MINUTES - Regular Meeting

Thurston County Planning Commission
Wednesday, April 18, 2001
County Courthouse Complex
2000 Lakeridge Drive SW
Building 1 - Room 152
Olympia, Washington 98502

1. Call to Order

Chair Bower, followed by introductions of Planning Commission members, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

a. Attendance

Members Present: Bob Bower, Tom Cole, Liz Lyman, Janet Reiner, Peggy Paradise, Thomas Smith, and Mark Lovrien

Members Absent: Barbara Frost and Brian Fagernes

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

b. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as submitted.

c. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Cole moved seconded by Commissioner Paradise to approve the minutes for April 4, 2001. Motion carried.

2. Public Communications

None.

In honor of Secretaries Week the Commission expressed appreciation to Sandy Norton, Recording Secretary, for all of her hard work and support.

3. Worksession/Action: 2001 Comprehensive Plan Amendment Proposals

John Sonnen summarized the County’s response to the questions and comments raised at the Planning Commissions April 4, 2001 public hearing on the proposed amendments to the Park and Recreation Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan for the Olympia Growth Area and the proposed rezone from CMR to PO/RM along Mud Bay Road/Harrison Avenue. The Commissions questions,
public comments, proposed changes from City of Olympia, and County’s responses were made part of the Commission mailing.

**Parks and Recreation Chapter (OLY-1)**

Jeff Fancher, Deputy Prosecuting Attorney for Thurston County responded to Commissioner Paradise’s concern regarding assurance that money collected for parks in the growth area will be spent in the growth area. Mr. Fancher spoke briefly on the approach of impact fees. Mr. Fancher referenced RCW 82.02.050 and stated that money from impact fees has to be used in those areas that the jurisdiction that is collecting the fee has control over. Mr. Fancher stated that RCW 82.02.050 states: if the Capital Facilities Plan of the County is complete, other than for the inclusion of those elements which are the responsibility of a special district, the County may impose impact fees to address those public facility needs for which the County is responsible. Mr. Fancher provided his interpretation of RCW 82.02.050 by stating that fees collected by the County have to be used by the County for those items in the Capital Facilities Plan for which the County is responsible.

Mr. Sonnen stated that in addition to the impact fee approach, a second approach would be to establish open space to provide for immediate subdivision needs or collect a fee in lieu of that open space to fund the parks that will be on the adopted park plan.

Mr. Sonnen stated he spoke with Michael Welter, Director of Parks and Recreation, regarding his thoughts on the funding options. Mr. Sonnen stated that one funding possibility is the use of Conservation Futures Funds. Mr. Sonnen stated that Mr. Welter indicated that the County shares the same philosophy as the city in trying to acquire land as it comes available. Mr. Sonnen stated that one approach would be to acquire the properties identified on the adopted park plan and then wait on annexation before development.

Commission Cole expressed a concern regarding regional cooperation between the City and the County.

Mr. Sonnen responded to Commissioner Cole by stating the City of Olympia is proposing to adopt two policies that would call for an inter-jurisdiction committee to coordinate capital investments and park and recreational facilities and to establish a regional approach in planning major facilities. Mr. Sonnen stated that Mr. Welter thought this was a good idea and he shares the philosophy that park users do not observe jurisdictional boundaries, and encourages this approach.

Jan Boubel, Director of the City of Olympia Parks and Recreation Department provided an example of regional cooperation by speaking briefly on the Urban Trails Plan. Ms. Boubel stated that this plan was prepared and finalized in 1993. Ms. Boubel stated that the City of Olympia, Lacey, and
Tumwater came together in developing this plan and at that time the County was not willing to expedite funds to develop the Urban Trails Plan. Ms. Boubel stated the cities then moved forward to develop the plan. Ms. Boubel stated that Mr. Welter went on a staff basis without any additional resources and fulfilled a plan that put the two together. Ms. Boubel stated that the Directors continue to meet and talk on a monthly basis and the advisory committees meet once a year. Ms. Boubel also stated that there is more growing interests on a regional approach.

Commissioner Bower expressed a concern regarding funding and responsibility and asked staff to research how much money the cities are paying to the County for parks. A discussion followed.

Commissioner Bower expressed a concern regarding the approach of taking the money in lieu of open space. Commissioner Bower stated that he is not in favor of a regional park and building multifamily housing in a complex that has no place for children to play. A discussion followed.

Commissioner Bower asked Mr. Sonnen to provide the Commission with the City of Olympia’s multi-family requirement for open space.

