MINUTES

Wednesday, September 29, 2004 Public Meeting

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Lyman, followed by introductions of the Thurston County Planning Commission members, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

   a. Attendance

   Thurston County
   Members Present: Liz Lyman, Bob Bower, Craig Ottavelli, Liz Kohlenberg, Chris Lane, Margaret Paradise, Joyce Roper, George Darkenwald.

   Members Absent: Tom Cole

   Staff Present: Jennifer Hayes, Nancy Pritchett, Ryan Andrews and Cami Petersen

   b. Approval of Agenda

   Commissioner Ottavelli moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Kohlenberg seconded. The agenda was approved.

2. Public Hearing: GMA Update of the Comprehensive Plan

   Staff: Jennifer Hayes

   Commissioner Lyman opened the public hearing at 7:02 p.m.

   Ms. Hayes described what the Comprehensive Plan updates include, gave an overview of the regulatory changes, and described some of the policy changes that have been incorporated in this updated Comprehensive Plan.

   The following public testimony was given:
a. **Jerry Dierker, Bigelow Street NE, Olympia**

Mr. Dierker stated that he has two questions that he would like to say on the record:

1) He is not sure that the 2003 Buildable Lands map and report included the late 2003 FEMA information which did remove some of the lands along the river basins;
2) He is not sure that the 2003 Buildable Lands report took into account lands subsidence and areas that are subject to liquefaction and other types of land slide or geological hazards.

Mr. Dierker stated that he believes this update of the Comprehensive Plan is the best one that he has seen and he thanked the Planning Commission for all their work on this update. Mr. Dierker discussed the protection of water sources in this county and he believes that a Buildable Lands map for the County should be created to show the actual area available in the County.

Mr. Dierker stated that he thinks SEPA should be done before the Planning Commission makes their recommendation to the Board.

b. **Michael Smith, Cooper Point Road NW, Olympia**

Mr. Smith stated that he has been a resident of Thurston County since 1978 and is here today to speak in opposition of the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments, specifically the changes in land use. Mr. Smith explained that he and his wife searched for a long time for a piece of property to be able to subdivide. Mr. Smith and his wife purchased a five-acre parcel on Steamboat Island Road recently that is zoned RR 1/2. The proposed amendments of the Comprehensive Plan is going to change this zoning to RRR 1/5 and limit the amount of trees that he can remove from this property, which will take away the plan for investment that he and his wife were attempting to make to benefit his family.

c. **Randy Smith, 179th Ave SW, Rochester**

Mr. Smith stated that on page seven of the Green Cove Basin amendment draft talks about sixty percent of existing vegetation on the lot, but does not indicate specifically preserving sixty percent of the trees on a parcel. Mr. Smith believes that this language should be changed to specifically retain sixty percent of the trees on a parcel in the Green Cove Basin. Mr. Smith suggested that for future growth management acts, a large portion of this county should not be designated as critical areas. Mr. Smith feels that this is a bad way to go with growth management because what is acceptable in a small area is not good for a large area.

d. **Steve Lundin, Gravely Beach Loop NW, Olympia**

Mr. Lundin thanked the Planning Commission for all of their efforts that they have put forth on the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Lundin stated that he approves the changes that have been proposed on the Special Uses section. Mr. Lundin stated that the section talking about Rural Country Inns be removed from the Comprehensive Plan because this is not being used to his knowledge. Mr. Lundin stated that the maps that are showing the commercial areas of Steamboat Island Road are incorrectly representing this area. Mr. Lundin also stated that there is text in the document that refers to the examples of commercial areas that should not be in this text but under the neighborhood commercial area section. Also, the basic zoning densities that are allowed in the unincorporated area should be changed to 15 to 20 acre average densities.
e. **Darlene Wheeler, Gresham Street SW, Rochester**  
Ms. Wheeler stated that she and her husband own a piece of property with two types of zoning: Rural Commercial and Medium Density. Ms. Wheeler stated that she is concerned with the proposed zoning because it could possibly increase the property taxes on their piece of land to an unbearable level. Ms. Wheeler is opposed to the proposed change in zoning at this time.

