THURSTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes
September 7, 2005

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Kohlenberg convened the special meeting of the Thurston County Planning Commission at 7:04 p.m. Members provided self-introductions.

   a. Attendance

   Members Absent: George Darkenwald, and Liz Lyman.
   Staff Present: John Sonnen, Kathy McCormick, Mark Swartout, Michael Welter, Kerry Hibdon, Lester Olson, Dale Rancour, Scott Clark, Bill Phillips and Cami Petersen.
   Others: Mark Hancock.

   b. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Lane moved, seconded by Commissioner Musser, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

2. Public Communications Not Associated With Topics for Which Public Hearings Have Been Held

There were no public comments.

1. Approval of Minutes

The Planning Commission agreed to postpone accepting the minutes from July 6 and 13, 2005 until the next meeting on September 21, 2005.

2. Briefing – Proposed Olympia/Thurston County Joint Plan Amendments

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TDD (360) 754-2933 Website: www.co.thurston.wa.us/permitting
Mr. Sonnen introduced Kathy McCormick, Senior Planner, Thurston County Regional Planning Council, who is working with the City of Olympia. Mr. Sonnen explained that the City of Olympia has two proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan, which is brought before the Planning Commission this evening.

Ms. McCormick began the discussion on Chapter 5, Housing Chapter Update.

Commissioner Cole asked Ms. McCormick if anything contained in the chapter 5, Housing Chapter Update, would be affected by the potential future change the County may make to the UGA boundaries? Ms. McCormick stated that she does not know of anything in this report that will be affected by that. Mr. Sonnen explained that the only thing might be the possible exclusion of the Green Cove Peninsula. Commissioner Cole asked if this means that this proposed amendment to Chapter 5 will have to be changed. Ms. McCormick stated that she does not believe it would because the information that is contained in Chapter 5 is the City of Olympia and Thurston County data, and she does not believe that this chapter will be updated again until another census occurs or if some housing initiative takes place.

Commissioner Cole asked if the percentages in the report might change due to the possible changes to the UGA. Ms. McCormick explained that the data used is census data and the percentages will not be updated until the next census occurs.

Ms. McCormick explained that in the Olympia Comprehensive Plan there are asterisks placed where Joint City/County adopted policies are referenced. Ms. McCormick referred the Planning Commission to page 5-17 for an example of this.

Ms. McCormick explained that the changes made to Chapters 5 and 6 are not substantive, but primarily to bring these chapters up to date with current information, but reminded the Planning Commission that the current information is based on the census of 2000. This does not reflect the recent increase in housing and housing costs throughout the County. Commissioner Kohlenberg asked if there shouldn’t be a table to reflect the increase in housing costs recently. A discussion on this continued about whether or not it would be possible to show housing “trends” accurately. No conclusion was made.

Commissioner Roper asked whether the 2005 legislation on manufactured housing, which made some changes in the ability to locate those types of homes in various jurisdictions, is included in the Housing Chapter. Ms. McCormick stated that this is not, but that this legislation has requested that the City’s change their development codes and the City of Olympia has done that. Mr. Sonnen explained that this means jurisdictions are required to treat all housing the same, and that the Planning Commission will be receiving information on this in the future.

Commissioner Ottavelli asked where he could find an assessment of where buildable lands are because he is not finding this in this chapter. Ms. McCormick explained that there is a Buildable Lands Report, which is located on the TRPC website at www.trpc.org. Commissioner Ottavelli
asked whether or not that should be noted somewhere in this document. A discussion followed. Mr. Sonnen stated that the working draft does reference the website where this additional information is located. Mr. Sonnen explained that he also working on updating the current Buildable Lands Report, and has asked Regional Planning to take into account, in this new update, the recent population allocation information that is available. It was agreed that the TRPC website could be referenced in the document.

Ms. McCormick explained the changes to Chapter 6, Transportation Chapter Update, which include three main points: 1) change to the Transit Map, 2) updated Traffic Model Maps, which include explanation, and 3) updated the Project List. Ms. McCormick pointed out portions of the Chapter 6 document that have been changed.

