MINUTES - Regular Meeting

Thurston County Planning Commission
Wednesday, March 7, 2001
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 7:05 p.m. by Vice Chair Lyman, followed by introductions of Planning Commission members.

a. Attendance

Members Present: Tom Cole, Liz Lyman, Barbara Frost, Brian Fagernes, Janet Reiner, and Thomas Smith

Members Absent: Bob Bower and Peggy Paradise

Staff Present: Jennifer Hayes, Fred Knostman, John Sonnen, and Sandy Norton

b. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as submitted.

c. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Cole moved, seconded by Commissioner Fagernes to approve the minutes for February 21, 2001. Motion carried.

2. Public Communications

Arnie Olson, 3946 90th Lane SW, Olympia, WA 98512 asked the Commission if the County is going to be sharing any information on the natural gas pipeline that is coming through the County connecting to Satsop. Mr. Olson stated that he asked the Board on Monday and they are researching it. Commissioner Lyman stated that this is not a Planning Commission issue and that the Commission has no jurisdiction over the matter. Mr. Olson stated that a public open house is being held at the West Coast Motel on March 8, 2001 from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. for any interested parties.

Mr. Knostman stated that there is a Special Use Permit and Shoreline Substantial Development Permits required for the proposed gas line. Mr. Knostman stated that Williams is the contractor and Duke will operate the facility at Satsop. Mr. Knostman stated that Williams is constructing the
pipeline from south of Rainier from a main line across the County within an existing Williams pipeline easement. Mr. Knostman also stated that there is still discussion on what type of mitigation would be required for certain aspects of the proposal. Mr. Knostman stated that this is considered an essential public facility and they are required to do a 90-day notice before they can actually submit an application. Once the application is received, the County will start with the environmental review process that may be needed and then ultimately a Hearing Examiner hearing and decision which would then be appealable by parties to the Board of County Commissioners. Mr. Knostman stated that is not something the Planning Commission would be reviewing.

3. **Briefing: TRPC Project Updates**

**Update on Buildable Lands and Regional Benchmarks Report**

Holly Gilbert, Thurston Regional Planning Council gave a brief overview on the buildable lands program and data from the Regional Benchmarks Report dated June 2000. Ms. Gilbert handed out copies of the Benchmark Report for reference. Ms. Gilbert stated that the buildable lands program refers to a 1997 amendment to the Growth Management Act. Ms. Gilbert stated that six counties in Western Washington, Snohomish, King, Kitsap, Pierce, Thurston, and Clark, were affected based on a population trigger. Ms. Gilbert stated that the purpose of the buildable lands legislation is to determine whether the County and its cities are achieving density within urban growth areas, by comparing density and development assumptions in their comprehensive plans with what is actually happening since the plans have been adopted and if urban densities are not occurring, another purpose of the legislation is to identify the jurisdictions in which that is not occurring for reasonable measure to be identified, other than adjusting the urban growth boundaries, in order to increase consistency between actual development and the Comprehensive Plan assumptions in the next five years. Ms. Gilbert stated that in Thurston County, after the legislation was passed, it was decided by the planning directors in the County that TRPC would augment it’s information services program to meet the requirements for the jurisdictions in the County. Ms. Gilbert stated the first buildable lands monitoring and evaluation report is due by legislation in September 2002. Ms. Gilbert referred the Commission to the Growth Chapter of the Benchmarks Report. Ms. Gilbert stated that Phase 1 of the buildable lands data focusing on residential data has been released. Ms. Gilbert also stated that this years focus has been on the commercial development requirements that will be made available by the 2002 deadline.

Ms. Gilbert stated that the Benchmarks Report started as an effort on the part of local governments and to measure the results of their efforts in achieving the thirteen goals of the State Growth Management Act by comparing trends and key indicators against 25 benchmarks established in five categories/chapters which are growth, transportation, economy, environment, and housing. Ms. Gilbert stated that this plays an important role in this area determining whether implementation of GMA is occurring and achieving the desired results. Ms. Gilbert stated that Benchmarks Report is timely now because jurisdictions in the County are preparing for the next round of GMA Comprehensive Plan updates and this could provide important data foundation for that work. Ms. Gilbert also stated that the Benchmarks were developed to compare comprehensive plan policies
already in place. Ms. Gilbert highlighted the six Benchmarks in the Growth Chapter of the report. A discussion followed.

Commissioner Cole expressed concerns regarding potable water vs. population and where we may be in the next 20 years and annexation after building.

