MINUTES - Regular Meeting

Thurston County Planning Commission
Wednesday, August 7, 2002
County Courthouse Complex
2000 Lakeridge Drive SW
Building 1 - Room 152
Olympia, Washington 98502

1. Call to Order

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

a. Attendance

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

Members Absent: Bob Bower and Barbara Frost

Staff Present: John Sonnen and Sandy Norton

Guests: Kirk Robinson, Thurston Conservation District

b. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved.

c. Approval of June 5, 2002 Minutes

Commissioner Lyman stated that on page 2, item 6, Commissioner Reiner voted “no” to the approval of the February 20 minutes. Commissioner Reiner agreed.

Commissioner Cole moved seconded by Commissioner Smith to approve the minutes for June 5, 2002. Motion carried.

2. Public Communications

None.

3. Briefing: Thurston Conservation District

Kirk Robinson, Resource Technician, from the Thurston Conservation District (TCD) stated that TCD is a subdivision of the government and is a non regulatory agency that works with all of the residents of Thurston County (farmers and landowners) as well as all the cities on projects
throughout the County. TCD is operated by volunteers and is funded through grants and special County assessment funds.

Mr. Robinson provided a power point presentation on the following topics:

- **How TCD was established** – Authority established by the legislature in 1939 and formed in early to mid 40’s when TCD was formed. TCD is governed by a five-member board.

- **How TCD is financed** – Grants are obtained from State and Federal grants and property tax assessments. Each parcel in Thurston County is charged five dollars per parcel and an additional ten cents for each acre after one acre.

  Property tax assessment is up for renewal this year. The Board will be holding a public hearing on September 3, 2002.

- **2003 Estimated Revenue** – Mr. Robinson handed out a handout which identifies the 2003 estimated revenues, expenditures, and expenses.

- **Benefits of Assessments** – Provides flexibility, stable income, follow-up on projects, Washington Conservation Core (WWC Crew), educational programs, annual plant sale.

  WWC crew is provided by the Department of Ecology. They are paid minimum wage and obtain a scholarship after one year of $4500. Money can be used to pay for school or student loans. WWC crew also receives full medical.

- **Goals of TCD** – TCD has three main goals: 1) Farming for Clean Water Program – working with farmers doing farm planning, helping commercial farmers etc.; 2) Soil Management – educate people on erosion and sediment soil sampling; and 3) Riparian, Wetland, and Wildlife Habitat – work with landowners to protect, enhance, and restore upland wildlife habitat.

- **Statistical Results 1993-2001** – TCD averages about 1400 contacts per month; completed 291 farm conservation plans; approximately 10,000 soil samples; provided 42 miles of fencing along streams; 94, 000 feet of riparian plantings.

- **Projects Completed** – Mr. Robinson provided photos of projects completed throughout Thurston County.

  Commissioner Reiner asked how TCD was helping with the Deschutes River logjam. Mr. Robinson stated that TCD has provided technical assistance but has not provided funding for the project because the funding sources are limited and specific as to what monies can be used for.

- **Scatter Creek Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)** – TCD is assisting landowners in this watershed to form a group to help get funding for HCP. Goal is to have all endangered species identified and to have a plan in place for 10 – 15 years which would provide security to the
landowners.

- **Educational/Outreach Programs** – TCD provides a monthly add in the local newspapers regarding different workshops that are going on and information on funding resources; Sponsor natural resource youth camp for 12-18 year olds; TCTV programs to educate the public on soil sampling, growing crops, fertilizer use, plantings in your background; TCD sponsors Envirothon, which is national competition done through the schools; TCD sponsors South Sound Green for which they work with schools and teachers to set up water monitoring programs, allow kids to obtain hands on experience with water testing, see effects riparian plants have on the environment and how different projects effect streams.

- **Future of TCD** – Continue working with all variety of farmers; continue working with rural and urban landowners; and to continue to provide local solutions to local problems.

Mr. Robinson also handed out a handout titled “Thurston Conservation District,” a booklet titled “Tips on Land and Water Management for Small Farms and Livestock Owners in Western Washington,” and a brochure titled “My Manure Pile is a Mountain! – Waste Management Options.”

Commissioner Fagernes stated that on August 6 he was involved with a project with the Conservation District where TCD helped a farmer obtain a permit in one day for a manure storage bin. Commissioner Fagernes stated that he was impressed with the assistance of the TCD.

4. **Briefing: Critical Areas Update**

Mr. Sonnen handed out a 2002/2003 work program for the Critical Areas update and explained the proposed approach for amending the Critical Areas regulations during the upcoming year. Mr. Sonnen informed the Commission that they would be provided with a series of briefings over the next couple months. Background information regarding the Critical Areas regulations was included in the Commission mailing.

Mr. Sonnen provided a brief background of why the Critical Areas regulations needed to be updated. Mr. Sonnen stated that the County is required by the state to update our regulations to ensure they comply with the Growth Management Act every five years. We have until December 2004 to complete the process. The County has some grant funding that runs through June of 2003.

