1. **6:30 P.M. CALL TO ORDER**
Chair Lane called the January 6, 2010 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, Liz Kohlenberg, Kathleen O'Connor, Christopher Earle, Tom Cole

**Absent:** Commissioner Edward Fleitche, William Jackson

**Staff:** Olivia Terwilleger, Jeff Fancher, Scott Clark, Jeremy Davis, Cynthia Wilson, Cliff Moore, Corina Hayes, Tim Smith, City of Tumwater Planning Manager, Tammi Merriman, City of Yelm

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

**MOTION:** Commissioner Cole moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Kohlenberg seconded.

The following changes were made to the agenda:
- Item 5: Working Lands Worksession will be moved before Item 4

**Motion carried as amended.**

2. **6:32 P.M. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS (Not associated with topics for which public hearings have been held.)**

*James Essig*
I am here to talk about the future updates to the GMA that the Department of Commerce is currently working on. I’d like to inform the Thurston County Planning Commission that they are currently working on updating the GMA and revising certain sections of the WAC. These new revised WACs may have impacts on future projects that you guys are going to be working on and current projects and I feel that they should be taken into account.

These changes relate to the clarification of the criteria for classifying of designated natural resource lands in critical areas within Thurston County. Specifically, WAC 365-190 refers to amendments to the current guidelines to classify ag lands, forest lands, mineral lands, and critical areas. WAC 365-195 is repealing all sections except the Best Available Sciences. They are refining the definition of Best Available Science. Under WAC 365-196 they are creating an entirely new chapter, which is looking at procedural criteria for adopting comprehensive plans and development regulations and codifies all the WACs previously in 365-195 except the Best Available Sciences. This is being done to avoid confusion with the adopted comprehensive plans and court cases that cite the existing WAC.

I am asking you to pause and at least consider the proposed GMA updates and perhaps avoid being challenged by the Growth Management Hearings Board. Thank you.
Sharron Coontz

Hi, I am Sharron Coontz and I was at the last meeting speaking about Rocky Prairie. During that meeting the Chair asked me a question about, as I recall, you sort of phrased it when we first thought about the rezone, was it maybe “sour grapes,” and I wasn’t really happy with my answer. So I went back and spoke to some of the people, including the woman who originally suggested the rezone idea. They reminded me of our discussion at the time and I just wanted to come and tell you just briefly.

Our feeling at the time was any industrial use, even something far smaller than what the Port had originally planned for that area, would be, in fact, a defacto rezone of that area with new traffic, water, air pollution, noise, and so on, in what’s always been a rural area. Remember that even at its so-called “peak industrial time” had about fifteen employees most of the time max, and used about 69 acres of what was then over a 1600 acre site. So this was hardly a hub of industry at the time. It all ended in 1993. Since that original zoning, or the rezone in 1999, there has been a lot of science about prairies. Discovering, for instance, just in the last plus or minus eight years or so, the science figure of how many prairies we have has dropped from 8% to 3%. It is fairly dramatic as people realize just how important that is. The need to protect them, the importance of connectivity for some of the critters to survive, as they need larger areas than these little islands of protections we’ve been giving them. So we need larger areas, both for protecting and restoring both habitat and the animals.

Since just last year new discoveries have been made on the land in terms of for butterflies, thought they may be at risk (inaudible) and new critters that have been found there. So I guess the real question, when I went and thought about it, was – who’s really trying to rezone the area? The folks who want it kept and preserved/protected as it is, or the ones who wants lots of bustle, noise, traffic, pollution next to a wildlife preserve and very close to a state park. And I would say it is the later.

Ms. Coontz provided the Planning Commission (Commission) with cd’s with the Rocky Prairie Song, which mentions all of the species found on the property.

3. 6:36 P.M. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner O’Connor moved to approve the December 2, 2009 minutes and accept the audio as the official record. Commissioner Nelson seconded. Motion carried.

Commissioner O’Connor moved to approve the December 16, 2009 minutes and accept the audio as the official record. Commissioner Nelson seconded.

The Commission requested that the minutes be changed to eliminate the outline of the Power Point presentations given by the Port. All Power Point presentations are part of the official Planning Commission record.

The following paragraph will be amended: Page 7, item 5, third paragraph beginning at line 40 will be rewritten using a verbatim transcript for accuracy.

The December 16, 2009 minutes will be tabled until the January 20, 2010 meeting so the above corrections can be made and reviewed.
4. 6:42 P.M.  WORKSESSION: WORKING LANDS
Staff: Cliff Moore, Corina Hayes, Jeremy Davis

Mr. Davis provided the Commission with an overview of the issue and background of the proposed amendments to the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) that would better enable implementation of recommendations contained in the Thurston County Agricultural Advisory Committee’s (Ag Committee) Working Lands Strategic Plan. Mr. Davis explained that this was brought before the Commission at a previous work session, changes had been proposed, and those changes were taken back to the Ag Committee and to the public for review and comment. Mr. Moore highlighted a few of the recommendations and stated that the recommendations are reflected in the draft provided to the Commission for review this evening.

Mr. Davis explained that the Commission will hold a public hearing on the Comp Plan Policies in early February 2010.

The Commission asked if the current Conservation Futures property tax will be increased to generate the needed funding for this proposal and with the current state of the economy whether relying on grant funding is realistic. Mr. Moore explained that the County is taking a “long view” on this and is not proposing to increase Conservation Futures tax. The recommended policies in this proposal will allow the County to develop working relationships with other agencies, such as WSU Extension, in the future. The policies will also provide the County leverage when applying for grants. A discussion ensued.

The Commission thanked staff.

