THURSTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes January 5, 2011

1. 6:30 P.M. CALL TO ORDER
Chair Lane called the January 5, 2011 meeting of the Thurston County Planning Commission to order at 6:30 p.m. Commissioners provided self-introductions.

Attendance: Chair Chris Lane, Commissioners Scott Nelson, Edward Fleisher, Christopher Earle, Kathleen O’Connor & Liz Kohlenberg

Absent: Christine Spaulding & Bill Jackson

Staff: Andrew Defiois, Cindy Wilson, Scott Clark & Jeremy Davis

2. 6:31 P.M. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Commissioner O’Connor moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Nelson seconded. Motion carried.

3. 6:31 P.M. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS (Not associated with topics for which public hearings have been held.)
No one chose to speak

The official audio is available on line at: http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/planning/planning_commission/planning_comm_minutes.html

4. 6:31 P.M. CONSIDERATION OF 2011 PLANNING COMMISSION RULES
The draft rules that were given to the Planning Commission were not adopted in 2010 and staff is asking that they be adopted in 2011.

Changes that need to be made to the document:

1. Page 5, Section X where it reads Development Services staff should read Planning Department.
2. Section 11, A, should read on or before the closing dates not losing dates.
3. Page 2, B, the election date shall be changed to the second regular scheduled meeting in January to allow adequate time to discuss and assemble an election committee.

Commissioner O’Connor moved to approve the revised 2011 Planning Commission Rules. Commissioner Nelson seconded. Motion carried.

Commissioner Kohlenberg arrived.

5. 6:34 P.M. COMMITTEE SET-UP FOR ELECTION OF PLANNING COMMISSION OFFICERS

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The Planning Commission discussed what the duties of the committee would be and it is basically to call each Planning Commission member currently serving to see who they will be nominating and if they plan on continuing to serve. The next step after that is completed is to report back to the entire Commission as a whole the results. Commissioners Scott Nelson and Kathleen O'Connor volunteered to be on the committee.

6:36 P.M.  WORKSESSION: Critical Areas Ordinance Briefing: The draft is not prepared for release yet. The purpose of this work session is a critical areas primer to prepare the Planning Commission for considering the CAO.

Staff: Scott Clark, Andrew Deffobis, Jeremy Davis & Cindy Wilson

Mr. Clark explained to the Commission that this work session was to prepare them to go through the CAO. Staff is very close to having all of the draft changes completed. Staff will also be handing over to the Commission some small reading material to go over before the next meeting that prepares them with the case law, the precedence and growth management. This will provide them with further background when reviewing the draft changes to the CAO.

The titles to the documents that were handed to the Commission were then read off by Mr. Davis. Next, Mr. Davis compiled all of the applicable sections of the Growth Management Act to give to the Commission. The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires the County to balance the Growth Management goals and also defines some basic Critical Areas including wetlands and geohazard areas. It also requires the County to follow minimum guidelines to classify critical areas. This in turn requires the County to develop development regulations for critical areas and update those development regulations every seven years. The County must include best available science in developing policies to protect the values and functions of critical areas. A discussion ensued in regards to the documents that were handed out to the Commission.

The CAO must also be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission was then given the primary chapter of the Comprehensive Plan; Chapter 2 Land Use, Chapter 3 Natural Resource Lands and Chapter 9 Natural Environment. Chapter 9 is the primary chapter to deal with critical areas and the goals and policies throughout.

Mr. Deffobis then came before the Commission to talk about Best Available Science and Chapter 365195 of the WAC. Best available science can come from local state, federal or Natural Resource Agencies that consider something to be best available science. The responsibility ultimately to include best available science in the critical areas regulations falls on the legislative body of the city or county; which in this case is the Thurston County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). The WAC also states that when possible city’s and county’s should consult with scientists, other experts or consultants in compiling the best available science. Some common sources of best available science include data from research monitoring, reports, surveys and publications that you would find inside scientific journals etc including expert opinion. A discussion ensued. The Commission asked staff to supply examples of when County’s and City’s did specifically vary from best available science. The Department of Commerce has come up with a hand out for best available science which is available on their website. The County is also required to use the Department of Ecology’s wetlands manual (the latest version) as its best available science for the wetlands section.
Ms. Wilson provided some additional information from different county’s CAO court cases. Most of the other county’s have gone through the adoption process of their CAO.

7. 7:45 P.M. STAFF UPDATES

Mr. Clark provided the following staff updates:
- The first meeting in February is when the Commission will start getting draft updates of sections of the CAO.
- The City of Olympia had asked the county to take corresponding action based on a large development going in by Ken Lake; there had been concerns with flooding and storm water. The mayor of Olympia asked the county to take similar steps, so that action has been added to the docket.
- We currently have a moratorium on bio-mass generators based on concerns by the BOCC. The moratorium is twelve months in length.
- The BOCC has adopted a budget with about eleven million dollars to the good.
- We will be hiring a consultant to do the Impact Fee Study.
- A lot of effort is being made to try and alleviate the burden on rural property owners; especially for working land property owners that are coming down because of critical areas ordinances and other endangered species.

8. 7:57 P.M. CALENDAR

January 19, 2011 – All Commissioners will be in attendance

9. 7:58 PM ADJOURN

With there being no further business, Chair Lane adjourned the meeting at 7:58 p.m.

[Signature]
Chris Lane, Chair

Prepared by Carrie Toebbe, Recording Secretary