THURSTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes
January 5, 2005

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
Members Present: Liz Lyman, Joyce Roper, Bob Bower, Craig Ottavelli, Liz Kohlenberg, George Darkenwald, and Chris Lane.
Members Absent: Margaret Paradise and Tom Cole
Staff Present: Nancy Pritchett and Cami Petersen

b. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Bower moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Lane seconded. Motion carried.

The Planning Commission welcomed Commissioner Bob Macleod as an observer of this evenings meeting. Mr. Macleod has indicated that he will be observing the Planning Commission meetings from time to time as his schedule allows.

Public Communication Not Associated For Topics That Have Not Been Docketed As Quasi-Judicial

None.

Election of Officers
Commissioner Lyman explained that she and Commissioner Ottavelli had been appointed to the nomination committee for the nomination of the Planning Commission Chair and Vice Chair for 2005. Commissioner Lyman and Commissioner Ottavelli canvassed for suggestions for the nomination of officers.

Commissioner Lyman stated that the canvassing resulted in the following nominees: Commissioner Lyman and Commissioner Kohlenberg as Co-Chairs and Commissioner Cole as Vice Chair for 2005. Commissioner Lyman then asked for other nominations from the floor and no other nominations were made. The Planning Commission then voted unanimously to elect the three nominated members.

**Approval of Minutes**

a. Approval of Minutes and Acceptance of Tapes from December 15, 2004

**Commissioner Roper moved to approve the minutes as amended from December 15, 2004 and accept the tapes as the official record. Commissioner Kohlenberg seconded. Motion carried.**

**Discussion:**

Commissioner Roper requested that the following paragraph be inserted for clarification into the section titled: Briefing: Mineral Lands, page 4 of the draft minutes, following the sixth paragraph from the top of the page. The insertion will read: Commissioner Roper asked whether the timeline envisioned could result in the adoption of the Mineral Lands Ordinance before the update to the CAO and if so, would applications vest under the existing CAO. Ms. Hayes stated they would unless a deferred adoption date was included in the Mineral Lands Ordinance or some other alternative would be adopted.

Commissioner Lyman requested that the following change be made to the section titled: Briefing: Mineral Lands, page 3, fourth bulleted item from the top of the page:

♦ Planning Commission recommendation is that property subject to designation that has an access route through residential areas be conditioned so that truck traffic is limited. The majority of the Planning Commission agreed to this recommendation and other members felt this would require additional discussion.

**Briefing: Geologic Hazards**

*Staff: Nancy Pritchett*

Ms. Pritchett began the discussion by providing a background of the Geologic Hazard Committee that met for eight meetings beginning in September. Ms. Pritchett began the discussion of the draft documents titled:
1. Committee Draft, Amendments to the Critical Areas Regulations TCC 17.15.600, December 29, 2004, Geologic Hazard Areas

2. Committee Draft, Geologic Hazard Areas, New/Revised Definitions, December 28, 2004


Ms. Pritchett explained that she had recently discussed these documents with Mike Kain, Planning Manager and Cynthia Wilson, Environmental Planner, and they have provided comments and changes to the drafts that will be discussed this evening.

Ms. Pritchett began the discussion of the document: Committee Draft, Geologic Hazard Areas, New/Revised Definitions, December 28, 2004. The discussion included the following:

♦ Ms. Pritchett explained that not all of the geo-hazard areas are mapped within the county and so it is a struggle to come up with criteria for these buffer areas. Ms. Pritchett explained that staff has tried to come up with better definitions contained in this section to allow the reviewing staff a better capacity to be able to identify hazard areas.

♦ Landslide Hazard Areas and Marine Bluff Hazard Areas – The Planning Commission questioned why these two vertical height requirements are different. They felt that there was a lack of information for either hazard area to justify one requirement over the other. A discussion ensued. The Planning Commission agreed that they would like some type of justification for the percentages for height requirements for these two hazard areas. Commissioner Kohlenberg and Ms. Pritchett will look into this, but Commissioner Kohlenberg explained that they struggled with this in the Geologic Hazards Committee and were unable to find any specific documentation to support these exact percentages.

♦ Commissioner Bower requested that there be a map of the current Marine Bluff areas within Thurston County, and he asked where the definition in this document comes from. Ms. Pritchett explained that this comes from the Coastal Zone Atlas of Washington. A discussion followed.

♦ Carlyon Beach – how is this issue addressed within these regulations so that this problem does not occur in the future? Ms. Pritchett explained that this issue is addressed in the definition discussing the toe of a steep slope. The Planning Commission agreed again that a map showing the hazard areas along marine bluffs was needed. Ms. Pritchett explained that they are mapped in the Coastal Zone Atlas of Washington.

