MINUTES – Regular Meeting

Thurston County Planning Commission
Wednesday, January 15, 2003
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, Liz Lyman, Liz Kohlenberg, Margaret Paradise and Mark Lovrien
      Members Absent:  Thomas Cole
      Staff Present:  Fred Knostman, Nancy Pritchett, John Sonnen and Cami Olson

   b. Approval of Agenda

      The agenda was approved.

   c. Approval of Minutes from December 4, 2002

      Commissioner Lyman moved seconded by Commissioner Lovrien to approve the minutes for December 4, 2002. Motion carried.

2. Public Communications

   None.

3. Election of Officers

   Commissioner Lovrien nominated Liz Lyman for Chair, Commissioner Paradise seconded. Motion carried. Commissioner Bower nominated Commissioner Lovrien for Vice Chair, Commissioner Paradise seconded. Motion carried.

4. Briefing: Regional Transportation Planning Financing Status Update

   Thera Black highlighted the role of the Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC), outlining its background, issues and status. Ms. Black discussed the relationship between the TRPC and the Planning Commission. Ms. Black outlined the history of the TRPC, showing its evolution, and talking about the current plan called the Trans Action 2025 Plan. To find the preferred direction for the 2025 Plan, the TRPC will look at transportation, investment strategies and coordinating policies better. TRPC hopes to have a draft of the plan out by this summer or early fall.
Commissioner Lovrien commented that, in his opinion, the biggest disconnect of the Growth Management Act is pricing and regulating people out of the urban areas, causing people to travel. He feels this is the biggest problem with transportation. Commissioner Bower says that the American vision is to have a house and a yard, which is keeping people living in the rural areas. We are also seeing people moving to other counties. Ms. Black feels that the local jurisdictions need more funding predictability without competing with other jurisdictions.

5. **Hearing/Action: Open Space Tax Program**

Ms. Pritchett summarized the Open Space Tax Program application submitted by the Willits on parcel number 12904130000. The proposal is to place approximately 65 acres of land at the north end of the Steamboat Island Peninsula into the open space tax program. Ms. Pritchett highlighted briefly the site characteristics, easement information, habitat management plan for the site, public benefit rating system, estimated market value, and staff approval of the proposal.

Commission Bower opened the public hearing. There was no public comment.

**Commissioner Lovrien motioned to approve. Commissioner Kohlenberg seconded. Motion carried.**

6. **Briefing: Wireless Communication Facilities**

Hearing will be held on February 27, 2003. Mr. Sonnen stated that the main objective tonight is to familiarize the Commissioners with the regulations and answer any questions.

Mr. Sonnen presented a handout to the Planning Commissioners as well as the audience titled “Proposed Code Amendments/Issues, Wireless Communication Briefing 5/15/02.” Mr. Sonnen briefly summarized the handout.

Commissioner Lyman asked if this will address only those facilities not in the rights of way. Mr. Sonnen explained that it would address the Wireless Communication Facilities (WCF) located in the rights of way but would not regulate replacement utility poles for automated reading due to that being an existing utility. Using existing poles for WCF would fall under the regulations for an attached facility, which would require only a staff review.

Commissioner Bower asked the Commissioners for comments on this topic. There were no comments. Commissioner Bower stated that he has three main concerns about this topic:

1. His first concern is the safety of taller poles, specifically as to how they would stand up in the event of an earthquake. Mr. Sonnen explained that communication towers must meet the building code standards, but utility poles are generally only required to get a locational permit. Mr. Sonnen said that he can put some language together for the commissioners to look at on February 5th to address the issue.

2. His second concern is how involved Thurston County will be concerning FCC requirements and what is appropriate. Mr. Sonnen explained that the wireless companies are not doing field testing at this time. Commissioner Bower asked if the tower plans are stamped by an Engineer to show that the tower has met the standards set. Ms. Pritchett
explained that when they take out the application for the project they are required to show that they are below the required FCC emissions limits. Mr. Sonnen said that he can try to find out if the FCC does require a stamp to show the facility has met the required standards.

3. His third concern is that he would like to see the WCF’s kept out of residential areas. Mr. Sonnen talked about some of the difficulties in trying to locate the towers in only those forested areas due to the nature of the digital coverage.

Commissioner Lyman asked about the location of WCF in a critical area. Mr. Sonnen explained that under the current regulations, WCF towers are prohibited in all critical areas and critical area buffers. A proposal, recommended by the planning commission, is going before the Board of County Commissioners to continue to prohibit them in all critical areas except aquifer recharge areas where they would be tested within one hundred feet of a well.

Mr. Sonnen suggested that they clear the agenda for February 5th in order to allow as much time as necessary on this issue. Mr. Sonnen asked that the Commissioners give some attention to the proposed administrative requirements. He also stated that many people have shown concern, and that they would like to have public hearings on any of the proposed facilities. Staff has suggested that they limit this to the condition that it is a new pole or an increase in the height to an existing pole. This would then be subject to Hearing Examiner approval.

7. **Discussion: City Liaison Assignments**

It was decided that this will be addressed at the meeting on February 5, 2003.

8. **Planning Commission Staff Updates**

**Natural Resource Lands**

The Commissions letter to the Board of County Commissioners concerning Natural Resource Lands will be discussed at a future meeting.

**Rules and Procedures**

Commissioner Bower said that he had requested a paragraph be added to the Rules and Procedures stating that the chairman with one other person could talk to someone outside of the meeting. Mr. Knostman said that Jeff Fancher said that this should not be in the rules. Commissioner Bower would like something that says the chair by themselves or with another one can do this, so this will be specified. Mr. Knostman said that they can discuss this with Mr. Fancher at the next meeting.

Commissioner Lyman asked why text was deleted under Application and Petition on Page 6 of the Rules and Procedures. Mr. Knostman explained that this is old text that no longer applies. Commissioner Lyman suggested changing the text from parliamentary law to parliamentary rules on page 2, subsection A.

The Rules and Procedures will be discussed further at the next meeting.
Draft Letter to the Board of County Commissioners

Commissioner Bower noted that on the draft letter to the Board of County Commissioners, subject: Amendments to Chapter 3, Natural Resource Lands (part of the 2003 Comprehensive Plan Amendment Proposals) – paragraph two, third word in should be were instead of where. Ms. Pritchett made a note of the correction.

Commissioner Bower stated that he will need to receive any comments to this letter by Friday, January 24, 2003. He states that he will sign and send out the letter if he does not receive any comments by that date.

Misc.

Commissioner Lyman asked if they could again meet with the Board of County Commissioners as they have in the past. Mr. Knostman said that he will bring that to the attention of Michael Welter, Development Services director.

Commissioner Bower presented staff with an article concerning the Growth Management Act. He also presented an article discussing the reality of living in rural areas. Commissioner Bower suggested that the county consider providing a pamphlet with information about the types of services a rural resident can expect from the county, which would include topics such as private septic systems and wells.

9. Calendar

The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for February 5, 2003.

The February 27, 2003 meeting will be held at the Lacey Community Center. The meeting will start at 6:30 p.m. and the doors will be open at 5:30 p.m. The Commission would like the public notice to state that there is a time limit for public testimony.

10. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:26 p.m.

Liz Lyman, Chair
Mark Lovrien, Vice Chair
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