MINUTES – Regular Meeting
Thurston County Planning Commission
Wednesday, March 5, 2003
County Courthouse Complex
2000 Lakeridge Drive SW
Building 1 - Room 152
Olympia, Washington 98502

1. Call to Order

Chair Lyman, 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, Craig Ottavelli, Joyce Roper and Mark Lovrien
Members Absent: Thomas Cole
Staff Present: Fred Knostman, Nancy Pritchett, John Sonnen, Jeff Fancher Mike Kain and Cami Olson

   b. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Lyman would like to discuss the future Joint Planning Commission meeting and the topic of Low Impact Development. The agenda was approved as amended.

   c. Approval of Minutes

February 5, 2003 minutes:

Commissioner Roper asked that the following changes be made:

1. Page 2, number 3, fifth paragraph should include comments raised by the Planning Commission members regarding the topic of informing future property owners having notice that they are responsible for dismantling cellular towers located on their property if the cellular company leasing their land does not remove the tower. Commissioner Lyman asked that the following change be made:

   1. Page 3, number 3, last paragraph should read: Commissioner Lyman referred to Section 20.33.080, Section 1d1 and asked if the location of the rookeries were known and if data were available to the applicant.

2. Page 2, number 3, third paragraph should read: Commissioner Roper stated that including property values...
Commissioner Paradise moved to approve the minutes as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

2. **Public Communications**

None.

3. **Worksession: Draft Ordinance Wireless Communication Facilities**

Commissioner Lyman began the discussion by asking Mr. Sonnen to address the questions raised by Planning Commission members at the February 19, 2003 briefing session concerning FCC regulations, guidelines, and compliance.

**Mr. Sonnen introduced Mike Kain, Thurston County Development Services Current Planning Section.**

Mr. Sonnen opened the discussion of the Proposed Amendments to the Thurston County Zoning Code titled “Wireless Communication Facilities and Antenna Support Structures” by addressing Commissioner Bower’s questions concerning FCC reviews of cellular base stations.

Mr. Sonnen addressed a question that was raised by Mike Wright, citizen, who suggested that the environmental effects of radio frequency emissions could be considered in Wireless Communication Facility (WCF) regulations. Mr. Fancher explained that the courts have allowed the topic of health effects to be heard as a part of the regulations, but the decision for approval or denial of a WCF application cannot be based on health concerns. Commissioner Roper stated that she is concerned that the FCC standards are not tested in the field.

Mr. Fancher stated that it is his recommendation to remove “Interference” from Section 20.33.090, Item 7, to read: Noise. WCFs shall not exceed noise standards as defined in Chapter 173-60 WAC. The Planning Commission members agreed.

Mr. Sonnen addressed a question raised by Mr. Wiltzie and Mr. Perkinson, citizens, concerning microwave beams that communicate between towers. Commissioner Bower raised the question of how the microwave beams affect residential areas located at higher elevations between these microwave towers. Mr. Sonnen stated that he is waiting for more information on this subject from the FCC and the Planning Commission decided to discuss this topic further when this additional information is received.

Commissioner Bower stated that he would like to discuss the topic of creating a Thurston County Plan for Wireless Communication Facilities that would address location concerns. Mr. Sonnen referred to Section 20.33.080, Option, which addresses the issue of identifying possible sites for WCFs. Commissioner Ottavelli stated that he would like the County to consider using a consulting firm to do an analysis concerning the feasibility of creating a Wireless Communication Plan. The
Planning Commission asked for further information on possible no-cost presentations by a consulting firm. Mr. Sonnen will look further into information concerning the consulting firms and report this information to the Planning Commission at a later date.

Mr. Sonnen presented a handout to the Planning Commission during the meeting titled “Public Comments Regarding Proposed Code Amendments, Wireless Communication Facilities, 2/27/03.” Mr. Sonnen explained that he has compiled the suggested changes presented by the public in oral testimony and letters at the February 27, 2003 Public hearing. Mr. Sonnen began the discussion of this handout by highlighting some of the suggested changes to the Thurston County Zoning Code titled “Wireless Communication Facilities and Antenna Support Structures.” The discussion included the following:

1. Section 20.33.010, Item 1 – Commissioner Roper suggested including the word “facilities.” The Planning Commission agreed.

2. Section 20.33.030, Item 2 – Commissioner Bower stated that the regulations should consider encouraging the location of WCFs in Long-Term Forested areas. Mr. Sonnen suggested that Item 2 be removed from Section 20.33.030 and be placed in Section 20.33.080, Item 1, Siting. Mr. Sonnen and Commissioner Bower decided to continue the discussion on this issue for future review of the Planning Commission.

3. Section 20.33.030, Option – Mr. Sonnen explained that the public has expressed concern that as the antenna support structures become taller, they will also become wider, which could create an impediment to motorists. A discussion followed concerning the safety and placement of antennas on existing or replacement utility poles located on roadway rights-of-ways. It was suggested that safety concerns for motorists could be addressed by requiring that the replacement of utility poles be located specifically away from corners and be shielded from the travel lanes by curbs or other devise. They could also be limited to roads with travel speed of 45 MPH or less. Commissioner Lovrien stated that this type of regulation should be uniform for all utility poles and should not single out utility poles accommodating WCFs. However, the majority of the Planning Commission members supported the concept of allowing WCFs on utility poles with the suggested safeguards.

4. Section 20.33.040, Item 2 – Mr. Sonnen stated that Mike Wright, citizen, has suggested that all WCF applications be subject to Hearing Examiner approval. A discussion followed. The Planning Commissioners decided to recommend Hearing Examiner approval for any remote freestanding WCFs proposing to locate an antenna more than twenty feet above the tree line and for any increase in height of other antenna support structures.

5. Section 20.33.050 – Mr. Sonnen stated that Mike Wright, citizen, suggested an addition to this section concerning application requirements. A discussion followed
concerning adding the property owner as a co-applicant. The Commissioners agreed to require the landowner to be a co-applicant on a WCF application.

6. Section 20.33.050, Item 1bii – It has been suggested to amend this section to state that the cellular company would agree to dismantle and remove the WCF/antenna support structure and restore the site to “its approximate original condition.” The Planning Commissioners agreed.

7. Section 20.33.050, Item 1d – Commissioner Kohlenberg expressed her concern that staff may not be qualified to determine whether analysis submitted by an applicant is accurate and that a requirement should be established for third party review. Mr. Sonnen stated that one possible option would be to require third party review regarding subjects that the staff does not have expertise, and to give staff the option of obtaining a third party review on other parties necessary. The Commissioners agreed.

8. The Planning Commission initiated discussion of compliance with FCC guidelines but did not reach any conclusions.

4. Planning Commission Staff Updates

Commissioner Lyman asked the Commissioners if April 14th, 2003 would be a possible date to meet with the Joint Planning Commission. The Commissioners agreed that would be an acceptable date for the meeting.

Commissioner Lyman asked if the Planning Commission could look at the possibility of Low Impact Developments for Thurston County. It was decided that Commissioner Lyman could compose a letter to the Board of Commissioners concerning this topic.

5. Calendar (Tentative)

Mr. Knostman addressed the topic of the tentative agenda for March 19, 2003, asking if the Commissioners would like to add another Worksession for Wireless Communications. It was agreed that this would be added to the agenda for March 19, 2003.

Mr. Knostman advised the Commissioners that on May 13, 2003 a joint meeting is tentatively scheduled with the Tumwater Planning Commission to discuss the Tumwater Joint Plan.

6. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Liz Lyman, Chair
Mark Lovrien, Vice Chair
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