THURSTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes
January 19, 2005

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
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, Jennifer Hayes, John Sonnen, Michael Welter and Cami Petersen

b. Approval of Agenda

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

Commissioner Lyman requested that one additional item be added to the agenda:
- Update on Mineral Lands Board Meeting – to be discussed after the Workprogram Discussion

2.  Hearing/Action: S. Wendler Open Space Application

Staff: Jennifer Hayes

Commissioner Lyman opened the public hearing at 7:01 p.m.

Ms. Hayes provided a brief introduction, explaining that this is an application to classify 17.31 acres as Open Space-Open Space under the Farm and Agricultural Conservation Land category for a 50% reduction in property valuation. The property is located at 1228 – 93rd Ave SW in Tumwater UGA and is in the Salmon Creek Basin. This property is being transferred over from the open space farm...
and Ag classification – which is a different program offered by the Assessors office and the property owner meets all the eligibility requirements, will continue to do some low-level agriculture on this site. This property is zoned half-light industrial and half single family and there is a single family home on the site. The total acreage is 18.31 acres and the one-acre home site is to be excluded, classifying the remaining 17.31 acres as Open Space-Open Space. The use of the property will remain the same.

Commissioner Lyman asked if the applicant would like to testify in this matter. The applicant did not wish to testify. No other members of the audience wished to testify in this matter.

Commissioner Kohlenberg asked Ms. Hayes why the designation is changing. Ms. Hayes explained that the property is no longer eligible for the Assessor’s Open Space Farm and Ag Classification because they no longer meet the minimum income requirements that are applied to parcels that are under twenty acres in size.

Ms. Hayes explained that one comment letter in favor of approving this application was received from Daniel and Vianna Moody (letter dated December 30, 2004) and a copy was provided to the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Lyman closed the public hearing at 7:07 p.m.

**Commissioner Kohlenberg moved to forward a recommendation to approve this Open Space Application to the Board of County Commissioners. Commissioner Bower seconded. Motion carried.**

3. **Review 2005 Work Program**  
   **Staff: Michael Welter, Jennifer Hayes, John Sonnen, Nancy Pritchett**

Ms. Pritchett provided the Planning Commission members with a revised handout titled “Preliminary Workload Estimate for 2005, Long Range Planning.” Ms. Pritchett explained that there have been some changes that are shown in red ink throughout the document.

Mr. Welter addressed the Planning Commission to discuss the work program for 2005. The handout provided by staff is a list of mandatory issued in which the Planning Commission will undertake throughout the upcoming year, and also provides a sense of the staff time involved and what the staffing needs are for each topic. Mr. Welter explained that the work projected for 2005 requires approximately 5.25 staff members to accomplish. At this time we do not have the staff required but are looking to bring on an additional staff member to Long Range Planning. The process for hiring a staff member will take a few months and some internal staff shuffling will also be occurring. Cindy Wilson will become more involved in advanced planning, and Ryan Andrews will be also working on additional long range planning projects.

Mr. Welter asked that the Planning Commission add items to the 2005 work program list that they feel should be included in future work sessions of the Planning Commission. This will then allow
staff to prioritize the topics as best as they can to accomplish the tasks which are outlined for the upcoming year, and to note which items shall be worked on in the future. This work plan will be then taken to the County Commissioners and see what the final work plan will look like.

Mr. Welter discussed a few items that are on the horizon for Advanced Planning. Those items included:

- A suggestion by Commissioner Macleod to hold a summit on SEPA and its associated impact fees. This may occur during the summer or possibly the fall, although a time has not been set at this point.
- Priorities of Government – the Commissioners have set this as a number one priority for 2005, which will have (at this point undefined) involvement for several county departments.

The following questions were asked by the Planning Commission:

- Commissioner Lyman asked what the thoughts were in assigning FTE’s to the Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) portions of the work plan for this year? Is there an assumption that additional staff time will be required for this process, much like the work that was done in the past on the Wireless Communication Facilities proposed amendments to the Zoning Code. Mr. Sonnen responded that staff has assumed that the Planning Commission should be finished with the CAO portion by April or May, with decisions by the Board by June or July. Mr. Sonnen explained that this is optimistic and hopefully it will be possible to meet these deadlines.

