



## MEETING MINUTES

### Conservation Land Bank Commission Meeting September 20, 2024 Hybrid Meeting San Juan Island Grange

**Commission Members in Attendance:**

Ann Marie Shanks, District 2, position 2  
Peggy Bill, District 3, position 3  
Brian Wiese, at large, position 4

Mike Pickett, at large, position 5  
Tim Clark, at large, position 7

**Commission Members Absent:** Marilyn O'Connor, District 1, position 1, Amy Trainer, at large, position 6

**Land Bank Staff in Attendance:** Lincoln Bormann, Charlie Behnke, Eliza Habegger, Erin Halcomb, Doug McCutchen, Aaron Rock, Amanda Wedow, Tanja Williamson

**Land Bank Staff Absent:** Shauna Barrows, Tyler Goodman, Peter Guillozet, Jacob Wagner

**County Council Liaison:** Christine Minney

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

Topic	Key Discussion Points & Agreements
<b>Call to Order</b> 8:31 am	Chair, Brian Wiese, called the meeting to order.
<b>Public Comment</b> 8:31 am	None
<b>Adoption of Minutes</b> 8:32 am	The draft August 16, 2024, minutes were reviewed. There were corrections. Minutes were approved.

<p><b>Partner Update – San Juan Preservation Trust (SJPT)</b> 8:37 am</p>	<p>Conservation Director, Vickie Edwards, reported the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SJPT Fall 2024 Island Dispatch was created by Director of Communications and Outreach. Included is an article written by previous Director of Communications and Outreach, Craig Canine, titled, “Better Together. Long Live the Land Bank”. The article highlights cross organizational partnership projects and the SJPT support of the SJC Conservation Land Bank. Can be found on SJPT website: <a href="https://sjpt.org/sjpt-land-bank-endorsement/">https://sjpt.org/sjpt-land-bank-endorsement/</a></li> <li>• North Shore Preserve opening on Public Lands Day, September 28<sup>th</sup>. Barbara Rosenkotter, SJPT Board President, and Kathleen Foley Lewis, SJPT Special Projects Director, will provide remarks on behalf of SJPT. Other SJPT staff and board members will be present.</li> <li>• Kathleen Foley Lewis, lead on North Shore Project, has received comments from Lincoln and team on the conservation easement draft. The next step is to share with the Prosecuting Attorney’s Office and have the SJPT attorney work directly with the SJC attorney.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Council Liaison</b> 8:41 am</p>	<p>Christine Minney gave the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council approval of affordable housing awards; came from the Very Low-Income Housing Fund as well as the Affordable and Supportive Housing Fund. The awards totaled approximately \$65,000 and went to applicants on Orcas and San Juan Islands. An allocation of \$30,000 to the local resource centers via the Emergency Rental Assistance Pilot Project. Awards were based on the Housing Advisory Committee recommendations and all projects received full funding. There were no Lopez allocations because Lopez organizations did not apply.</li> <li>• Five grants were awarded to five different already existing affordable housing projects on Orcas and San Juan Islands to be used for smaller maintenance, construction, or rehabilitation type expenditures.</li> <li>• Council took final steps to formalize the lease with the San Juan Community Home Trust for the development of the Argyle lot across from the Land Bank office in the town of Friday Harbor.</li> <li>• In August, Council issued request to the Governor’s Office for executive relief for poor ferry service. Initially denied but later received funding of \$1,000,000 from the Department of Commerce’s Emergency Rapid Response Program with the intent to support three main initiatives: interisland passenger only water taxi, Anacortes and San Juan Island passenger only charter service, and an on-call essential or critical services barge transportation. \$500,000 was received from the Governor’s Emergency Fund to support increased weekend interisland service during the winter.</li> <li>• SJC is conducting a review and revision of the County’s Uniform Development Code, also known as Title 18. This is intended to achieve a more user-friendly development code and streamline permit review processes to promote consistent</li> </ul>