♦ The Planning Commission discussed the buffers and the inconsistency between the Marine Bluff areas and Landslide Hazard areas. They did not feel that the buffers are being imposed in a fair manner. The Planning Commission struggled with the fact that there is no documentation in the Best Available Science to support this specific buffer designation. The Planning Commission came to the conclusion that they were not supportive of selecting a set buffer distance, which would apply to all marine and landslide hazard areas due to the fact that bluffs and slopes can be very different. The Planning Commission felt that it is over burdensome to the landowner in some cases. The discussion included whether or not to require a geotechnical report for each project application to evaluate each hazard area.
Are there maps available to prospective property owners that will show whether or not there is a hazard area on a particular parcel? The Planning Commission would like to see if this information could be provided.

Commissioner Lyman suggested that staff use a uniform approach to the writing of Best Available Science for all sections of the Critical Areas Ordinance. Commissioner Lyman stated that in her opinion staff should remove the references within the documents that refer to discussion or conclusions of the sub-committees and only cite the actual literature that the committee’s relied upon to come to their conclusions.

Ms. Pritchett began the discussion of the document: Committee Draft, Amendments to the Critical Areas Regulations TCC 17.15.600, December 29, 2004, Geologic Hazard Areas. The discussion included the following:

Page 2, 17.15.620 Buffers.

Ms. Pritchett provided the following suggested change to Alternative One: A. Landslide Hazard Areas, Item 1 – Change the buffer from fifty feet to seventy feet with the first fifty feet left as undisturbed vegetation. Ms. Pritchett explained that staff felt that this would prevent decks, etc. from being built onto houses that are built on that fifty foot buffer line.

The Planning Commission discussed again the reasoning for the buffers that have been selected for these types of areas. The Planning Commission would like some type of documentation to justify this buffer requirement. The Commission also requested information as to what have been the maximum distances recorded for landslide occurrences in order to justify the buffers that are being imposed.

The Planning Commission requested any empirical information to say what the minimum buffer should be and why.

Commissioner Ottavelli requested information concerning the success rate for the ICB and UCB buffer requirements.

1. Why was native vegetation removed from the requirement in this section? It was removed by a suggestion to allow the vegetation that exists to remain as long as it is approved vegetation. Commissioner Lyman thought that the marine habitat buffer adds an additional 100 feet of management area on top of the 100-foot marine riparian habitat area that is proposed. Ms. Pritchett will look into this.

The Planning Commission suggested that the sub-committee re-convene to discuss further the buffer distances and try to come up with documentation to base the proposed buffers on.

Erosion – buffers are not include in erosion hazard areas. The Planning Commission felt that this should be addressed if it an issue of concern for the county. Ms. Pritchett will check into this.

Page 4, 17.15.63 Special Management Areas:

What does a “special management area” imply? Ms. Pritchett suggested that this title can be changed as needed.

2. The Nisqually Hillside – Preservation of the Nisqually view-shed area. Discussion ensued about how to preserve this and justify the preservation with Best Available Science. Some members suggested that this can be justified by the reasoning that this is a
local condition that should be preserved and not rely on Best Available Science. The current buffers should be looked at, however, to make sure that they are adequate in preserving the slope of this area. If they are already adequate then this section may not be necessary within this section because the slope in this area is already being protected and preserved.

The Planning Commission did not complete its review of the Geologic Hazards briefing material and will postpone the discussion to a future meeting – possible January 26, 2005.

**Discussion Item**

1. *Meeting with Board of County Commissioners on January 10, 2005 to discuss the Mineral Lands Task Force.*

Commissioner Lyman reminded the Planning Commission that she would be attending a meeting with the Board of Commissioners on January 10th to explain the Planning Commission’s recommendation that the Mineral Lands Ordinance be postponed until the Critical Area Ordinance is completed through Planning Commission review. Commissioner Lyman asked if there are any other items that should be included in this discussion with the Board. No additional items were added.

**Staff Updates**

*Staff: Nancy Pritchett*

Ms. Pritchett provided the Planning Commission two documents: 1) 2005 Work Program; 2) Preliminary Draft (*STAFF*) 2005 Official Docket of Comprehensive Plan Amendments Proposals. Ms. Pritchett explained that the Planning Commission should review this work plan and there will be a short discussion with staff at the next meeting to discuss this workload and any priorities the Planning Commission feels should be added.

**Calendar**

*Who will not attend the following upcoming Planning Commission meetings?*

1. January 12, 2005 – Cole, Roper, Ottavelli, Bower
2. January 19, 2005 – Cole
3. January 26, 2005 – Cole, Lane

**Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Liz Lyman, Chair
Tom Cole, Vice Chair
## Thurston County Planning Commission

### REQUEST FOR INFORMATION SUMMARY SHEET

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<tr>
<th>DATE OF REQUEST</th>
<th>ISSUE/REQUEST</th>
<th>AUTHOR</th>
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Thurston County Planning Commission  
January 5, 2005 Regular Meeting