1. **6:34 PM CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Lane called the July 2, 2008 regular meeting of the Thurston County Planning Commission to order at 6:34 p.m. Commissioners provided self-introductions.

**Attendance:** Chair Chris Lane, Commissioners Tom Cole, Liz Kohlenberg, Liz Myers, Kathleen O’Connor, Scott Nelson, and Joyce Roper.

**Staff:** Scott Clark, Olivia Terwilleger, and Recording Secretary Cheri Lindgren.

**6:34 PM APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MOTION: Commissioner Kohlenberg moved to approve a revised agenda. Staff added a briefing on Transfer Development Rights (TDRs) following the Long-Term Agriculture worksession. Commissioner O’Connor seconded. Motion carried.

2. **6:34 PM PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS** (Not associated with topics for which public hearings have been held.)

There were no public communications.

3. **6:35 PM APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

MOTION: Commissioner O’Connor moved to approve the June 18, 2008 minutes as presented and accept the audio as the official recording. Commissioner Myers seconded.

Commissioner Nelson arrived.

The following change was requested to the June 18, 2008 minutes:

- Add, “(previously known as the Farm Lands Preservation Plan)” following (WLPP) within the second line of the third paragraph on page 3.

The motion as amended carried.

4. **6:44 PM (W) LONG-TERM AGRICULTURE**

(Staff: Scott Clark, Olivia Terwilliger)

Ms. Terwilliger presented a large display map. Parcels less and greater than 20 acres meeting criteria are shown in green. Thirty-two parcels shown in purple were removed because of the presence of wetlands. Staff evaluated all 32 parcels by looking at aerial photographs to determine if agriculture activities are occurring. Parcels with unknown agriculture activity were included as well.

Discussion ensued on the reason smaller parcels, such as .3 acre parcels are reflected on
the map for Long-Term Agriculture (LTA) designation, as well as the initial scope of the project. Mr. Clark explained that legal counsel is recommending the inclusion of small parcels less than 20 acres when contiguous to larger parcels (200 and 320 acres) based on criterion 3, which states in part, “… including land in areas used or capable of being used for production based on land characteristics.”

Commissioner Nelson said the initial culling process involved lands not previously considered that are capable and greater than 20 acres in size and meeting the criteria.

Several Commissioners suggested it doesn’t make sense to designate parcels less than 20 acres in size as “lands of long-term commercial significance.”

Commissioner O’Connor asked whether the parcels in green are adjacent to 200-acre parcels that are proposed for designation or currently in LTA, which are not reflected on the display map. Ms. Terwilliger replied that currently designated LTA is not shown on the map. All parcels meeting the criteria, whether small or large, are shown in green. Commissioner O’Connor said it would be helpful to see lands also currently designated LTA, distinguish parcels less than 20 acres in size for review purposes, and show the larger parcels that qualify for designation based on the criteria.

Commissioner Cole arrived.

Members agreed with Commissioner O’Connor and requested receiving a revised map prior to deliberating and forwarding a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC).

Commissioner Roper arrived.

Commissioner Kohlenberg suggested a map with original LTA and proposed LTA should be attached to the Commission’s recommendation to the BoCC.

Mr. Clark reviewed criterion 5, predominant parcel size, which staff applied when creating the map.

7:01 PM Discussion ensued on the sequencing of criteria used to create the new map, establishing a reasonable small parcel size (5-20 acres), postponing a decision to the next meeting, and unintended consequences of designating small parcels (less than five acres) LTA.

Commissioner O’Connor suggested staff follow a sequence when creating a refined map for the next meeting:

- The first cut should include lands already designated LTA or lands newly considered in LTA greater than 200 acres in size.
- Identify parcels 5-20 acres in size that are contiguous to lands already designated
LTA or lands newly considered in LTA that are greater than 200 acres in size meeting slope, soil, and wetlands criteria. Parcels that do not meet one of the criterions should be removed from consideration with the exception of wetlands. Parcels with wetland issues require further review and evaluation by the Commission.