The Planning Commission asked if the maps are available because they did not receive the maps with their documents. Ms. McCormick apologized and stated that the maps are available on the City of Olympia website. Mr. Sonnen stated that he could get copies of the maps for the Commissioners.

Commissioner Kohlenberg asked if GMA should be referenced in these documents, because the information in these chapters is closely tied to the GMA. Mr. Sonnen explained to Ms. McCormick how the code is referenced at the beginning of the County plan. Ms. McCormick will look into this.

3. **Briefing/Set Hearing: Capital Facilities Plan**  
*Staff: Mark Swartout*

Mr. Sonnen explained the delay in mailing the Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) to the Planning Commission last week and informed the Commissioners that they will be able to send any specific questions about this draft to Mr. Swartout after this meeting and he will work to answer those specific questions for them.

Mr. Swartout provided the Planning Commissioners with a copy of the PowerPoint Presentation he will be sharing with the Commissioners this evening. Mr. Swartout explained to the Commissioners his process in creating the CFP for this year. Mr. Swartout explained that the document titled “Thurston County Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment for Chapter 6, Capital Facilities Plan, CO-4” is the actual CFP that will be adopted by the Board of Commissioners. The second document titled “Supplement to the Thurston County, Washington Draft Capital Facilities Plan, 2006 – 2011” is a document that the Planning Commission had requested in the past to give additional detail about the projects contained in the CFP document is not officially adopted by the Board of Commissioners. The Planning Commission stated that this has been very helpful information.

Commissioner Kohlenberg asked for clarification as to when a project becomes “capital.” Mr. Swartout explained that there is no clear answer to this, but that a capital project cannot occur unless it is included in the CFP.
Commissioner Cole asked whether the Planning Commission must set the public hearing this evening if there are still questions that they will be asking because they are needing more time to look over the document. Mr. Swartout stated that he will be taking any questions by email and will respond to those questions at the next meeting. The Planning Commission agreed to set the hearing at that the September 21, 2005 meeting.

Mr. Swartout began the PowerPoint Presentation (see document for details of this discussion).

A representative of the Griffin Neighborhood Association on Steamboat Island presented the Planning Commission with a Thank You card and some refreshments. Gayle Ferrous stated that they wanted to say “thank you” to the Planning Commission for all of the hard work that they have done on the Critical Areas Ordinance and wanted to tell the Planning Commission that they are doing a good job.

The meeting continued with the PowerPoint Presentation.

Commissioner Lane asked if there is a priority list in the CFP for projects that may be subject to being “knocked off” the list of projects? If funding does get cut, how do they decide what goes? Mr. Swartout explained that the Supplement document to the CFP explains each project and how it is prioritized in relation to other department projects.

Commissioner Roper referred to page 6-18 and asked what the category titled “Other” included. Does this include some of the CTED grants that may be at risk? Mr. Swartout explained that the category title “Other” includes any additional items from each departments break-down table which is not listed on the table on page 6-18 as a line item. Mr. Sonnen agreed.

**Parks Department**  
*Staff: Michael Welter, Director*

Mr. Swartout explained the Parks section of the CFP using the PowerPoint presentation.

Commissioner Lane asked about W.E. Allen park which shows that it is completed but has expenditures listed for half a million dollars. Mr. Swartout explained that this table is showing completed meaning acquisition of the property, not for completing the park project.

