



Memorandum

TO: County Council
FROM: Cliff Strong, Senior Planner
THROUGH: Mark Personius, Director
Steve Roberge, Asst. Director
DATE: January 22, 2024
SUBJECT: Amendments to the Wildlife Advisory Committee, Agricultural Advisory Committee, and Conservation Easement Program Oversight Committee Administrative Rules

At the behest of the advisory committees, Planning and Development Services is proposing amendments to the qualifications for serving on the Wildlife Advisory Committee (WAC) and the composition of the Conservation Easement Program Oversight Committee (CEPOC). Additionally, the Agricultural Advisory Committee has requested certain amendments, though none of them change policy. (As none of these are land use controls, Planning Commission review is not required.)

1. Amending the Qualifications for being Appointed to the Wildlife Advisory Committee (WAC)

The WAC would like to be able to have a Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (or other such wildlife agency) representative as one of their members. However, the current qualification language precludes such a person if they don't live or vote in Whatcom County, many of whom don't as they cover territories larger than Whatcom County.

Therefore, they would like to amend WCC 2.118.040 to carve out an exception to this requirement for such a person, as shown in Exhibit A.

2. Cleaning up the Agricultural Advisory Committee code

No policy amendments are proposed. The AAC only wishes to clean up the language of their establishing code.

3. Amending the Composition of the Conservation Easement Program Oversight Committee (CEPOC)

The CEPOC would like to make a few changes to code regarding committee composition. They would like to:

- Add an additional position for a conservation easement-holding entity (such as the Whatcom Land Trust, who co-holds the majority of our conservation easements, though it could be another).
- Change one of the farmer positions to a farmer/forestry position to account for adding forestry to their program guidelines.

- Add a ninth position—a citizen with expertise in agricultural programs—to keep an odd number of members so as to prevent tie votes. Such a person could be from a variety of Whatcom County organizations (e.g. Whatcom Family Farmers, Whatcom Conservation District, Sustainable Connections, etc.).
- Change the member ownership interest guidelines to allow members to participate in the Conservation Easement Program as long as they recuse themselves from voting if they have ownership interest in the land in accordance with the Whatcom County Code of Ethics.

Therefore, they would like to amend WCC 3.25A.060 as shown in Exhibit A.