biologist Andrew Borner presented his cost estimates for improving soil nutrients in the specific fields based on soil tests, and; Charlie Behnke reported on water resources and hydrologic features on the property – the well, spring, pond, stream and wetlands.</p> <p>Peter and Erin will present the draft Stewardship Management Plan to CART at its March meeting. After that, broader input will be sought from the public. Information gaps will be addressed. CART will then review it. Brian Wiese repeated his request to receive agendas of the CART meetings. He asked if members of the public had been attending the meetings. Eric replied that they had not.</p> <p>Sandi Friel asked at what point will CART be making leasing model recommendations to the LBC. Lincoln and Eric addressed this question. CART is currently researching plans &amp; information to move forward. Lease models will be explored during the summer with recommendations hopefully coming in the fall. However, the current lease could also be extended if necessary.</p> <p>Christa Campbell encouraged CART to clarify the name and purpose of the group now and in the future in order to avoid murkiness. Jim Skoog encouraged the Team to keep it simple and keep it clear. Doug Strandberg and Brian Wiese appreciated the thorough discussion. Judy added that she has talked to Brook Brouwer, the chair of the Team and he plans to attend the future LBC meetings in order to keep the LBC informed of progress.</p>

	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Miles Becker will request that the facilitator send agendas to the two Orcas Land Bank Commissioners.</p>
<p><b>Stewardship Report</b> San Juan Island 10:25 am</p>	<p>Doug McCutchen began the Stewardship Report for San Juan Island by showing a short video of the dam at Zylstra Lake Preserve during the recent rainstorm.</p> <p><b>Lester Cabin at Cady Mountain Preserve</b> – Doug reported that the Lester cabin has been condemned. None of the utilities are anywhere near code requirements and the foundation is rotting into the ground. Asbestos testing of the materials in the cabin were all negative. In order to remove the cabin from the property, the first step was to make the cabin available to other County departments. The only department to express interest was the Fire Department. They want to use it for a controlled burn after the roof, some of the cedar shakes, and a handful of other items have been salvaged.</p> <p><b>Zylstra Lake Preserve</b> – There was discussion to review grant funding issues since three of the seven LBC members had been absent at the last meeting. Lincoln summarized the issues with grant revenue limiting other uses of the land. There has been a lot of interest locally to see agriculture continue in one fashion or another. A soils map was presented as well as a map showing waterfowl congregation areas. Lincoln summarized the effect of reduced funding to roughly \$180K. His sense is that this would be a good compromise and would protect wildlife and provide agricultural opportunities and some recreation at the preserve.</p> <p>Doug Strandberg stated that the previous meeting notes covered the situation well. In his opinion, complying with the grant requirements was not worth the \$180K now that he understands the limitations. Revenue overall has been strengthened by REET collections. Lincoln feels that all of the uses will be compatible with the grant requirements.</p> <p>Sandi stated she was in favor of complying with the grant requirements in order to qualify for the grant.</p> <p>Brian wondered about public expectations for public access.</p> <p>Miles asked about the type of agriculture that might happen on this property. Lincoln answered that it would be haying for now. Doug added that in the past the property had been used for small diverse homesteads, which included a holly tree farm and dairy farm. It is prime farmland with access to water. Other local farmers have indicated that limiting agricultural activities to only haying and livestock would be a waste; it has more capacity than that.</p> <p>Ron Whalen asked about a buffer zone to protect wildlife from agricultural activity. As a neighbor, he noted that the waterfowl spend more time in the fields this time of year than on the water.</p> <p>There was discussion among LBC members as to the recent history of haying on the island, the quality of the hay and the quantity of the hay. Christa summarized by saying that the restrictions placed by the granting agency seem compatible with the management concepts presented. The SJPT CE would allow for haying and food crops.</p> <p>Ron Whalen stated that the accessibility to the agricultural areas would be difficult. Lincoln disagreed with that assessment and said access would remain similar to the way it is now.</p> <p>Christa asked for a consensus from the LBC. The Land Bank Commission agreed by consensus that Lincoln should move forward to apply for the funding from the RCO.</p>

<b>Stewardship Report</b> Lopez Island	<b>Channel Preserve</b> – Amanda Wedow, the Lopez Preserve Steward, reported that the Stewardship Management Plan for the Channel Preserve LBC has been edited to make clarifications and incorporate the comments made by the LBC. It will be included with the Amended 2020 Expenditure and Acquisition Plan which will be presented at the March 20, 2020 LBC meeting.
<b>Zylstra Preserve Site Visit</b>	Christa Campbell, David Meiland and Sandi Friel and Doug McCutchen made plans for a site visit to the Zylstra Preserve following the meeting.
<b>Meeting Adjourned</b> 11:05 am	Chair, Christa Campbell, adjourned the meeting.
<b>NEXT MEETING</b>	The next LBC meeting will take place March 20, 2020 at the San Juan Island Grange, 152 First St. N, Friday Harbor, WA 98250.