- Commissioner Roper was curious about the addition of item number 3 under County Amendments - the place holder for Water and Waste Management: Grand Mound Water Service area amendment. Ms. Hayes explained that Water and Waste Management (WWM), who are looking to expand the water service area in Grand Mound, added this to the 2005 work plan. This would be an amendment to the Comp Plan because the water service plan is incorporated by reference to the Comp Plan. WWM would make their proposed changes and the Planning Commission would be reviewing the plan and would be making sure it follows the plan amendment process rules. This is a placeholder because WWM has not yet come forward with a description of the proposal, which will be presented to Board. Ms. Hayes explained that she does not have any additional information at this time. Commissioner Roper expressed her concern that the Planning Commission will be addressing items such as this that have already been addressed previously, which is a valuable use of the commission’s time unless this is new information and not the same information that has been presented before. Commissioner Bower expressed his concern that his may mean extending water service outside of the Urban Growth Boundary of the Grand Mound Area. Ms. Hayes explained that water service could be extended outside a UGA or city boundary as long as you are not encouraging more urbanization that would not otherwise be there. Mr. Hayes explained that WWM would have to take that into account when they create their plan.

- Commissioner Kohlenberg requested that one item to be added to the work plan is the creation of a list of information that needs to be created as they work through their review processes. Commissioner Kohlenberg expressed her concern that there is a lack of
information that is necessary as the Planning Commission deals with the CAO update. This type of list will be created at the bottom of the work plan.

- Commissioner Lyman suggested that this type of discussion be held with staff quarterly in an effort to update the list and identify the important topics that have been brought up throughout the work sessions on the CAO.

- Commissioner Lyman asked for additional explanation about the 2005 Work program item on page 3, number 2 – Amend the zoning code to incorporate the density requirements pertaining to critical areas and Summit Lake garages currently in the Critical Areas Ordinance (TTC 17.15). Mr. Sonnen explained that current CAO regulations originally were for environmentally sensitive area regulations and it wasn’t limited to the categories that we have now, such as steep slopes, etc. One of the special management areas included Summit Lake, which has been placed in the CAO, when ideally this should be covered in the Zoning Code Regulation. So the items such as Summit Lake density requirements pertaining to CAOs will be pulled out of the CAO and placed in the appropriate place.

- Commissioner Lyman stated that there should be more standardization in terms of how densities are calculated within the jurisdictions. Mr. Sonnen stated that this is staff’s recommendation also and that this matter can be presented to the Board. Commissioner Kohlenberg stated that this is affecting practical planning issues between the city of Lacey and the County.

- Commissioner Lyman asked why the Planning Commission has not been involved in reviewing the subdivision regulations. Ms. Hayes explained that in 1987 a decision was made by the County to authorize the operation of the Planning Commission statute that does not include review of the subdivision ordinance. Any change to the subdivision ordinance is presented directly to the Board of Commissioners. Ms. Hayes explained that Jeff Fancher, Deputy Prosecuting Attorney for Development Services, has looked into this questions and she will forward his comments to the Planning Commission via email. Commissioner Lyman requested that the Board be asked if the Planning Commission could become involved in reviewing the subdivision ordinance.

- Commissioner Kohlenberg asked why the Planning Commission has not been involved in reviewing the Stormwater Manual? Mr. Sonnen explained that this would not be coming to the Planning Commission for review. The draft version of the Stormwater Manual is posted on Water and Waste Management’s website and Mr. Sonnen will ask if Kevin Dragon of WWM would be available to brief the Planning Commission as to the changes that are being proposed.