Commissioner Roper referred to page 6-49 and asked if there is a Level of Service (LOS) based on each park and if that is based on the neighborhood or entire community. Mr. Welter explained that the LOS for parks is 4.5 acres per 1000 regionally, with the intent to provide diversity in the facilities and spread out their location. Commissioner Roper stated that this information would be more helpful than just listing the size (or capacity) of each facility, which would help to understand the ranking of the facilities better. She is unclear how “professional judgment” is calibrated throughout all of the departments. Mr. Welter explained that the philosophy of the County park system is not the same as the cities. The County is looking to develop only portions of facilities, leaving the remainder as open space. A discussion followed about how the information in this table can better reflect how the park projects are prioritized,
instead of just stating “by professional judgment.” Mr. Welter explained that the information they are looking for is contained in detail in the Parks Comprehensive Plan, and he believes that it would be very difficult to summarize that information and place that in this table format. Mr. Swartout suggested that this issue be looked at by next February at greater detail. Commissioner Ottavelli stated that he is also interested in looking into this issue with Commissioner Roper. Mr. Welter will provide Commissioners Roper and Ottavelli with the Parks Comprehensive Plan.

 Commissioner Lane stated that he believes exploring this question is only creating a ton of work and he asked how often citizens are asking for an explanation to how the LOS is rated in a County Park. Commissioner Kohlenberg stated that she agrees that this will create a lot of work, but that the Planning Commission has asked for this for a few years and the only way to find answers to these questions is to look into it. Commissioner Ottavelli stated that he believes they are only trying to pull the information that already exists into an easy-to-understand format for public review. A discussion followed.

It was decided that Commissioners Roper and Ottavelli will look further into this and will provide their findings to Mr. Swartout by February 2006.

Mr. Welter introduced Kerry Hibdon as the Capital Projects Manager.

**Solid Waste**
*Staff: Scott Clark*

The Planning Commission complimented Mr. Clark on this portion of the CFP, and stated that they found this section very clear and easy to understand.

Mr. Swartout explained the Solid Waste section of the CFP using the PowerPoint presentation. The Planning Commission did not have any questions on this section for Mr. Clark.

**Storm Water**
*Staff: Scott Clark*

Mr. Swartout explained the Storm Water section of the CFP using the PowerPoint presentation. The Planning Commission did not have any questions on this section for Mr. Clark.

**Water/Sewer**
*Staff: Scott Clark*

Mr. Swartout explained the Water/Sewer section of the CFP using the PowerPoint presentation.

Commissioner Cole asked Mr. Clark to explain what amount of the Grand Mound project is funded by grants and funded by county tax dollars. Mr. Clark explained that the Grand Mound project is financed using loans which will need to be repaid. Grand Mound is starting to develop and Mr. Clark stated that there are six new developments in Grand Mound currently. Commissioner Cole stated that they had been promised in the beginning of this proposed project
that the County taxpayers would not be made to pay for this project, and yet that is what has happened.

Commissioner Strub asked if there are capital development fees in place to reimburse the County for the Grand Mound project. Mr. Clark explained that the developers are required to install their capital and if they are outside of the original utility approval district, they will be required to pay an additional amount to fund the additional capacity required by the development. Mr. Clark stated that if they are also outside the original ULID they will be required to pay a water right mitigation fee or bring a water right with them. Mr. Clark stated that the debt requirement they are seeing for Grand Mound currently would take some of that fee until further development occurs.

**Transportation**

*Staff: Lester Olson, Director, Dale Rancour*

Mr. Swartout explained the Transportation section of the CFP using the PowerPoint presentation.

Commissioner Cole asked if the Roads and Transportation Department has considered looking into the problem with traffic entering onto Yelm Highway at SR 10, Reservation Road. Mr. Rancour explained that this is a state highway issue and would be under their jurisdiction.

Commissioner Roper asked whether or not the grants the Roads and Transportation Department receives are contingent upon CTED compliance. Mr. Swartout will look into that question.

Commissioner Kohlenberg asked whether the projects that do not show up in the CFP are balanced against the CFP projects. Mr. Olson explained that some of those improvement projects are paid for by the neighborhoods. Mr. Olson also explained that the loss of revenue for County Road Projects is starting to be visible and will only worsen to where maintenance is taking money that would have previously been used for road improvements.

