Minutes - Regular Meeting

Thurston County Planning Commission
Wednesday, June 21, 2000
County Courthouse Complex
2000 Lakeridge Drive SW
Building 1 - Room 152
Olympia, Washington 98502

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by Chair Bower, followed by introductions of Planning Commission members.

   a. Attendance

      Members Present: Leo Deatherage, Bob Bower, Tom Cole, and Liz Lyman
      Members Absent: Barbara Frost, Brian Fagernes, Janet Reiner, e.j. Curry, and Peggy Paradise
      Staff Present: Fred Knostman, Jennifer Hayes, Gina Suomi, (Development Services Staff), Shanna Stevenson, (TRPC Staff), Dotty Tryk, Marie Cameron, (OPBD Staff), Mark Cook, Dick Blinn, Jim Bachmeier, (Water & Waste Management Staff), Dale Rancour, (Roads & Transportation Staff)

   b. Approval of Agenda

      The agenda was approved as submitted.

   c. Approval of Minutes

      Minutes, June 7 and May 17, should be brought to the next meeting

2. Public Communications

   None.

3. Special Recognition of Jackie Kettman's Service to the Commission

4. Briefing: Transfer of Development Rights Demo Project

   Shanna Stevenson gave a brief update and history of the Transfer Development Rights Program. Local jurisdictions were encouraged to preserve farmland as part of the Growth Management Act, and owners of farmland who were downzoned from 1 unit per 5 per acres to 1 unit per 20 acres were given an economic incentive to preserve farmland. The County currently has approximately 11,000 acres in Long Term Agriculture District (LTA), mostly in river valleys.
There have not been any transfers since TDR was enacted in 1995. New information packets were passed out to Commission members.

The County received a grant from CTED to reevaluate the TDR program to look at why it has not been successful. Interested parties, including the development community, permit staff for the County and cities, the Thurston County Agriculture Committee, and farmland owners, were interviewed for recommendations to make the program more useful. A new information packet was developed. The new packet along with a questionnaire were sent to the 366 landowners in LTA and they were invited to a forum that explained the program and gave them a chance to ask questions. At the forum, several issues were discussed, including whether the County will ever change zoning back to 1 unit per 5 acres, and what protection landowners would be given from future tax increases. Another issue is that the process to certify rights is very expensive, and could be changed to rely on Assessor’s data instead of a new survey. Twenty landowners have expressed an interest in being contacted about the program. Information will be kept at permit counters in each jurisdiction so landowners can sign up to be part of the program, and this list can be made available to developers. The price of the right is to be negotiated between the owner and developer.

Mr. Cole asked about current values and future values of these rights and wondered if the agriculture community expressed why these rights weren’t selling. Ms. Stevenson said that the development community did not react positively to the program, but the Master Builders would circulate a list of interest landowners. A wait-and-see attitude was expressed by landowners.

Mr. Bower asked how much of the 11,000 acres in LTA was in active farming. Ms. Stevenson was not certain.

Ms. Stevenson will have a work Session with Board of County Commissioners on July 18th.

Mr. Deatherage said that there was never an interest in the program by the development community and that projects do not pencil out as profitable because of impact fees assessed on projects.

5. **Briefing: Draft Capital Facilities Plan (Comprehensive Plan Amendment CO-3)**

Marie Cameron, OPBD, presented the Draft Capital Facilities Plan for 2001 to the Planning Commission.

**Stormwater utility**

Mark Cook and Scott Lindbloom, Water & Waste Management – Stormwater Section presented the stormwater CFP. Stormwater is in the 2nd year of a 6 year dedicated rate increase plan to fund capital facilities. The Department is behind on projects due to the emergency projects, such as in the South Tumwater area due to groundwater flooding. The Stormwater Rate Boundary was extended to
include the Salmon Creek Basin area in South County to pay for the special projects in the area. The utility funded reconstruction of the Hickman Ditch. The Department has put together a plan to get them back on track in the next year, 2001. Some projects have been farmed out to private consultants, including design and work on Mallard Pond and Pacific Avenue wetland. The Rate increase turns off December 31, 2004. The discussion about whether to continue the current rate structure will be in December, 2001.

Mr. Bower asked for clarification about the Salmon Creek Projects.

Mr. Cook explained that the ratepayers in Salmon Creek came in at the same rate and that there was a multi-tiered rate structure to give parity to existing ratepayers to fund the CFP. Special projects were funded by a Special Benefit District in a sub-area of the Salmon Creek Basin. Hopkin Ditch is one of the Districts and Hickman Ditch has a special assessment to cover these types of projects.

Mr. Bower asked if Stormwater had any salmon projects. Mr. Cook stated that the Mallard Pond and the Pacific Avenue wetland are two specific projects on a funding schedule. The Department attempts to find supplemental funding for these types of projects.

**Solid waste**

Dick Blinn, Director of Water and Waste Management, stated that the Solid Waste Section of the CFP is very abbreviated. The County began long hauling landfill through the transfer station on May 1, 2000. Comments were limited due to a claim filed against the County. Capping of the landfill will be completed from May through October 2001 during the dryer part of the year. Maintenance projects that are funded by the CFP are routine in nature.

**Sewer/water**

Jim Bachmeier, WWM, stated that there are no new projects for the CFP. The Tamoshan and Beverly Beach sewer replacement is scheduled for 2001 as well as major maintenance for the upgrade of the treatment plant at Boston Harbor.