5. 6:55 P.M.  STAFF UPDATES
Staff: Scott Clark

Mr. Clark provided the following staff updates:
- The Governor’s proposed budget does not include funding for 7-year Comprehensive Plan updates. The final decision on the budget will occur after the Legislative session. However, today Mr. Clark has learned that the Department of Fish and Wildlife will provide funding for Prairie Conservation Planning which will assist in completing the Critical Areas Ordinance. This funding will allow the department to fund a staff member for a six month period to complete this update.
- Staff has received the first set of comments on the Shorelines Management Plan, which are extensive. Staff will be discussing the timelines for response with the Department of Ecology as well as additional funding to allow for the changes that are being required. Staff will provide the Commission with a briefing to update the Commission on Shorelines within the next few months.

The Commission asked when the Grand Mound Rezone will be brought back to the Commission. Mr. Clark explained that he will be taking this to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) for the 2010 docketing process and does not know exactly when that will be.

- New Planning Commission member Christine Spalding has been appointed by
the BOCC.

- Commissioner Jackson has been re-appointed to the Commission by the BOCC.

6. **7:00 P.M. PUBLIC HEARING: CLUSTER SUBDIVISION**
   *Staff: Jeff Fancher*

Chair Lane stated that the purpose of this public hearing is to accept public comment on the proposal to make the interim regulations regarding cluster permanent until the County has time to make additional changes to Cluster Subdivision Regulations. A sign-in sheet has been provided for members of the public who wish to testify.

Mr. Fancher provided background information concerning the cluster subdivision regulations and the interim regulations which has been in place.

**Chair Lane opened the public hearing at 7:00 p.m.**

*Sharron Coontz, 3716 – 85th Ave NW, Olympia*

My name is Sharron Coontz. Can I just ask for a quick clarification? As you said that last part “and hopefully we will go back to allowing a density bonus at some point.” Is that the County’s official position?

Mr. Fancher explained that hopefully there will be a chance to study this issue and go back to that. We do not know the County’s official position at this time.

Ms. Coontz stated that she is very much in favor of this and hopes that people will take a really hard look at it. On a recent tour it looked like there was a cluster over here and a few family farms trying to survive in between and suddenly you know this cannot happen for very much longer, and how can they because the infrastructure that is needed to support those new communities, that are actually becoming little cities out there in the country – you’re going to need the transit, fore engines, schools – and suddenly you just become this urban sprawl out in an area that was designated rural. Ms. Coontz hopes that the Commission looks at this later and that they do pass this. Thank you.

**There being no further public testimony, Chair Lane closed the public hearing.**

6. **7:06 P.M. WORKSESSION: JOINT PLANS**
   *Staff: Jeremy Davis, Tim Smith, City of Tumwater Planning Manager, Tammi Merriman, City of Yelm*

Mr. Davis stated that the Memorandum provided to the Commission for this worksession included the changes and additional information that was requested by the Commission at an earlier meeting.

Mr. Davis provided the Commission with an overview and a Power Point presentation of the proposed Joint Plan Amendments, which will be before the Commission for public hearing on January 13, 2010. The Commission was asked if they have any additional questions of comments on the following:

- 1-E Tumwater 2025 Transportation Plan Update - There were no questions from
the Commission.

- 3-E Tumwater Southwest UGA Resizing and Land Use Analysis – There were no questions from the Commission.
- 4-E Zorad – Site Specific Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Rezoning – There were no questions from the Commission.
- 3-A Olympia Parks and Open Space Chapter Update – There were no questions from the Commission.
- 3-D Lacey Updates – Land Use, Housing and Utilities Elements - Mr. Davis stated that at a previous briefing the Commission requested additional information as to why the gas line extension extends beyond the UGA on the map. Mr. Davis stated that he and Mr. Ginther are not sure of the reasoning and have inquired with TG&E. They should have a response before the upcoming public hearing. There were no questions from the Commission.
- 3-B Yelm Transportation Plan Update – Mr. Davis stated that no comments have been received at this time from the Thurston County Public Works Department. The Commission asked Ms. Merriman if the City of Yelm had applied for any Federal Stimulus money to assist with this proposal. Ms. Merriman stated that they did apply but did not receive any funding, however, the State Department of Transportation was able to fund the first mile of the project with monies that were available for this use. A discussion ensued concerning the project.

Mr. Davis stated that a staff report will be provided to the Commission prior to the January 13, 2010 public hearing. The Commission was reminded that all of the proposal staff reports and related information is located on the Planning Website.

7. 7:16 P.M. WORKSESSION: HOUSING
Staff: Olivia Terwilleger

Ms. Terwilleger explained that currently there are inconsistencies between the Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) Chapter 4: Housing and the Comp Plan sub plan Consolidated Plan for Housing in Thurston County (CPHTC). The Commission was provided with a staff report containing the proposed changes. The Commission reviewed the proposed changes to the Comp Plan and asked questions of staff. The Commission requested staff to provide the following additional information:
- Can the Comp Plan reference the Special Needs Definitions of the CPHTC instead of spelling them out?
- Is the reference to “linguistically isolated” legally required or can this be eliminated.
- Can there be more than one Homeless Encampment because of possible geographical locations and needs throughout unincorporated Thurston County? Staff will review other comparable County’s and report information back to the Commission.

8. 7:52 P.M. CALENDAR

Mr. Clark stated that staff will need to schedule four Commission meetings in the month of February to meet the public hearing and Board of Commission briefing deadlines. The Commission will be holding public hearings on Homeless Encampments, Maytown, Asphalt Plants and Mineral Lands in the near future.
January 13, 2010 – Commissioners Cole and O’Connor will not be in attendance.

9. 7:55 PM  **ADJOURN**

With there being no further business, Chair Lane adjourned the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

_______________________________
Chris Lane, Chair

Prepared by Cami Petersen, Recording Secretary