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# MEETING MINUTES

# Conservation Land Bank Commission Meeting

**May 17, 2024**

**Hybrid Meeting**

**San Juan Island Grange**

**Commission Members in Attendance:**

Marilyn O’Connor, District 1, position 1 Mike Pickett, at large, position 5

Ann Marie Shanks, District 2, position 2 Amy Trainer, at large, position 6

Peggy Bill, District 3, position 3 Tim Clark, at large, position 7

Brian Wiese, at large, position 4

**Commission Members Absent:** None

**Land Bank Staff in Attendance:** Charlie Behnke, Lincoln Bormann, Peter Guillozet, Erin Halcomb, Aaron Rock, Amanda Wedow, Tanja Williamson

**Land Bank Staff Absent:** Shauna Barrows, Tyler Goodman, Eliza Habegger, Doug McCutchen, Jacob Wagner

**County Council Liaison:** Absent

**Public in Attendance:** 6 individuals over the course of the meeting.

| **Topic** | **Key Discussion Points & Agreements** |
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| **Call to Order**  8:38 am | Chair, Brian Wiese, called the meeting to order. |
| **Public Comment**  8:39am (1:40) | Norris Palmer had a question regarding when Land Bank financials/budgeting will be discussed. |
| **Adoption of Minutes**  8:41 am (3:04) | The draft April 19, 2024, minutes were reviewed. There were corrections. Minutes were approved. |

