THURSTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes December 15, 2010

1. 6:30 P.M. CALL TO ORDER
   Chair Lane called the December 15, 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, Edward Fleisher, Liz Kohlenberg, Christopher Earle & Kathleen O'Connor

   Absent: Tom Cole, Christine Spaulding & Bill Jackson

   Staff: Andrew Deffobis, Tony Kantas & Olivia Terwilleger

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

   MOTION: Commissioner Nelson moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Earle seconded. Motion carried.

3. 6:32 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. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

   Commissioner Nelson moved to approve the August 18, 2010, August 25, 2010, September 1, 2010 and September 15, 2010 minutes and accept the audio as the official record. Commissioner Earle seconded. Motion carried.

5. 6:31 P.M. SET PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR: One Open Space Tax Program Application

   Staff: Olivia Terwilleger

   Ms. Terwilleger asked the Planning Commission to set a public hearing for one open space tax program application that was submitted. She noted that on the agenda is said three applications however two of the applications submitted were for Timber and those types of applications go before the Thurston County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). The application submitted to Ms. Terwilleger was for 26 acres of agriculture and the public hearing date she requested was for January 19, 2011.

   MOTION: Commissioner Nelson moved to set a public hearing for one open space tax program application on January 19, 2011. Commissioner Kohlenberg seconded. Motion carried.
Commissioner O’Connor arrived.

6. 6:33 P.M. WORKSESSION: Cottage Housing
    Staff: Tony Kantas

Mr. Kantas explained that he had already introduced the draft cottage housing code that the Green Stakeholders Group drafted. The draft code was also sent to the City of Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater for comments. The City of Lacey commented liking the draft. The City of Olympia still is hesitant because they already have a Cottage Housing Code which is also within the Urban Growth Area that is not very detailed but they are not interested in revisiting the issue at this time. The City of Tumwater also liked the draft but provided comments which were attached to the packet the planning commission received. A discussion ensued.

Commissioner Nelson requested that Mr. Kantas send all of the Planning Commissioners an electronic copy of the City of Tumwater’s Cottage Housing Code.

7. 6:52 P.M. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS (Not associated with topics for which public hearings have been held.)

Chair Lane was asked to let a member of the audience that was a few minutes late to the meeting speak and agreed.

Jami Balint – P.O. Box 88028 Tukwila, WA 98138
Ms. Balint a member from the audience commented on the up and coming Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) Update. She encouraged staff and the planning commission to work together to implore the goals of the growth management act and the Critical Areas Ordinance. Some questions were asked of staff that Mr. Deffobis will write a written response to and send to Ms. Balint.

Scott Roberts – Freedom Foundation, Olympia, WA
Mr. Roberts a member from the audience asked the Commission for the website and where the October 20, 2010 minutes were from that time.

Jim Zahn – 3323 Yelm Highway SE
Mr. Zahn a member from the audience also commented on the CAO specifically to oak trees and aquifers. Mr. Zahn asked the Commission why the county has the authority to make rules in regards to species that are not on the endangered species list when the federal government has not said that the county has to make specific regulations. Commissioner Cole responded along with Commissioner Kohlenberg. Another question was why can’t the property owner cut down trees in an agricultural area on their own property? This is proposed to change in the revised CAO. Can this be reconsidered?

Glen Morgan – Tenino, WA
Mr. Morgan brought up the buffer zoning impact on property owners and how the Assessor’s Office is applying those rules. A discussion ensued.

8. 7:16 P.M. WORKSESSION: Critical Areas Ordinance Update
    Staff: Andrew Deffobis
Mr. Deffobis gave the Commission a brief update on the closure of the open house meetings. On line you can visit a virtual open house including audio of the question and answer sessions. The public is encouraged to visit the web site. Again, one of the biggest concerns of the public is the Mazama Pocket Gopher regulations. Staff has been meeting with State and Federal agencies and also private citizens to try and discuss all of the concerns surrounding the gopher. The state and federal agencies still believe that the gopher is of concern and those concerns having not changed. Therefore further active conversations will continue to try and find a balance between property owners and protecting the gopher. A meeting was also between staff and the Thurston Association of Realtors to discuss how insurability of properties and how mortgage lending is impacted by non conforming development. This will continue to be an evolving issue as further information is sought out. The Assessor’s Office was contacted to discuss the impact of critical areas on property values and is waiting for further discussion and effects.

Staff is continuing to work on the draft CAO. At the end of next week they are hoping for some sections to be complete enough for other staff to review and comment on. The hope is to release a draft proposed CAO or sections of to the Planning Commission in January 2011. The first meeting in January staff will be giving the Commission a refresher on the Growth Management Act and how it impacts the CAO.

The interim Prairie Ordinance that was established the BOCC back in 2009 then amended and renewed this past year is up for renewal again. The BOCC just set the public hearing for that renewal for January 20, 2011. The renewal would be to extend the ordinance for another six months. A short discussion ensued.

9. 7:31 P.M. STAFF UPDATES

Mr. Deffobis provided the following staff updates:

- The application process for the Transfer of Development Rights position has been underway. Two candidates are being further discussed and Scott Clark envisions making a decision next month between the two.
- The BOCC approved another Senior Planner for a one year position.
- Within the budget for 2011 there is money for the Impact Fee Analysis and a consultant will be working on that.

10. 7:34 P.M. CALENDAR

January 5, 2011 – The nominating committee will be set up for election of officers. All Commissioners will be in attendance.

11. 7:35 PM ADJOURN

With there being no further business, Chair Lane adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Prepared by Carrie Toebbe, Recording Secretary

Thurston County Planning Commission
December 15, 2010 Minutes