Mr. Cole asked for clarification on the use of loan and grant funds. Mr. Bachmeier said that the Department pursues a combination of funding sources, including state revolving loan funds and Centennial Clean Water Fund grants. For Tamoshan and Beverly Beach, the community would repay a loan through a LID. Mr. Cole asked about the cost per household. Mr. Bachmeier said this was still unknown, but that it would range from $9,000 to $20,000.

**Roads and transportation**

Dale Rancour, Roads and Transportation Services, stated that their CFP table includes more projects (151) than there are funds to cover. Capital improvement projects are dependent upon outside grants. If there are excess county funds it is used for safety projects. The Department is in a holding pattern for grants, but plans to expand safety and repair and maintenance projects.
Mr. Bower asked about difficulties obtaining permits. Mr. Rancour said that there are difficulties pertaining to all endangered species, threatened species, possible listed species and research into historical/cultural impacts of projects.

Mr. Bower asked Mr. Rancour to find out how much the Roads Department is paying for the County traffic control function. Mr. Bower also asked what areas of the County were getting close to capacity. Mr. Rancour responded that the Henderson/Old Highway 99 intersection was at capacity, and there were some other impacted areas in the County such as Mud Bay.

**Parks and recreation**

Michael Welter, Parks and Recreation Department, updated the Commission that the Lacey bond to fund the new park to be shared by the County and City did not pass. The County acquired the land for the park and Lacey paid $1.4 million (50% of the total). The County spent $1 million for phase 1 of the development of the park leaving $400,000 held in reserve for maintenance and operations. Mr. Welter reported that the Parks Department was successful in receiving $282,800 for land acquisition from the State IAC. The County has $1.3 million for infrastructure improvements. Lacey is reconsidering to have a vote for the bond in 2001 and has indicated that they are still committed to the project. The total cost of the Lacey/Thurston County Park is $6.2 million split between the County, City ($2.7 million each) and the balance from other funding sources. Mr. Welter did note that the CFP projects had not changed from the previous year.

Mr. Bower asked what would happen if Lacey backed out of the park project. Mr. Welter said the City was committed to the project, and if there were delays, it would just take longer to complete the park.

**County buildings**

Marie Cameron presented information on new projects included in this CFP cycle. Business Application Information Systems refers to new Information Systems. Now these are listed under one category. Another change is the Coroner Relocation. The Public Health building now has a new figure.

Mr. Cole asked about operations costs for the satellite jail. Dotty Tryk of OPBD indicated that there are 4 funding sources to fund these operations. The County is still looking at staffing levels and the funding sources. Ms. Tryk is meeting with the BOCC on Thursday, June 22, to discuss these issues. Funding sources include taxes, Law and Justice Funds, Real Estate Excise Taxes, and the General Fund.

Dotty Tryk, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, OPBD, reported that the County is proceeding with design of the Tyson Building for a minimum-security facility. Discussions about the concept of a Law and Justice Center are taking place. Development of the Center would take a bond. She reported that the county has found property for the Public Health building and negotiations are taking place.
Mr. Cole asked if the County was still considering keeping jail and courts in the current location and finding another location for General Government. Ms. Tryk and Mr. Knostman said that options and alternatives to building new jails or retrofitting current facilities would come up as the planning process moves along.

6. Planning Commission and Staff Updates

Ms. Hayes reminded Commission members that there is a Joint Planning Commission meeting on June 26 at Tumwater. She reminded members that there would be a discussion about Regional Transportation issue and asked that the Commission have a representative at the meeting. She said she would send an e-mail reminder to members. Ms. Hayes also what mailing lists members were on and what meetings they attend. The City of Tumwater had requested that agendas for their meetings be handed out to Commission members (Mr. Knostman passed out the agenda). Ms. Hayes asked if members wanted a briefing regarding the Yelm transportation plan. The Commissioners said they did not need a further briefing on this item, although Commissioner Lyman noted that absent Commissioner Frost had expressed concerns about the number of houses that would be removed for the bypass. Ms. Hayes said she would bring that information to the July 5 meeting.

Mr. Bower asked staff to contact Commission members to see who would be attending the July 5th meeting. A quorum is required at that meeting to set the public hearing on the Comprehensive Plan Amendments. Mr. Knostman reminded staff and members that if we don’t have a quorum at the July 5th meeting it would delay when we could have the public hearing until the 2nd week of August.

Mr. Bower read an e-mail from Barbara Frost. She clarified that she was not requesting to hold meetings one time each month, but that if staff knew in advance that the meeting would only last one hour it should be combined with other topics and have one two or three hour meeting during one month. Mr. Bower said that he felt that staff was doing that already and had been canceling meetings whenever possible. The other Commissioners agreed that the current meeting schedule was working.

Mr. Knostman informed the Commission that interviews for the Policy and Projects Senior Planner position would be held on June 27th.

Ms. Lyman asked about the Salmon Creek Stakeholders Meeting with the BOCC on June 20.

Mr. Knostman did attend the meeting. BOCC directed Water and Waste to look at the ditching issues and investigate what it would take to extend the Hopkins Ditch District to increase revenue and possibly define a Hickman Ditch District. There is a proposal to make all duct work to be 2 feet above flood level in the Salmon Creek Basin area. Knostman will meet with Joe Butler and PAO to investigate the feasibility of this and then meet with the Master Builders.
7. Calendar (Tentative)

The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for July 5, 2000.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

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Bob Bower, Chair