f. **Dave Orwoll, 11th Ave NW**  
Mr. Orwoll owns a five-acre parcel and obtained a Special Use Permit to construct a beautiful barn and plans to build a home on the property some day so he and his family can reside on the property. Mr. Orwoll explained that his property has an easement running through it. The proposed change in impervious surface regulations to only allow six percent and means that they would have to tear down their barn in order to build a home on the property because they would then exceed the impervious surface limitations. Mr. Orwoll asked if this proposed change to impervious surface limitations includes agricultural buildings? Mr. Orwoll stated that he is opposed to this proposed regulation because it would cause him to lose his barn in order to build a retirement home on this property. Mr. Orwoll stated that this property is only partially in the Green Cove Basin and he is unclear as to whether this property would then be included in these regulations.

g. **Eric Johnson, President, Cooper Point Association**  
Mr. Johnson explained that he is the president of the Cooper Point Association, which consists of several hundred-property owners on Cooper Point Road. Mr. Johnson stated that his association is here in support of the proposed amendment that creates new development standards for the Green Cove Creek basin for the following three reasons:

1. It is consistent with the Growth Management Act
2. The Green Cove Creek drainage basin is an urban basin that works for the environment
3. Stormwater and water quality is very expensive to manage after the development has occurred.

The Cooper Point Association urges the support of the proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

h. **Tim Trohimovich, 1000 Friends of Washington Representative**  
Mr. Trohimovich is the Planning Director for the 1000 Friends of Washington Organization, which is a statewide organization working with cities and counties to protect land for future generations. Mr. Trohimovich provided the Planning Commissioners with a letter dated September 29, 2004, including attachments. Mr. Trohimovich explained that this letter contains recommendations for the Planning Commission to consider. Mr. Trohimovich stated that there are three major recommendations to the Comprehensive Plan update:

1. The current rural densities are not sustainable over the long term.
2. Need a variety of rural densities – the zoning needs to match the characteristics of each area
3. Take a hard look at the urban growth area – it is over 61 percent larger than it needs to be currently for the projected 2025 population and should only be 20-25 percent.

Mr. Trohimovich thanked the Planning Commission for all of its hard work on the Comprehensive Plan amendments.
i. **Sue Danver, Black Hills Audubon Society Representative**

Ms. Danver provided the Planning Commissioners with a letter dated September 29, 2004 that included attachments. Ms. Danver explained that she is in support of the Planning Commission’s hard work on the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Danver stated that the Black Hills Audubon society would lean toward the comments of the Cooper Point Association and the 1000 Friends of Washington. Ms. Danver explained that she has not had the opportunity to read the Comprehensive Plan amendments, but that Black Hills Audubon Society supports regulations which will protect water quality and water quantity. Black Hills recommends the following:

1) Thurston County conducts a study to determine how much population is supported by its current aquifers and the needs for existing rivers and wetlands.
2) A good understanding and protection of county aquifers be a priority.
3) Dense housing developments with impervious surfaces and septic systems may compromise watershed health.

Ms. Danver explained that the packet she has handed out contains maps of three plats located along the Deschutes River that she would like the Planning Commission to consider. Ms. Danver would also like to state that good habitat means protection for the wildlife as well as the people of Thurston County and the environment that they cherish. Ms. Danver explained that tourism can increase with bird watching, and this should be protected and encouraged.

j. **Jerry Handfield, Gravelly Beach Loop, Olympia**

Mr. Handfield explained that he has been a resident of that location for two and a half years. He would like to commend Jennifer Hayes for responding to his email questions rapidly and would like to thank her for that. Mr. Handfield stated that he supports the proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan, thanks the Planning Commission for all of its hard work on the amendments, and he urges the Planning Commission to keep good records.

k. **Peter Herzog, Washington State Parks Representative**

Mr. Herzog stated that he represents the Washington State Parks and would like to testify as to the State Parks designations. Mr. Herzog stated that he has submitted a letter previously, which contained specific recommendations to the Comprehensive Plan amendments. Mr. Herzog explained that there are not a lot of State Parks in Thurston County, but it is possible that there could be more in the future. Mr. Herzog stated that he would like the Planning Commission to consider allowing State Parks lands to automatically be designated as the Parks and Preserves district instead of always having to request a zoning change. He would also like State Parks to be given additional latitude on paving requirements – to be allowed to bypass the permitting process for paving automatically so the parks can provide paving for ADA access and be able to retrofit current park lands to increase the access for individuals with disabilities. Mr. Herzog stated that he would urge the Planning Commission to consider swimming pools within State Parks also.

l. **Mike Leigh, Kaiser Road NW, Olympia**

Mr. Leigh stated that he lives in the Green Cove Basin, along the Kaiser wetland. Mr. Leigh has a concern that it is too late because of all of the major developments that are going on currently in the Green Cove basin. Mr. Leigh explained that his property is RRR 1/5 zoning and he believes that this is not big enough. He would like to see tighter zoning and less building in this area. He would also like to state that he supports the language that retains vegetation in this area. Mr. Leigh stated that he believes that language should be added to encourage the planting of *native* vegetative species.
Commissioner Lyman closed the public hearing at 8:00 p.m.