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| **Partner Update – San Juan Preservation Trust (SJPT)**  8:42 am (4:02) | Conservation Director, Vickie Edwards, reported the following:   * The Preservation Trust held their annual meeting on May 9th at the San Juan Island Yacht Club, their first in person since annual meeting since Covid, and upcoming is the annual summer social on July 20th at the North Shore Preserve. * Kathleen Foley expects to have the draft North Shore Preserve conservation easement (CE) ready at the end of June and will submit the first round of bills to the [Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office](https://rco.wa.gov/recreation-and-conservation/) for reimbursement. She is also meeting with Peter to discuss preserve signage. * Lastly, Director of Communications and Outreach, Craig Canine, is retiring at the end of June. He will be greatly missed. In the interim, Kristen Buckley, will be the contact for summer outreach. |
| **Council Liaison**  8:47 am (8:10) | None |
| **Chair and Commissioner’s Report**  8:47 am (8:18) | Tim noted the Climate and Sustainability Committee hasn’t convened again since last month’s commission meeting and shared news that the County has begun Climate Resilience Planning with an [online Community Survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/35KPL6K) on the County’s Engage platform. Tim also met with the Agricultural Lease Committee a couple times and noted progress is being made on leases and he also met with Peggy and Erin at Watmough Bay Preserve.  Peggy met Cedar Charnley, newly hired Lopez Island seasonal field assistant, and looks forward to working with him.  Marilyn reported the communications sub-committee met and was tasked with reviewing the website for improvements. One such improvement has been implemented and there is now a [public trail maps quick link webpage](https://sjclandbank.org/public-trail-map-quick-links/), which Marilyn hopes will simplify searching for the information.  Brian shared that he, Anne Marie, and Tyler hosted a table at Earth Day Orcas. He also encouraged everyone to attend upcoming Gathering of the Eagles Canoe Journey events. On Orcas, there will be a street fair in Olga and a guided walk focused on salmon habitat restoration at Coho Preserve. |
| **Open Public Hearing**  9:10 am (31:15)  **Closed Public Hearing**  9:15 am (36:57) | Norris Palmer asked where the money is invested. Aaron answered that is invested into the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP) which is managed by the state. Lincoln noted investing options is restricted by the state constitution and what government can invest in. There was also discussion regarding stewardship and conservation easement monitoring. |
| **Proposed 2024 Second Amended Budget Discussion continued**  9:15 am (37:00) | Marilyn O’Connor moved to accept the Proposed 2024 Second Amended Budget. Peggy Bill seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. Motion passed unanimously. |
| **Financial Update – Projections through 2026**  9:16 am (37:36) | Aaron presented the financial projections through 2026. There was discussion. Aaron highlighted conservation future requirements: 75% of conservation futures is required to go to acquisitions and 25% to stewardship. |
| **Director’s Report**  9:42 am (1:03:20)  Overview of Trust for Public Land Attitudinal Survey  Transactions Analysis | Marilyn requested Lincoln [reviewed the presentation made to council by the consulting group (FM3) that is working with the Trust for Public Lands](https://youtu.be/xsIyllHtCpo?si=eBNAIFeXmcG_qBGq&t=3806). Marilyn clarified that she felt it was important information to review, as it was collected by an independent contractor, and it tells what the community and other conservation organizations expect from the Land Bank. Marilyn noted the mandate was most likely written in 1989 and she was interested to see how closely it was supported by this recent poll. She feels that there’s been change over time and there’s also continuity in the values expressed in the mandate. She wondered if the general public is familiar with the full extent of what our stewardship program is accomplishing. There was discussion regarding forest health work and wildfire.  [Lincoln shared a table of all the Land Bank transactions from the beginning of the program to date, showing appraised value vs what the Land Bank and partners have paid.](https://youtu.be/xsIyllHtCpo?si=F0wMoeuZ-mBcbWOI&t=4983) Lincoln used Beaverton Marsh as an example of how a project unfolded over time (2001 to 2021) and to provide examples of what was the property was worth, what did the Land Bank pay, what our partners contributed. For the Beaverton Complex (470 acres), total appraised value is $4,641,000 and total purchase price is $4,122,150. The Land Bank contributed $2,071,3000 in funding and partner contributions comes to $2,570,000. |
| **Break**  10:12 am – 10:25 am (1:38) |  |
| **Outreach/**  **Communications Report**  10:26 am (1:38:04)  **Outreach/**  **Communications Report continued** | Tanja reported on the communications sub-committee focused on the last three strategies from the strategic plan: 1) Increase and diversify number of activities to broader audience. 2) Expand volunteer program. 3) Improve overall effectiveness of current outreach activities. Mary Gropp is mentoring an Orcas Island High School senior on a senior project about beach trash and Leave No Trace Ethic. She will host a booth at the San Juan Island Children’s Festival and is also working with Island Rec on San Juan Island for conservation centered events for their youth summer camp. Other events include the upcoming opening of Cady Mountain Preserve and participated in the Joyce L. Sobel Family Resource Center screen free week. Brian highlighted the relationship with the Islands’ Youth Conservation Corps and Lincoln shared that over the life of the program the Land Bank has worked with 300 members. |
| **Stewardship Report**  10:31 am (1:42:35)  Ag Lease Update (Frazer Homestead and Beaverton Marsh Preserve)  **Stewardship Report continued**  Paul G. Allen Family Foundation Grant Application | Charlie reported on progress with the two selected Ag Lessees, the Shephard Family, and the San Juan Island Grange. They’ve been given short term use of the properties in preparation for the long term. At Frazer Homestead the Sheperds are bringing a small herd of cattle and refencing the pond. Charlie is working on fencing at Beaverton Marsh Preserve. The Ag Lease Committee is close to finalizing lease language. Brian asked when the Commission will get to review the final lease. Charlie estimates in the next couple months and signed off in the fall. The letter of agreement in the meantime outlines what can be done until then. Brian requested a map of Beaverton Marsh Preserve with an overlay of the Overmarsh Project.  Erin reported she was at the Council meeting when FM3 presented their findings in collaboration with TPL. She noted that the Land Bank has been working towards protecting water sources and linking stewardship work not only to reducing an immediate risk to fire but cultivate older trees for fire resiliency. Healthy forests equal higher water quality noting there are 26 streams on Turtleback.  Peggy commended everyone that worked on the Richardson Marsh Preserve Stewardship and Management Plan. She feels it’s a good plan.  Lincoln has been working with a consultant to help find funding for large-scale stewardship activities, and this grant opportunity emerged from the Allen Foundation.  The Land Bank has submitted multi-faceted application which would: 1) allow added contracting capacity for on-going forest thinning efforts; 2) purchase mobile kilns to dramatically increase our ability to create biochar (to sequester carbon and add to soil fertility), and 3) secure and apply 6,000 tons of basalt rock dust on agricultural fields (basalt actively absorbs CO2 from the atmosphere, increases crop yields, and helps to de-acidify marine environments). This work would be done in concert with the Yale Center for Natural Carbon Capture, the Conservation District, University of Washington and other partners. The hope is that this pilot project will spark expanded efforts along similar lines throughout Washington State and elsewhere. |
| **Public Comment**  10:57 am (2:09:25) | Roger Ellison, San Juan Island Grange President, wanted to thank Charlie and the Islands Conservation Corps (ICC) for their wonderful fencing and to note that, after listening to Lincoln speak on basalt, part of the impetus of the Over Marsh Commons is to test good regenerative agriculture ideas on the ground. He invited everyone to join a volunteer work party at the site on Sunday, May 19, 1pm to 3pm. |
| **Meeting Adjourned**  11:03 am (2:14:44) | Chair, Brian Wiese, adjourned the meeting. |
| **NEXT MEETING** | The next LBC meeting is scheduled to take place June 21, 2024, at the Orcas Island Library. |