In trying to reach a consensus, Chair Bower asked the Commission if the County has a responsibility of providing open space/parks for the Urban Growth Area. The Commission unanimously agreed that the County has a responsibility. A discussion followed.

Chair Bower asked Mr. Fancher if SEPA mitigation fees could be used on all developments, no matter what size, to provide for a neighborhood park. Mr. Fancher stated that SEPA mitigation fees could be used in a development in the Urban Growth Area if it is a development of nine lots or less. Mr. Fancher stated the regulation could be changed to four lots. Mr. Knostman stated that nine lots is the threshold for SEPA. Mr. Knostman also stated that the ten percent only comes into play for projects 10 acres or larger in size.

Mr. Sonnen spoke briefly on the approach of a fee in lieu of dedication outside of SEPA. Mr. Sonnen stated that the threshold could be lowered and we could require open space or mandatory open space for larger developments and maybe an option of a fee in lieu of open space for smaller developments and those fees can be contributed towards parks identified in the park plan.

Mr. Knostman stated that a fee in lieu of open space is not an option for multi-family.

Commission agreed, excluding Commissioner Reiner, to use the SEPA mitigation fee for neighborhood parks and to lower the threshold from nine lots to four lots. Commissioner Bower stated that most of the money collected, other than justified by the city, would belong to the County and be spent in the County.
Commissioner Reiner expressed concern for the smaller project homeowners if lowering the threshold from nine lots to four.

The Commission feels that the County has a funding and park responsibility toward the Urban Growth Area and the Commission agrees that open space parks should be provided for each development. The Commission also prefers the ten percent open space requirement, with Commissioner Reiner descenting. The Commission recommends SEPA mitigation fees be used for neighborhood parks and the lot size be reduced from nine lots to four lots. The Commission chose SEPA to keep the funds in the County rather than giving the funds to another jurisdiction.

Commissioner Reiner stated that parks and recreation is an important aspect for psychological, physical, and emotional well-being for people but expresses concern about the impact this has on smaller homeowners.

The Commission expressed a concern about the money being tract and identified so that people would know where their money is being spent and what neighborhood park the money was used for.

**Wildlife Habitat**

Mr. Sonnen briefly discusses the comments raised at the April 4, 2001 public hearing regarding wildlife habitat. Mr. Sonnen handed out a map titled Figure 2, City of Olympia, Significant Wildlife Habitat Units, which is an excerpt from the regional wildlife habitat study. The map identified areas within the County, by size, of known significant wildlife habitat. A discussion followed.

**Trails/Open Space**

Mr. Sonnen referred the Commission to page 6 of the Response to Questions memorandum, which was made part of the Commission mailing. Mr. Sonnen then addressed the issues raised from public comment received on Trails and Open Space.

Commissioner Lyman stated she would not like to see a trail go through a critical area/buffer that would impact the environment. Commissioner Lyman expressed concern about the areas that have been set aside to protect the environment and then allowing trails to go through the buffer.

Mr. Sonnen stated that the Olympia Planning Commission is recommending that the proposed segment of proposed trail OT-10 stop at the LBA Park and not extend west through into Ward Lake. The Planning Commission concurs with the Olympia Planning Commission to element that section of the trail.

Mr. Sonnen stated that the Olympia Planning Commissions recommended revisions had negligible
impact to the County with one exception. Mr. Sonnen stated the exception is the policy that proposed to require the County to develop neighborhood parks. Mr. Sonnen also stated that if the Commission is not prepared to do that then we should not be adopting that policy and so staff is recommending PAR 1.3 “Develop neighborhood parks according to neighborhood park level of service standards” should not be adopted by the County until or unless we are prepared to implement it.

The Commission agreed to recommend to omit PAR 1.3.

Mr. Fancher spoke briefly on RCW 4.24.210, Liability of owners or others in possession of land and water areas for injuries to recreation users – Limitation, which addressed Commissioner Reiner’s concerns on security and liability if violence occurred on a public trail in the County. RCW 4.24.210 was made Attachment 1 of the Response to Questions memorandum.

**CMR to PO/RM (OLY-3)**

Mr. Sonnen highlighted the public comments received on this proposal. Mr. Sonnen outlined the Olympia Planning Commissions recommendations as noted on page 10 of the Response to Questions memorandum.

Commissioner Lyman expressed a concern regarding property values if the density is lowered.

The Commission agreed to recommend the changes as recommended by the City of Olympia.