Commissioners discussed parcels shown in green that are not contiguous to 200-acre parcel patches. Chair Lane said it appears that the first criterion, parcels less than 20 acres in size if adjacent to 200 and 320-acre parcel patches was not followed for parcels identified in northeast and southwest Thurston County.

Commissioner Nelson pointed out that the 200-acre parcel patch has to be in close proximity to a 320-acre parcel patch.

7:18 PM Commissioner O’Connor said the misunderstanding concerns parcels less than 20 acres that were added and are not contiguous to existing LTA or 200+ and 320-acre parcel patches capable of LTA.

Commissioner Roper said Commissioners were looking for additional information for parcels shown in yellow on the map.

Commissioner O’Connor agreed with Commissioner Nelson’s statement that the 200-acre parcel patch has to be within close proximity of a 320-acre parcel patch and that the parcels are predominantly 20 acres or greater in size. It would also be helpful if staff could provide a copy of an Excel spreadsheet with the “yes/no” columns. She asked staff to provide a listing of parcels that have not been documented as having agriculture activities.

5. 7:28 PM (B) TRANSFER DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS
(Staff: Olivia Terwilliger)
Ms. Terwilliger provided the Commission with an overview of TDRs and Purchase of Development Rights (PDRs) and how they apply to Thurston County. Developers in Olympia have purchased development rights in the County to decrease density.

Commissioners asked staff to follow up on whether densities can be reduced only within Olympia’s city limits or within its urban growth area (UGA) and whether there are mandatory minimum densities within the city limits based on the Growth Management Act (GMA).

Ms. Terwilliger reported 35 rights have been issued, 14 rights purchased, and 70 acres protected by TDRs. PDRs are different in that a land trust purchases the right and places restrictions on the land. The land does not transfer to an UGA or to the city to increase densities. Thurston County’s Comprehensive Plan states TDRs and PDRs should be utilized as economic incentives for farms to remain in agriculture. There is no market demand or incentive for developers to purchase development rights.

Discussion followed on King County’s program.
Ms. Terwilliger described what’s possible for Thurston County. The County could purchase TDRs and bank them for purchase by developers. Realtors could earn a commission and provide an incentive to advertise and market a PDR program. Conservation futures monies could be used for PDRs.

Commissioner Nelson pointed out that Thurston County is required to have a Working Lands Preservation Plan (WLPP) in place for eligibility to use conservation futures funds. The County’s Agriculture Committee received a grant last year to develop a WLPP.

Discussion ensued on how the value of the development right is defined and/or assessed.

7:45 PM Ms. Terwilliger reported that once a landowner sells development rights the property value decreases because the highest and best use of the property decreases.

Commissioner Kohlenberg said she understands the Assessor did not reduce the tax assessment when the County purchased development rights.

Commissioner Roper referred to the fee associated with enrolling in the County’s open space program, which is a disincentive.

Mr. Clark said the disincentive of removing property from the fee is that the Assessor will collect back taxes.

Ms. Terwilliger outlined the benefits between open space and a transfer.

6. 7:50 PM STAFF UPDATES
Mr. Clark reported staff is considering a request for a six-month extension of the UGA subdivision moratorium to enable staff to complete an environmental analysis on why some areas should remain under the moratorium and what areas should be removed. A public hearing is scheduled for July 14, 2008.

Mr. Clark provided members with copies of the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservations draft Economic Development Plan for Grand Mound. An invitation to an open house to be held at the Great Wolf Lodge was distributed. Commissioners were encouraged to attend the public meeting. The next elected officials meeting is scheduled for July 8, 2008 with the Tenino City Council.

Mr. Clark reported staff is working on creating a Commission Work Program Calendar for the remainder of the year.

Mr. Clark reviewed plans to restructure the long-range planning division.

7. 8:03 PM CALENDAR (Tentative) AND ATTENDANCE
- July 16, 2008: LTA, Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) – Administrative Chapter, and potentially a Development Code Docket item (Commissioner Myers unable to attend,
8. **8:05 PM ADJOURNMENT**
   With there being no further business, Chair Lane adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

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Chris Lane, Chair

Prepared by Cheri Lindgren, Recording Secretary
Puget Sound Meeting Services