Commissioner Roper referred to page 6-57 and stated that she was surprised to see that there were no specifics mentioned for projects, which made it very difficult to understand what is going on with projects without having to look at the Supplement to the CFP. Commissioner Roper stated that she is concerned that the public will need the Supplement in order to understand the CFP projects. It was agreed that they would look into this in the future.

**County Buildings**

*Staff: Bill Phillips, Director, Central Services Department*

Mr. Swartout explained the County Buildings section of the CFP using the PowerPoint presentation.

Commissioner Cole referred to the proposed Accountability and Restitution Center (ARC) project and stated that he is concerned that the hidden operating costs for this project will be enormous. Commissioner Cole stated that he was concerned when the County proposed to
purchase the Tyson Building for a jail but the operation costs were not looked at during that planning stage, and that the same problem occurred with the proposed Law and Justice Center, which was voted down by the citizens. Commissioner Cole stated that he does not believe this project can be looked at without considering the operating costs. Commissioner Cole stated that the inmate population projections on page 6-8 in the CFP are incorrect and that he has received the correct information from the Chief of Operations of the County Jail. Commissioner Cole stated that he is aware that the CFP is not the place to address this, but that it should be looked into.

Mr. Phillips explained that a proposed capital project has to meet one of two objectives. Those objectives include reducing costs or creating revenue. Mr. Phillips explained that we are in a crisis situation in this County currently with our offender population, and if something is not done the Federal Courts will mandate that we do something and it will be taken out of the County’s hands. The reality is that offenders have to go somewhere and we need to find a way to deal with them ourselves. Mr. Phillips stated that the operating costs of this facility are clearly a paramount concern. As this project moves forward they will be looking at ways to maximize the efficiency of the facility and drive the cost down. One of the reasons for going to an “ARC” approach is the concern of the County for the current lack of rehabilitation available for offenders and they re-offend.

Commissioner Cole stated that he understands this, but he is concerned with the level of staffing that will be needed for a facility such as this, and this will “bite” this County. Commissioner Cole stated that he is not sure how to solve this, but said that the citizens need to be aware of the costs involved in this type of project.

Mr. Swartout continued the PowerPoint presentation and provided a summary of the Capital Facilities Plan. Mr. Swartout addressed the points of the letter of request provided by the Planning Commission last year and explained that most of the points have been addressed.

Commissioner Lane referred to the project to build a tower in the center courtyard of the Courthouse complex and asked how parking will be addressed with this project because parking is currently a huge issue. Mr. Phillips explained that the planning work for this project has been completed and they are now working on a traffic study to look at all of those issues. The project cannot move forward until the parking issue is addressed.

Mr. Swartout explained that a new category has been added to the CFP Supplement titled “Environmental.” This is to provide additional information concerning environmental concerns for each project to address the request of the Planning Commission last year. Mr. Swartout stated that Roads projects are the only one he believes they can do this with and asked if there are any other areas that the Planning Commission would like to see this information. Commissioner Roper stated that it would be important information in areas concerning stormwater in areas where shellfish are a concern. Mr. Swartout stated that they would incorporate the “Environmental” information for stormwater projects in next years CFP.

Commissioner Roper referred to the square footage information on page 6-46 and stated that the
last two numbers are not adding up correctly. Mr. Swartout stated that he would fix this.

Mr. Swartout requested that any additional questions the Planning Commission has concerning the CFP be emailed to Cami Petersen at peterscs@co.thurston.wa.us by September 14, 2005.

4. **Staff Updates**

Mr. Sonnen will provide staff updates at the next regular meeting.

5. **Calendar**

Who will be attending the following upcoming Planning Commission meetings?

- **September 21, 2005 – Briefing: Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments** (Commissioner Lane may not be attending)

- **September 27, 2005 – Briefing: Critical Areas – Administrative Sections/Follow Up Topics** (Commissioner Cole is not available)

**NOTE:** No additional Parking Lot Issues were added at this meeting.

6. **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

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Liz Kohlenberg, Chair
Tom Cole, Vice Chair