Commissioner Lyman, referring to Benchmark 4, expressed a concern regarding the continued growth in the rural County despite the shifting of density and population growth into the Cities and Urban Growth Areas.

**Wetland Mapping Projects**

Steve Morrison, Thurston Regional Planning Council, gave a brief overview of the history of wetland mapping in Thurston County. Mr. Morrison handed out a Memorandum outlining the topics of his discussion and a map of the wetland inventory areas. Mr. Morrison detailed how the project uses existing data sources and new sources (e.g., color aerial photography) to increase the accuracy of wetland mapping in the region. Regional’s new approach to wetland mapping will result in more accurate and useful maps for planning purposes, and the data is available to the public. Mr. Morrison stated that information is available online through the Thurston Geodata Center. The website is www.goedata.org. A discussion followed.

4. **Briefing: County Property Assessment Process**

Dennis Pulsipher and Diana Thornton, Thurston County Assessor’s Office, provided an overview of the County’s property assessment process. Mr. Pulsipher handed out a booklet titled “The Property Tax System in Thurston County” which outlines the following topics:

a) Stakeholders in Thurston County’s Property Tax System
b) Role of the Assessor
c) Property Assessment Practices
d) Levies.

Mr. Pulsipher addressed key issues for the Assessor’s office. Those issues are as follows:

a) Maintain a database of property characteristics of all properties within Thurston County. This is on the lands, improvements, residential, commercial, and industrial properties.

b) Statutory requirement to inspect 1/6 of the properties in the County every year. Field appraisers look at different properties on a rotating basis and validate the characteristics on file and the conditional elements of each property. Appraisers are looking at the quality, condition, validating roof type and building style, and square footage.

Mr. Pulsipher stated that a plan is filed with the Department of Revenue every six years to
define their revaluation plan in terms of the future six years and what areas of the County will be inspected. Mr. Pulsipher stated that regions are assigned to different appraisal teams and appraisers and they have 1/6 area within their area. Mr. Pulsipher stated that parts of the County are visited every year for physical inspection and this allows the Assessor’s office to get out and look at more sales and to be aware of what is going on in each community. Mr. Pulsipher also stated that Department of Revenue has the statutory authority to be the regulatory agency to oversee property assessment activities and levy activities for the Counties.

c) Every year the Assessor looks at the valuation of property relative to sales in the County by neighborhoods. Mr. Pulsipher stated that the Assessor’s office operates on mass appraisal environment with about 16 appraisers responsible for valuing 110,000 parcels and commercial personal property records. Mr. Pulsipher stated that appraisers are looking at approximately 15 to 20 thousand properties a year as well as new construction and when valuing the properties every year they do a replacement cost by looking at the sales of brand new homes and seeing what it costs to build a brand new home and whether it’s in excellent quality, very good quality, average quality, fair quality, even some on the verge of poor quality then developing a database on those costs. Mr. Pulsipher stated that they then go out and look at sales of used property to find out what the market is defining as depreciation based on the age of the house. Mr. Pulsipher stated that a house that is five years old sales differently than a new home but also sales differently than a 30 year home and this is the database that is being created “sales database” to calibrate a costs model that is applied to all properties every year. Mr. Pulsipher stated that they also do sales ratio analysis by neighborhoods to look at the level of assessment and the measure of dispersion.

A lengthy discussion followed, including a discussion of the levy process and how property taxes are divided among property owners in the County.

5. **Worksession: 2001 Comprehensive Plan Amendment Proposals**

Port of Olympia Runway Safety Project

Doug Sandau, Port of Olympia, was available for follow-up discussion on the proposal. Mr. Sandau stated that they will be able to mitigate all impacts that may be created on anything that is done on the runway shift regarding projects and build out. Mr. Sandau handed out additional data on the runway project, which the Commission had not seen before. The data included maps of the airport land use compatibility, airport layout plans which identifies 1999 DNL Noise Contours with existing land use and 2020 DNL Noise Contours with generalized existing land use, Olympia regional airport traffic patterns, map of air traffic area, diagram of aircraft accident safety zone, and airport compatible land use matrix. Mr. Sandau stated that this is data that he finished prior to the meeting and that this is more precise data then what the Commission has already seen.

Commissioner Lyman stated that she attended the Salmon Creek Basin Stakeholder Committee
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meeting held subsequent to the runway briefing. At the meeting, she was informed by Mark Cook that data collection for the hydrological study has been completed. Therefore, shifting the runway will not have any impact on the integrity of the hydrological study.

