



MEETING MINUTES

Conservation Land Bank Commission Meeting September 18, 2026 Hybrid Meeting Orcas Island Fire Hall

Commission Members in Attendance:

Marilyn O'Connor, District 1, position 1

Anne Marie Shanks, District 2, position 2

Mary Gropp, at large, position 4

Chris Guidotti, at large, position 5

Amy Trainer, at large, position 6

Tim Clark, at large, position 7

Commission Members Absent: Peggy Bill, District 3, position 3

Land Bank Staff in Attendance: Shauna Barrows, Charlie Behnke, Lincoln Bormann, Rachel Dietzman, Tyler Goodman, Peter Guillozet, Erin Halcomb, Doug McCutchen, Amanda Wedow, Tanja Williamson

Land Bank Staff Absent: Eliza Habegger, Aaron Rock, Margo Thorp, Jacob Wagner

County Council Liaison: Justin Paulsen

Public in Attendance: 11 individuals over the course of the meeting.

Topic	Key Discussion Points & Agreements
Call to Order 8:30 am Time Stamp (0:09)	Vice-Chair, Marilyn O'Connor, called the meeting to order.
Public Comment 8:31 am (0:48)	There was a comment regarding County Code language and a comment regarding deer hunting on Orcas Island.
Adoption of Minutes 8:36 am	The draft August 21, 2026, minutes were reviewed. There were corrections. Minutes were approved.

Topic	Key Discussion Points & Agreements
(5:32) Chair and Commissioners Report 8:37 am (6:30)	Anne Marie commented the August LBC Meeting was great and highlighted the breadth and scope staff are involved in. She also noted having a conversation with a member of the public regarding County Budget and Department of Environmental Stewardship staff possibly coming under Land Bank umbrella. Amy shared the Tribal Sub-Committee has been doing quite a bit of work. She thanked Erin for her work and the committee has put out a draft tribal access and use policy that builds on the County's tribal framework.
Council Liaison 8:40 am (9:42)	Justin Paulsen reported the following: • Council member Paulsen will host "Community Budget with County Council Chair Justin Paulsen" events on San Juan Island Sept 23, 6pm to 7:30pm, at the SJI Library and on Lopez Island Sept 30, 5:30pm to 7pm at the Lopez Island Library. He will discuss the County's existing budget situation and the fiscal challenges that lie ahead and answer questions. The San Juan Island meeting will be recorded. • Council will spend time on the budget on Sept 21 and on Sept 22 will discuss revenue and expenditure discussion. October 5 is when the public hearing on the budget opens.
Partner Update – San Juan Preservation Trust (SJPT) 8:44 am (13:44)	Vickie Edwards, Conservation Director of SJPT, reported the following: • The Mount Ben West Conservation Easement (CE) concluded on September 16 – the Preservation Trust owns the land and the Land Bank holds the CE. Vickie noted the goal is to open a public trail through the property in 2028.
Directors Report 8:47 am (16:32) Acquisitions San Juan Island Talking Horse Farm (Ingram Property)	Talking Horse Farm (Ingram Property) – Background: 122-acre, R-10 property on Halvorsen Road on San Juan Island with significant agricultural history and natural areas. It neighbors Beaverton Marsh Preserve. The property is under a purchase and sale agreement for \$3.49M, with closing set to occur no later than January 21, 2027. It was proposed to sell the easternmost 40 acres of farmland property to someone who would continue agricultural practices and the Land Bank would concurrently purchase the adjoining 82 acres. Current: Lincoln outlined the process of assigning a 40-acre portion of the contract to a third party (Talking Horse Farm). The Land Bank's goal is to access the property the Land Bank retains via an access easement and to keep any additional residential structures on the 40-acre property within the current 6.5-acre area building site and out of any agricultural land. Proposals are due on September 30, 2026, and will then be reviewed by the Commission. Lincoln noted that because purchase price is included in the offer, proposals will be kept confidential until the final selection meeting on October 16, 2026. Lincoln also described a procedure for evaluating farm proposals. There was discussion.

	ACTION ITEM: Schedule a special Land Bank Commission meeting prior to October 16 regular monthly Commission meeting to review any proposals to purchase Talking Horse Farm.
Break 9:13 am – 9:25 am (43:44)	
Stewardship Report 9:25 am (43:53) Salish Seeds Project Annual Plant Sale San Juan Island Beaverton Marsh Trail Update Orcas Island Limited Deer Hunting Update	Tanja reported the online plant sale went live on Sunday, September 13 and runs through Saturday, September 19. Currently 70 orders have been placed and a few varieties have sold out. Plant pick up will take place on Saturday, October 3, between 11am and Noon on San Juan, Orcas and Lopez Islands. She also reported a large turn out for the last Third Thursday Volunteer Work Party at the nursery. Project manager, Rachel Dietzman, reported all required documents were successfully submitted by the deadline to Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and we have construction fund obligation. Review of plans and specs continues at WSDOT headquarters. She noted a challenge arose with WSDOT that they will not allow additive bidding, meaning the Land Bank can't submit the connector as a "base bid" and ask for alternate bids for other sections. Rachel shared a draft budget, breaking down all Beaverton Trail segments separately, and estimates we will begin advertising for bids sometime before October 30, 2026. There was discussion. Erin has been in contact with WA Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Hunter Education and Volunteer Coordinator, Jackie McBride and noted Jackie hoped to attend today's meeting via Zoom. Erin reminded the attendees the goals of limited hunting on Orcas Preserves were to reduce the pressure of herbivory in localized areas to see ecological uplift, to support tribal culture by providing and opportunity for reconnection, and to build upon programs that already exist in San Juan and Lopez Island Preserves providing opportunities for ethically sourced food locally. Updates include staff circling back to the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission and asking for ideas on how to address concerns about public safety and how to provide for a better hunt. Staff returned to Turtleback Mountain Preserve with WDFW to review ecological and safety concerns that were heard in public comments and have been in discussion with conservation partners, SJPT, and other local community leaders, for ideas in providing better education around hunting. There was discussion. Peter shared staff and commission sub-committees have been pushing forward Policy Manual revision and expect to have a draft for full commission review in a couple of months.
Outreach Report 10:15 am (1:33:47)	Tanja noted tours of Dolphin Bay Road property were extended through October. The last tour is scheduled for October 15. Outreach events are coming to a close for 2026, with the possibility of some pop-up planting events over the winter.
Future Agenda Items 10:17 am (1:36:06)	Accessibility (disabled, elderly); Organization structure, procedures, and priorities; tribal relations, annual retreat

2nd Public Comment 10:33 am (1:38:32)	A total of four members of the public shared comments on the following topics: the Talking Horse Farm purchase, limited deer hunting on Orcas Island and considering CE's and other non-fee methods for acquisition.
Break 10:28 am – 10:39 am (1:45:46)	
Executive Session 10:40 am (1:46:13)	The Land Bank Commission met in executive session in accordance with RCW 42.30.110 (1)(b) to consider the selection of a site or the acquisition of real estate by lease or purchase when public knowledge regarding such consideration would cause a likelihood of increased price.
Meeting Adjourned 11:11 am (1:47:27)	Vice-Chair, Marilyn O'Connor, noted no decisions were made during executive session. Marilyn adjourned the meeting.
NEXT MEETING	The next regular LBC meeting is scheduled to take place October 16, 2026, at the Mullis Community Senior Center, Friday Harbor, WA 98250.