	<p>standards for development. Community members or frequent users of the code should be encouraged to provide input on their experience with the code.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tomorrow is the Great Islands Clean-up, and the locations are Jackson’s Beach, Lopez Village Park and the Village Green at 10:00am.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Chair and Commissioner’s Report</b> 8:48 am</p>	<p>Peggy Bill provided updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walked the new Redtail Trail and was impressed at the beauty and the incredible amount of work that has gone into the project.</li> <li>• Visited proposed site for the Grange on Beaverton. Observed Charlie working on the installation of solar panels and well system.</li> <li>• She is appreciative of big red signs at Watmough that said “No hunting” on the boundary for the Land Bank property that goes on the trail.</li> <li>• Lopez Hill Hunting Concerns</li> </ul> <p>Anne Marie shared a compliment to Charlie about how helpful he is to property owners with conservation easements.</p> <p>Upcoming Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orcas Island on October 18<sup>th</sup> at the Fire Hall</li> <li>• Lopez Island on November 15<sup>th</sup>.</li> <li>• Annual Retreat in December or January</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outreach/ Communications Report</b> 8:54 am</p>	<p>Tanja provided the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Last night was final Nature Prescription Event on Nordic Walking and it was the most attended event of the series. Event may result in a local Nordic Walking Club getting started.</li> <li>• Great Island Clean-up tomorrow (9/21) with Nurdle Hunting on Jackson’s Beach.</li> <li>• North Shore volunteer event tomorrow (9/21) on habitat restoration including planting and cleaning up to prepare for the upcoming preserve opening.</li> <li>• Know your Island Walk at Beaverton Marsh Preserve next week.</li> <li>• Q3 Fall Newsletter to go out soon.</li> <li>• Informational mailer for the Land Bank Renewal, we are allowed one informational mailer for the renewal, and it should be in mailboxes on October 15<sup>th</sup>.</li> <li>• Community Conversations: there was consideration of not hosting this session due to conflicts with other groups meeting. Brian proposes holding this session as it’s in the final month before the election and is a good opportunity to answer questions and comments between all the islands. A doodle poll may be distributed</li> </ul>

	<p>after the meeting to schedule this event. There was encouragement of sharing this event with networks and word of mouth to increase attendance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Shore Preserve Opening: 11:00am-3:00pm on September 28<sup>th</sup>. A shuttle will be running between the Orcas Island High School starting at 10:45am and will run as a loop at approximately every half hour. The SJPT will be present. Lincoln, Peter, Kathleen and Barbara will provide opening remarks at noon and a tour opportunity at 1:00pm and 2:00pm. Cookies and refreshments will be available. There will be a photo slideshow organized by Peter to highlight the work done over the past few years.</li> <li>• There was discussion for Watmough to have soft opening this fall to avoid having an opening celebration in the middle of hunting season because the trail into the new preserve goes directly through BLM lands which will be open for hunting. A more formal opening celebration could occur in the spring. However, a soft opening could be confusing, is it open or not? There could be a feature article on Watmough in the fall newsletter. Watmough plan will be further discussed at October Commission meeting. Waiting until spring 2025 for official opening was suggested. Amanda offered a tour of Watmough in September and may offer another in October.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Break</b> 9:30 am – 9:44 am</p>	
<p><b>Stewardship Report</b> 9:44 am</p> <p>Ag Leasing Update</p>	<p>Charlie shared updates on farm leases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few months of negotiating farmland leases on San Juan Island, both approximately 40 acres: Frazer Homestead and Beaverton Marsh Preserves.</li> <li>• Frazer: The Shephard Family wants to continue grazing. They have had a short-term agreement while the lease is finalized. Requesting approval for a 20-year term lease with 5-year renewal periods.</li> <li>• Beaverton Marsh Preserve is 40 acres of pasture that has been farmed for 150 years. SJI Grange want to lease it and have a diverse community operation including community garden space and possible opportunities for farmers to get established with a small piece of acreage. There was discussion on how the water will hold up over time. Requesting approval for a 20-year lease agreement.</li> <li>• Both leases are the same rental rate for unirrigated pasture. There would be additional fees for water use at irrigated sites.</li> <li>• Positive feedback from Peggy Bill, Tim Clark, and Mike Pickett. They are appreciative of the effort that went into moving forward on these plans.</li> <li>• The grange is hiring a farm manager early next year to be the point person.</li> <li>• Mike Pickett suggested the Grange provide 6 month recurring updates to the Land Bank. The agreement includes an annual report but there is interest in 6- month updates, possibly in the spring and fall?</li> <li>• Brian suggests the Land Bank needs to be recognized on any signage.</li> </ul>

- Motion for approval of the two leases together – one for Overmarsh Commons, one for Frasier. Homestead Preserve. No oppositions. Two leases are approved. Lincoln will take to council for approval.