Commissioner Smith expressed concern about the possible impacts if the shift was not approved.

Ms. Hayes stated that additional text changes may be necessary to incorporate this data into the staff report. Ms. Hayes handed out a supplement to the staff report. The handout was titled “Supplement #2 to PO-1 Staff Report.” Ms. Hayes stated that this information summarizes how text and maps will need to be changed in the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Hayes stated that Mr. Sandau’s data is not included in the staff report but is information that supplements what is already specified in the staff report available to the public, that Exhibit A (airport map) will need updating. Staff will discuss how best to make the graphical changes using the Port’s new mapping information.

Olympia Parks Plan Project

John Sonnen provided a brief overview of the State and County regulations that provide guidance toward providing parks in the Urban Growth Area. Mr. Sonnen stated that the Growth Management Act allows parks and recreation as an optional element to the park plan. Mr. Sonnen stated that in order to obtain funding from the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) you have to have an updated park plan to be eligible for consideration. Mr. Sonnen stated that the Growth Management Act requires all growth areas to contain open space corridors and greenbelts and these are suppose to provide the same kind of things the Olympia Park Plan is calling for.

Mr. Sonnen identified two other things that have implications to the park plan. One is RCW 58.17.110, which is direction for the subdivision codes for each County and City. This code requires each subdivision make appropriate provisions for open space, parks, and playgrounds among other things like wastewater collection, stormwater, etc. The second is the County wide planning policies. Mr. Sonnen stated that the first thing that needed to be done when growth management started was to convene all the jurisdictions and under the requirements of the GMA decide how planning would be approached in Thurston County. Mr. Sonnen handed out excerpts from the Countywide Planning Policies and the addendum to the staff report for the park plan. The staff report addendum was also made part of the Commission mailing. Mr. Sonnen briefly highlighted each excerpt. Mr. Sonnen also handed out an addendum to the proposed park plan amendment. (This handout was also made part of the Commission mailing but some people did not receive the handout in their packet). Mr. Sonnen gave a brief overview of the addendum.

The Commission expressed concerns regarding impact fees.

Commissioner Lyman expressed concern about PAR 4.7 regarding Olympia’s proposal to request legislative authority to collect impact fees. This would diminish the ability of County residents in the Urban Growth Area to have their concerns addressed since the Olympia City Council does not represent those residents. The amended language for PAR 4.7 (in the addendum) stills seems to give
Olympia authority as long as they work with Thurston County.

Commissioner Smith expressed a concern regarding people within the Urban Growth Area having to pay a tax to a jurisdiction that they do not live in.

Commissioner Reiner expressed a concern regarding private property owners, who self develop, being charged an impact fee.

Discussions followed.

6. Planning Commission and Staff Updates

Mr. Knostman stated that the Board of County Commissioners held a public hearing on Monday, March 5, 2001 on the 2000 Phase II Development Code Amendments. Mr. Knostman stated that over 250 people attended and the only amendment that received testimony was the wireless communication amendment. Mr. Knostman stated the Board directed staff to prepare the ordinances for the other ten amendments, which is scheduled to be adopted on March 19, 2001. Mr. Knostman stated that further work sessions will be scheduled with the Board on the wireless communication facilities. Mr. Sonnen stated that the primary concern from the citizens is that cellular towers create a personal health threat.

Commissioner Lyman stated that Chair Bower asked her to meet with Andy Haub, City of Olympia, regarding the Green Cove Creek proposed amendment to look at the scientific aspect of the proposal. Commissioner Lyman asked that any questions/issues/concerns that the Commission would like her to address be emailed to her.

Commissioner Reiner informed the Commission that the Master Builders had asked her to participate in a committee looking more deeply at the proposed low impact development regulations in Green Cove Creek.

Mr. Knostman stated that an open house is scheduled for March 14, 2001 at the Olympia Center to find out more information about the Olympia Park Plan.

Mr. Knostman stated that Olympia’s Planning Commission public hearing is scheduled for March 19, 2001.

7. Calendar (Tentative)

The next Planning Commission meeting/public hearing is scheduled for March 21, 2001.

Commission Frost and Smith will not be attending the March 21, 2001 meeting/public hearing.

Commissioner Cole will not be attending the April 4, 2001 meeting/public hearing.
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8. **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

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Bob Bower, Chair
Thurston County Planning Commission

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
SUMMARY SHEET

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<th>DATE OF REQUEST</th>
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<td>What percentage of SEPA projects were in the UGA last year?</td>
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