- Commissioner Bower asked Mr. Welter whether the state has funded the Counties for these Growth Management topics? Mr. Welter explained that Thurston County has received a small grant last year, which covered a portion of last years work on some of these topics. Mr. Welter explained that Development Services would be discussion cost recovery within the permitting process with the Board in the near future.
- Commissioner Roper asked whether or not compliance cost recovery has been looked at. Do the violators pay for the work that is done by the compliance team? Mr. Welter stated that this is something to be looked at in the future and that the general fund does subsidize the compliance section at this time.

- Commissioner Kohlenberg requested that the worksession discussions be structured to better identify the key issues for discussion prior to the meetings in an effort to be able to structure the discussions and make the discussions flow more rapidly.

The following items will be added to the list for future work programs:
1. To consider unifying a method of calculating densities among the jurisdictions.
2. Subdivision Ordinance review.
3. Stormwater Manual – this is being revised and the Planning Commission would like to at least be briefed on the changes being made, when will the changes be adopted.
4. Keep the Planning Commission informed as to where the Watershed Plans are by having Mark Swartout periodically update them on items such as the Nisqually Watershed Plan.

4. **Mineral Lands Update**  
   *Staff: Jennifer Hayes*

Ms. Hayes explained that Commissioner’s Lyman and Bower met with the Board a few weeks ago to discuss the Planning Commission’s requests to delay Mineral Lands until the work on CAO has gone to public hearing. The Board has acknowledged that there is a connection with designating Mineral Lands and the CAO. The Board does not want to drop this project and would like the Planning Commission to continue to work on Mineral Lands during the time that they are looking at the CAO. Ms. Hayes would like to schedule a briefing on Mineral Lands in March, and in the mean time the Planning Commission should focus some attention to the issues of asphalt plants and mineral extraction as they review drafts of the CAO. There are other issues of Mineral Lands that are not related to the CAO that the Planning Commission could be looking at and trying to finish up as time permits in their busy work schedule. The Board will likely extend the interim ordinance on Mineral Lands which expires in April, but Commissioner Oberquell specifically requested that staff conduct a poll of the mineral operators of Thurston County to see what their needs to expand or develop new mine sites, as she does not want to hold up mine operators who are working in areas that are appropriate to mine. The Board has also asked that staff contact DNR again to see if they have information available yet concerning mineral extraction inventory within Thurston County.

Commissioner Lyman explained that the asphalt plant issue will be separated from the mineral lands discussions and it is possible that the Board may not allow new asphalt plants until a study on asphalt plants is completed. The Planning Commission will be looking at mineral extraction and mineral land designation and looking at asphalt plants separately.
5. **2005 Officers**

Commissioner Lyman stated that it seems to make more sense administratively to only have one Chair for the Planning Commission and possible having two Co-Chairs that will share additional duties of the Chair. Commissioner Lyman asked the Planning Commission for any additional suggestions or comments. A discussion followed concerning the extensive note taking that the Chair needs to do for each meeting. Commissioner Kohlenberg suggested that the Chair designate someone else on the Commission to take those extensive notes. The Planning Commission Minutes are not detailed enough currently to eliminate this task that the Chair must do in order to have enough detail to create letters to the Board on discussion issues.

The Planning Commission will elect the Chair at this time and elect the Vice Chair at a later date. The Chair and Vice Chair will work out the details of how the tasks will be divided between them at a later date.

**Commissioner Kohlenberg moved to amend the Rules of Procedure to allow for one Chair and two Vice-Chairs. Commissioner Bower seconded.**

**Commissioner Bower moved that a Vice-Chair be allowed to chair the meetings with the Chair present. Commissioner Kohlenberg seconded. Motion carried.**

**Commissioner Bower moved to nominated Commissioner Kohlenberg as Chair. Commissioner Lyman seconded. Motion carried.**

Commissioner Bower stated that he would like to make clear to Mr. Welter that the minutes of the Planning Commission used to be verbatim and used to be a source for the Chair to go back and refresh their memory as to the important topics of the meetings and public hearings. Commissioner Bower explained that this job has now fallen to the Chair.

