MINUTES – Regular Meeting

Thurston County Planning Commission
Wednesday, October 1, 2003
2000 Lakeridge Drive SW
Building 1 - Room 152
Olympia, Washington 98502

1. **Call to Order**

Commissioner Lyman, followed by introductions of the Thurston County Planning Commission members, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

   a. **Attendance**

   **Thurston County**

   Members Absent: Mark Lovrien, Craig Ottavelli, Margaret Paradise, Liz Kohlenberg, George Darkenwald.

   Staff Present: Nancy Pritchett, Cami Olson, Mark Swartout, Fred Knostman, Michael Welter.

   b. **Approval of Agenda**

   Commissioner Cole moved to approve the Agenda. Commissioner Bower seconded. The Agenda was approved.

2. **Public Communication**

   None.

3. **Briefing: Water Rights**

   Mark Swartout addressed the Planning Commission to discuss the topic of water rights. Mr. Swartout gave a brief overview of the handouts that he had provided to the Commissioners and a PowerPoint presentation on water rights. A discussion followed, which included the following:

   Commissioner Cole asked how wells with water rights and exempt wells can be impacted when instream flows are not being met. Mr. Swartout explained that junior water rights to instream flows may be asked to discontinue their withdrawal. Exempt wells for domestic use can be asked to use their water for in-house use only. Mr. Swartout explained that the date when the instream flow was set by rule is the date of the water right. Water rights that are senior to the instream flow are those that were issued prior to the date of the instream flow.

   Commissioner Lyman asked what the basis is to justify assuming lower gallons per day consumption for cluster subdivision. Mr. Welter explained that mitigation measures effecting water conservation are looked at
in order to allow growth to occur while compacting the growth. A discussion occurred concerning gallons per minute and how that is determined.

Commissioner Bower stated that he is concerned about the limitation placed on the types of land use in the rural county in which new water rights are not being issued. Commissioner Bower asked if water rights are being purchased and set aside so that water would be available to those in the rural county who would like to use their land for agriculture even though they do not have enough water rights to irrigate. Mr. Swartout explained that there is no law at the moment to preserve water rights for these situations. A discussion occurred concerning the dividing up of water rights.

Commissioner Cole asked what the process is for purchasing water rights and what the constraints are. Mr. Swartout stated that he is not exactly certain, but that the Department of Ecology must give final approval.

Commissioner Lyman asked if the county knows if the areas zoned as long term agriculture have access to sufficient water and water rights. Mr. Swartout stated that there is no way to know the answer to that. A discussion followed.

Mr. Swartout stated that on October 14, 2003 at 1:45 p.m. he will be briefing the Board of County Commissioners on the Chehalis and Nisqually Watershed Plans.

4. **Calendar**

Commissioners Roper, Cole and Lovrien will be unable to attend the October 15, 2003 meeting. Commissioner Lyman will be unable to attend the November 5, 2003 meeting.

5. **Staff Updated**

Mr. Knostman explained to the Planning Commission that the Board of County Commissioners will meet on October 8, 2003 to discuss the Comp Plan Amendments.

Mr. Knostman also briefed the Planning Commission as to the status of the appeal of the Wireless Communication Facility Amendments and explained that the appeal had been dropped.

6. **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Liz Lyman, Chair  
Mark Lovrien, Vice Chair