Commissioner Lyman explained to the public what the process would be for the Comprehensive Plan Amendments: The Planning Commission will review all of the public testimony from tonight’s hearing and the staff responses, will then forward their recommendations to the Board of Commissioners, and the Board will hold a public hearing on the final drafts of the Comprehensive Plan. A date for the Board’s public hearing will be set at a later date.

The following public comment letters were received prior to this public hearing:
1. Dave Schuett-Hames, dated September 28, 2004
4. Tim Trohimovich, 1000 Friends of Washington, dated September 29, 2004
5. Greg Mueller, email dated September 17, 2004
6. Diane Clement, email dated September 14, 2004

3. Public Communication

None.

4. Approval of September 15, 2004 minutes

Commissioner Ottavelli moved to approve the September 15, 2004 minutes and to accept the tapes of the September 15, 2004 meeting as the official record. Commissioner Roper seconded. Motion carried.

Commissioner Roper requested the following change:
   a. Section 8, Miscellaneous, Follow-up on High Ground Water Question – the distinction needs to reflect for tree retention a fifty-foot buffer of two-foot elevation be maintained - whichever is less, and for construction a fifty-foot buffer of two-foot elevation be maintained - whichever is more.

Commissioner Lyman requested the following change:
   a. Section 7, Briefing: Critical Areas – Riparian – the date for the Board of Commissioners public meeting should be October 19, 004 and not September 19, 2004.

Commissioner Kohlenberg requested the following change:
   a. Section 7, Briefing: Critical Areas – Riparian, third bullet – change affects to effects.

5. Worksession/(Action possible): GMA Update of the Comprehensive Plan
   Staff: Jennifer Hayes

Ms. Hayes explained that she will summarize the points made in the public comments and will then send them to the Planning Commission for review by the next scheduled meeting. Ms. Hayes briefly highlighted some of the issues that have been raised during public comment. A discussion followed. The Planning Commission will email staff with any questions or comments about the public testimony received as soon as
possible. This will allow staff time to research the questions and report back to the Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission discussed some of the major issues that have been raised throughout this Comprehensive Plan update process. The Planning Commission discussed with staff what their options may be to add some of these topics to the Planning Commission meetings for 2005 and decided that a list should be created and prioritized with the main issues the Planning Commission would like to review in the upcoming year.

Commissioner Lyman requested that staff provide additional information concerning the Grand Mound Wastewater Treatment Plant discharge levels in terms of whether or not it is meeting the Clean Water Act and if there are any problems discharging to the Chehalis River. The Planning Commission would also like to know how the Grand Mound system is doing in paying for itself.

The Planning Commission agreed to add a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners to review, during next year’s work program, whether or not the size of the cities UGA’s are in compliance with the Growth Management Act. The Planning Commission would like staff to ask Bob Mead, Thurston County Environmental Health Department, if the quantity of water available in the water sheds is sufficient for future development.

6. Staff Updates  
   Staff: Nancy Pritchett

Ms. Pritchett provided the Planning Commission with an updated tentative meeting calendar.

7. Calendar

Members which are unavailable for the following meetings:

October 6, 2004 – Tom Cole, Liz Kohlenberg, George Darkenwald, Chris Lane. No quorum is available for this meeting – meeting cancelled.  
October 13, 2004 – Bob Bower, Tom Cole  
October 16, 2004 - none

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

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Liz Lyman, Chair
Tom Cole, Vice Chair
Commissioner Lyman requested that staff provide additional information concerning the Grand Mound Wastewater Treatment Plant discharge levels in terms of whether or not it is meeting the Clean Water Act and if there are any problems discharging to the Chehalis River. The Planning Commission would also like to know how the Grand Mound system is doing in paying for itself.