6. **Briefing: Wetlands**

*Staff: John Sonnen*

Mr. Sonnen began the briefing of the draft document titled “Committee Draft, Amendments to the Critical Areas Regulations TCC 17.15.900, Wetlands.” Mr. Sonnen gave a brief background of the work that has been done to date on the Wetlands draft document. It has been submitted to the Planning Commission members who were on the subcommittee for any final changes to this draft. The draft was also sent to the Roads and Transportation Department WWM – Stormwater and copies were also sent to those staff members who administer the code for comment. Mr. Sonnen will bring those comments to the attention of the Planning Commission as they work through the document.

Mr. Sonnen provided the Planning Commission with a letter from Gretchen Lux, Wetland Specialist, Department of Ecology, dated January 14, 2005. Mr. Sonnen explained that these are DOE’s comments on Olympia’s Draft CAO. Mr. Sonnen provided the Planning Commission with a copy of a PowerPoint presentation titled “2004 Ecology Wetland Rating System,” which was a presentation...
by Gretchen Lux, who would be happy to brief the Planning Commission at a future meeting if needed to answer questions.

Mr. Sonnen explained that DOE has changed the way they look at wetlands and he explained the conclusions that DOE has come to in their research. DOE is now taking the approach of using mosaics as a way of defining the wetlands.

Mr. Sonnen provided a handout of a Power Point presentation by Gretchen Lux titled “2004 Ecology Wetland Rating System.” Mr. Sonnen explained that if the Planning Commission has any questions Ms. Lux would be happy to attend a future meeting.

The discussion of the draft document titled “Committee Draft, Amendments to the Critical Areas Regulations TCC 17.15.900, Wetlands” included the following:

- Page 1, Purpose – no changes were suggested
- Page 2, 17.15.920 Applicability – discussion, no changes
- Page 3, 17.15.940 A. Wetland Categories – Mr. Sonnen provided a handout of proposed changes to “Wetland” definitions. Mr. Sonnen explained the changes to this section. Mr. Sonnen asked if the Planning Commission would like to add an option containing the Department of Ecology’s example of a 1000-foot threshold and if so, should it be modified to include the wetland complexes and amphibian habitat consistent with the committees recommendation. A discussion followed. The Planning Commission decided to at the example by Department of Ecology and also included the reference to wetland complex and amphibian habitats.

The Planning Commission will continue the review of Wetlands at the January 26, 2005 meeting.

Mr. Sonnen provided a document titled “Attachment l, (Option) Table 9-1 Standard Wetland Buffer Widths,” which is the Department of Ecology’s suggestion for these buffer widths.

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

None.

8. **Approval of Minutes**

   a. Approval of Minutes and Acceptance of Tapes from January 5, 2005

   *Commissioner Roper moved to approve the minutes as amended from January 5, 2005 and accept the tapes as the official record. Commissioner Lyman seconded. Motion carried.*
Discussion:

Commissioner Lyman requested the following changes:

1. Page 2, Election of Officers – suggested this be changed to read: 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 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.

2. Page 2, Approval of Minutes, Discussion, first paragraph – the last sentence should read: Ms. Hayes stated they would unless a deferred adoption date was included in the Mineral Lands Ordinance or some other alternative would be adopted.

3. Page 3, Briefing: Geologic Hazards, fourth bulleted item – the second to the last sentence should be changed to read: The Planning Commission agreed again that a map showing the hazard areas along marine bluffs was needed.

4. Page 4, Briefing: Geologic Hazards, page 2, 17.15.620 Buffers, fifth bulleted item – a clarification should be added to the following sentence: 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.

5. Page 4, Briefing: Geologic Hazards, page 4, 17.15.63 Special Management Areas – The second bulleted item should be changed to the following: 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.

9. Staff Updates

   Staff: Nancy Pritchett

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

10. Calendar

Who will not attend the following upcoming Planning Commission meetings?

   1. January 26, 2005 – Cole (tentative), Lane
   2. February 2, 2005 – Roper
   3. February 9, 2005 – no comments
   4. February 16, 2005 – Ottavelli (tentative)
11. **Adjourn**  
The meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

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

#### REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

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