Lincoln shared updates:

- Lincoln shared a proposal from county for a wetland mitigation project at False Bay Creek Preserve. Public Works is doing work on Bailer Hill Road, including widening the shoulders, which will impact wetland areas by the side of the road. Department of Ecology (DOE) requires them to do wetland mitigation to offset that work. DOE has a preference for conserving additional wetlands rather than restoring degraded wetlands. The Land Bank has been restoring riparian areas in both of these creeks. The proposal from Public Works includes a one a 1/2-acre mitigation area on False Bay Creek and will do additional plantings to complement what the Land Bank already has there. Public Works would take on maintaining the plantings for a period of 5 years. There are questions about who does the monitoring and reporting beyond the 5 years.
- Brian proposes we establish a policy on what kind of sign off we are going to expect in the future from the county.
- Lincoln will check with Public Works about the permitting status as well as monitoring reporting requirements. Lincoln will provide update at next meeting before asking commission to take action.

Doug provided updates:

- Capacity issues with staff encountering stress related injuries which is impacting capacity and resulting in being behind on maintenance related projects. They are focusing on playing catch-up.
- Shauna attended a Washington Department of Natural Resources Certified Burner Program to facilitate more conservation type burns.
- He shared about a fall celebration at Family Tides Farm on Orcas.
- Brian requested a conversation, possibly at the retreat, if we plan to do any kind of prescribed burn. Doug shared they currently do pile burning and very small broadcast burns.
- Erin shared a Community Wildfire Protection Plan update. Several public meetings coming up on Lopez (October 14<sup>th</sup>), Orcas (October 15<sup>th</sup>), San Juan (October 16<sup>th</sup>). All from 5:30pm-7:00pm. Fire professionals will be present.
- Eliza shared about the Salish Seeds Project Native Wildflower Sale coming up, to make plants available to the public. Late summer cool and moist weather has been great for the plants at the nursery. New wildflower growing guide available online and in print from the office.

<b>Director's Report</b>	<p>Lincoln gave the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RCO Grants for Watmough Head are moving forward. Appraisals are finalized so hoping to start wrapping up the process by the end of the year.</li> <li>• At Frazer Homestead Preserve, The National Park has been interested in purchasing the southern two parcels because of their historical significance as the Cutler homestead. These parcels are excluded from the Ag lease.</li> <li>• Another resale that will be moving forward is near the False Bay Creek property, it's a 10-acre parcel that was purchased with the intention of reselling with a no build conservation easement. This will continue to be monitored as a conservation easement.</li> <li>• Lincoln has been giving many community presentations.</li> </ul>
<b>Public Comment</b> 10:57 am	<p>Tracy Cottingham appreciates being able to listen to the meeting and likes the idea of moving the Land Bank Commission meeting to Lopez in October. She appreciates Brian bringing up concerns on the renew campaign and not having anything contentious.</p>
<b>Future Agenda Items</b> 10:59 am	<p>Tribal relations and connections. Invite Frankie to come to future meeting or retreat. Northern Pike and alternatives Watmough Plan False Bay Preserve Mitigation Project Prescribed burns - further discussion</p>
<b>Meeting Adjourned</b>	<p>Chair, Brian Wiese, adjourned the meeting.</p>
<b>NEXT MEETING</b>	<p>The next LBC meeting is scheduled to take place October 18, 2024, at the Orcas Island Fire Hall at 45 Lavender Lane, Eastsound</p>

### Summary of Values of Land Bank Purchases

Number of Purchases / Donations	Appraised Value of Purchases 1990-2022	Land Bank Expenditures	Partner Expenditures	Non-acquisition partner contributions	Donations of Property	Land Bank Assists on Other Projects
68 / 7	\$87.6M	\$49M	\$33.5M	\$1.9M	\$7.5M	\$12.4M
<b>Total Purchase Price</b>	<b>\$82.9M</b>		<b>Total Partner Contributions: \$53M</b>			
<b>Number of CE Purchases / Donations</b>	<b>Appraised Value of Purchases 1990-2022</b>	<b>Land Bank Expenditures</b>	<b>Partner Expenditures</b>		<b>Donations of CEs</b>	
33 / 15	\$10.7M	\$7M	\$1.8M	n/a	> \$5M est.	
<b>Total Appraised Value LB Projects: \$98.3M*</b>		<b>Total Appraised Value All Projects: \$109.4M*</b>				
<b>Total LB Expenditures: \$56M</b>		<b>Total Partner Contributions All Projects: \$62.1M</b>				

\*Does Not Include CE Donation Value