In 1995, the state refined the Growth Management Act regulations to require the cities and Counties to include the “best available science” in the consideration of the critical area regulations. The County’s responsibility is to look at all of our existing regulations and compare to what has been deemed “best available science.” The state has been able to help us identify about 150 documents they believe constitutes “best available science.” There has also been some growth hearings board and court cases that identifies what they believe constitutes “best available science” on certain subjects. This information provides the County with a good foundation of “best available science.”
Mr. Sonnen stated that our first step is to review what is available and look at the range of alternatives that are scientifically supportable then compare the findings to the regulations. Mr. Sonnen then highlighted the different categories that the Commission will be reviewing (categories listed on work program handout).

Mr. Sonnen also stated the County will also be updated all the wetland regulations. Dept. of Ecology is now reviewing all of the literature for wetlands and expects to not have their other work completed until April of next year. A refined model regulation will be completed during the summer of 2003 year.

The Commission engaged in a discussion on the definition of “best available science.”

Commissioner Cole expressed concern with the Commission ability to determine what is “best available science” when faced with people with different interests and conflicting scientific studies supporting their position.

Commissioner Reiner expressed concern with the manipulation of numbers.

Commissioner Smith responded noting that if the numbers were manipulated that it would not be peer reviewed science.

Commissioner Cole indicted that human factors should be taken into consideration.

Commission Lyman stated that “best available science” is only one factor in adopting the Critical Areas Ordinance. If you deviate from the “best available science,” you want to make sure you have an objective rational for doing that. Commissioner Lyman sited WAC 365-195-905 (5).

Commissioner Paradise referenced page 11 (4) of “The Designation and Protection of Critical Areas Under the Growth Management Act,” which was included in the Commission mailing. Commissioner Lyman interpreted the Current Resolution as not being exclusively based on scientific information but should factor in other economic and social factors provided you can demonstrate that it would protect the functions and values of the critical areas.

Commissioner Reiner asked if the Association of Realtors, who provided a paper regarding Critical Area updates included in the Commissioner packet, would be included in the advisory committees.

Mr. Sonnen said that the report from the realtors association noted that regulations arrived at though interest group negotiations would be doomed to failure. He stated, however, that the composition of the committees would be up to the Commission.

Mr. Sonnen, encouraging the Commission to be involved in this stage of the process, asked the
Commission which subcommittees they would like participate in. The following Commissioners volunteered to be on the following subcommittees:

Fisheries – Commissioner Fagernes, Lyman, and Paradise
Shellfish – Commissioner Paradise and Lyman
Upland Habitat – Commissioner Fagernes
Aquifer Recharge – Commissioner Reiner
Flood Hazards – Commissioners Lovrien and Fagernes
Geologic Hazard Areas – Commission Cole, Lyman, and Lovrien
Wetlands – Commissioner Fagernes, Lyman, Paradise, and Reiner

Mr. Sonnen said a preliminary list of advisory committee members and interested parties will be prepared and submitted to the Commission to review and supplement.

5. **Set Hearing: Capital Facilities Plan 2003 - 2008**

Commissioner Lyman moved seconded by Commissioner Cole to set a public hearing for the 2003 – 2008 Capital Facilities Plan on September 4, 2002 at 7:00 p.m. in Room 152 of the Thurston County Courthouse. Motion carried.

6. **Planning Commission and Staff Updates**

*Junk Vehicle Definition*
Mr. Sonnen stated that the Board has given direction for approving the junk vehicle definition.

*Regulation for Sex Offender Housing*
Mr. Sonnen stated the Board has reviewed the Commissions recommendation in light of the new limiting state regulations and developed a strategy that will be put into final ordinance form this week. The Board is expected to adopt the regulation on August 19. Mr. Sonnen stated that something has to be in place by September 1 or we are preempted by the state.

*Wireless Regulations*
Mr. Sonnen stated that a draft regulation was presented to the Board last year. Since then, three worksessions have been held to evaluate the wide range of alternatives presented to the Board for consideration. Last month, the Board narrowed the scope of the regulations they will forward back to the Commission. Mr. Sonnen stated that he would refine the draft and present it to the Commission in the fall. Mr. Sonnen also stated that a public hearing would be scheduled then.

*Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU’s)*
Vice Chair Paradise asked about the status of ADU’s. Mr. Sonnen stated that the Board had deferred action on the proposed amendments and would consider taking another look at the issue this coming year.

7. **Calendar (Tentative)**
The next regular scheduled meeting is set for August 21, 2002.

Commissioner Smith stated he would not be attending the August 21 meeting.

8. **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

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Bob Bower, Chair
Peggy Paradise, Vice Chair
Thurston County Planning Commission

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
SUMMARY SHEET

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE OF REQUEST</th>
<th>ISSUE/REQUEST</th>
<th>AUTHOR</th>
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<tr>
<td>06/05/02</td>
<td>Legal position of the Commission relating to inviting private interest groups to a Commission meeting to provide a presentation on their point of views on a topic when inviting a governmental agency to speak on a topic. Chair Bower also wanted to know the number of private interest groups the Commission would need to invite.</td>
<td>BOWER</td>
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