4. **Planning Commission and Staff Updates**

**Port of Olympia follow-up issues**

Mr. Knostman asked the Commission if they had any questions regarding the March 9, 2001 letter from Mark Cook to the Port of Olympia. This letter was made part of the Commission mailing.

Commissioner Lyman expressed a concern regarding flooding and high groundwater if the impervious surface is being increased from the Port project.

Mr. Knostman stated that in the letter, Mark Cook was responding to the SEPA Mitigated Determination of NonSignificance that the Port did for their own master plan. Ms. Hayes stated that it was her understanding that the Port recognizes the flooding issues and understands that mitigation will be required at project implementation. A discussion followed.

To help clarify concerns of the Commission, Ms. Hayes stated that Mark Cook was commenting on
the SEPA that the Port is doing on their own project, and that the County’s own SEPA determination is still on going. Ms. Hayes stated that the County is waiting to see what the Port and other jurisdictions are doing on the amendments before making a final SEPA determination on this set of amendments.

Commissioner Bower stated if the Port is going to add impervious surface with new roads the Port will subtract impervious surface from removing the old roads without ending up with a significant increase of impervious surface in the high groundwater area.

Ms. Hayes stated the Port would have to mitigate at project implementation, and at the non-project amendment level it is hard to be specific in how that mitigation will take place.

Mr. Knostman reiterated that the Port does their own SEPA for the Port Master Plan and the County reviews it. Mr. Knostman also stated that the County also has to do a SEPA determination for our Comprehensive Plan Amendments. Mr. Knostman stated that when the Port is ready to obtain permits to do the project and at that time the Port will need to do another SEPA determination for that project and comply with our regulations.

Green Cove follow-up issues
Commissioner Bower stated that a Memorandum with an attached table, dated April 9, 2001, was sent to Mr. Sonnen and a copy to each Commission member regarding the proposed Green Cove Creek Basin Amendment. The memorandum addressed additional questions the Commission had and asked staff to explore the questions for the next worksession. The attached table was designed to help study the impact of different land-use policies on Green Cove.

Commissioner Reiner stated that the Committee meeting for the Green Cove Basin met with Andy Haub, City of Olympia, on Monday, April 16, 2001. Commissioner Reiner stated that a letter addressed to Sue Gordon from Duncan & Associates, insurance brokers, was handed out at the meeting. Commissioner Reiner handed out a copy of the letter to each Commissioner as an information piece. The letter addresses insuring of homes in the Cooper Crest and Green Cove Creek area.

Commissioner Lyman stated that she took the liberty of contacting Dr. May from the University of Washington. Dr. May a researcher referenced in the March 31, 2001 memorandum regarding Residential Low Impact Development District for the Green Cove Creek Basin area. Commissioner Lyman posed a number of questions to Dr. May to get his opinion on some issues raised at the public hearing. Commissioner Lyman will speak in depth during the worksession on this issue.

Mr. Sonnen stated he received a voice message from Andy Haub stating he is going to convene a
science committee to evaluate Olympia Planning Commissions and Thurston County Planning Commissions recommendations on May 4, 2001.

Regional Planning Commission meeting
Commissioner Bower stated that Thurston County Planning Commission is to be hosting the next regional planning meeting, and directed staff to find a guest speaker to discuss regional transportation issues. Ms. Hayes stated she is researching a speaker, and that she could try to arrange this meeting to take place in June or July.

Other news
Mr. Knostman stated that effective May 1, 2001, Don Krupp will be Acting Chief Administrator Officer for the Board of County Commissioners.

5. Calendar (Tentative)

The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for May 2, 2001.

Commissioner Cole and Paradise stated they would not be attending the May 16, 2001 meeting.

6. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Bob Bower, Chair
## Thurston County Planning Commission

### REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

**SUMMARY SHEET**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE OF REQUEST</th>
<th>ISSUE/REQUEST</th>
<th>AUTHOR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/24/01</td>
<td>What percentage of SEPA projects were in the UGA last year?</td>
<td>Bower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/04/01</td>
<td>Copy of citation quoted by Andy Haub from the Dept. of Ecology’s new stormwater manual.</td>
<td>Bower</td>
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<tr>
<td>04/18/01</td>
<td>How much money are the cities paying to the County for Parks?</td>
<td>Bower</td>
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<tr>
<td>04/18/01</td>
<td>Provide the Commission with the City of Olympia’s multi-family requirement for open space</td>
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