THURSTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes March 2, 2011

1. 6:30 P.M. CALL TO ORDER
Chair Lane called the March 2, 2011 meeting of the Thurston County Planning
Commission to order at 6:30 p.m. Commissioners provided self-introductions.

Attendance: Chair Chris Lane, Commissioners Edward Fleisher, Christopher Earle, Bill
Jackson, Liz Kohlenberg, Scott Nelson & Christine Spaulding

Absent: Kathleen O’Connor

Staff: Andrew Deffobis, Cynthia Wilson, Scott Clark, Jeremy Davis & Mike Kain,
Resource Stewardship Department

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

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

It was decided to move staff updates before approval of minutes.

3. 6:31 P.M. STAFF UPDATES

Mr. Clark provided the following staff updates:

• Staff and Planning Commission have been provided with new safety information
  including room set-up. It was recommended by the Thurston County Sherriff’s
  Office to purchase a camcorder to record the meetings.

• The Bio Mass Moratorium has prompted the need for three Planning Commission
  members to do the findings of fact & be the report writer to bring in citizens for
  an advisory group that is pro and con. Staff wants the group to come testify to
  three of the Planning Commission members then the three in return will present
  the information and do the finding of fact and make recommendations to the
  Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). This would take place on off Planning
  Commission meeting weeks.

• Staff met with US Fish and Wildlife (Ted Thomas and Jody Bush) in regards to
  the Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) today. They will be putting out a national
  press release probably within the next fourteen days that says they are going to
  move these prairie species from candidates into the formal listing process, which
  could take from 1-3 years.

• Thurston County closed its conservation futures ranking, the initial entry. We
  have received all of the conservation futures applications for this year, and now it
  goes into a formal ranking process, then to the BOCC to see who gets funded in
  that regard.

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Three volunteers were then chosen to participate in the Bio Mass citizen advisory group. Ed Fleisher, Chris Earle and Christine Spaulding volunteered and staff will be sending them a schedule so that they can continue with the process.

4. **6:40 P.M. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS** (Not associated with topics for which public hearings have been held.)

Dan Farmer – 9546 Marlbrook Court SE Olympia, WA 98516, Board Member for the Lost Lake Farmer’s Association

Mr. Farmer wanted to introduce himself to the Planning Commission and note that he has given to Jeremy Davis (Planning Department) a code amendment he would like to get put on the docket but the intent is trying to fix what is going on out at Lost Lake Resort. There are a lot of details that are behind it stated Mr. Farmer but he did not want to discuss said details at this time it was just an introduction to the Planning Commission.

5. **6:41 P.M. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Commissioner Nelson moved to approve the January 19, 2011 minutes and accept the audio as the official record. Commissioner Fleisher seconded. Motion carried.**

The official audio is available on line at:

http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/planning/planning_commission/planning_comm_minutes.html


**Staff: Scott Clark, Andrew Deffobis, Cynthia Wilson, Jeremy Davis & Mike Kain, Resource Stewardship**

Mr. Deffobis gave the Commission a handout that gives general definitions and explanations or “cheat sheet” for tonight’s discussion. Mr. Davis then passed out separate letters to each commissioner that had been mailed in from the Olympia Master Builders Association. Staff is continuing to work on the draft ordinance and the supporting best available science report and also working on a continued effort to place all information on the web site.

The first chapter that was discussed was General Provisions which has been expanded. This chapter provides the introductory information for the CAO and establishes the overall purposes of the ordinance. These are things such as minimizing the loss of life and property in critical areas in which is appropriate for the concern, maintaining water quality, protecting critical areas and habitats and also implementing the goals of the Growth Management Act. This chapter also designates what critical areas are being considered under the ordinance and state law. Mr. Deffobis continued with the first chapter changes that had been made and the Planning Commission asked questions of
Mr. Deffobis and other staff. Lastly the General Provisions also discusses the general requirements of the CAO. Projects must first seek to avoid impacts and where those impacts cannot be avoided but are still permitted by the CAO they would need to be minimized and mitigated. The property assessment relief is spelled out in the general requirements; the Assessor will look at what the critical areas are on a property and provide adjustments to property evaluation as necessary.

Staff met with the Assessor’s Office recently and brought up the concerns that citizens have been asking about in regards to critical areas impacting their property values. The Assessor’s Office is concerned about this issue and wants people’s property values to accurately reflect what is on their property and what that may or may not mean as for their ability to use their property as they had intended. The new Assessor has been in the role for only two months, is bringing himself up to speed and is interested in having an open dialog between everyone so no information is misconstrued.

The Subdivisions in Critical Areas chapter, 24.55 establishes the provisions for subdividing property that may contain critical areas and buffers. Generally speaking lots that are partially impacted by critical areas they may be subdivided subject to standards. One of the provisions is in order to subdivide you must have sufficient buildable area outside of the critical area and buffer to site a home. Lots that are completely within a critical area may or may not be subdivided. Questions were then asked of staff and a discussion ensued.

In 2007 the county approved the innovative technique. This was to provide for a variety of rural densities as required by the growth management act. Essentially it affects approximately 26,000 parcels and it totals about 183,500 acres zoned for RRR 1/5. There is approximately 44,000 areas of mapped critical areas. The specific affects of the technique are assessed on a site by site basis and innovative technique does not change the zoning areas for the county’s that zoned 1/5 or residential one unit per five acres. Essentially how it works is the acreage of the critical areas is subtracted from the parcels acreage before calculating the density under the allowed number of lots. This does not include all critical areas, but the listed; high ground water hazard areas, wetlands, marine bluff hazard areas, landslide areas, rivers, streams, marine shorelines, 100 year flood plains and the submerged land of lakes actually applies to a density reduction of all zoning districts. Examples were then discussed.

The next chapter that was discussed was proposed chapter 24.60 critical areas signs and fencing. The proposed chapter recognizes that signs and fencing may be necessary to mark the boundaries of some critical areas and also discusses the types of discretionary signage that would be allowed within those critical areas. This includes things such as interpretive signage or a trail head for example, street signs within approved right of ways, critical areas identification signs and survey signs and monuments. Signs under the proposal are required within wetlands, Fish and Wildlife habitat conservation areas, landslide hazard areas, marine bluffs and the buffers of all of those. Signs that are required would need to be located where lot lines intersect with critical area buffers at corners where critical area buffer changes direction and then in general at reasonable distances where people can see them. General sign verbiage is also discussed here. Fences are permit able on the outer boundary of wetland buffers or important habitat

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areas and buffers. Fencing can encroach on wetlands and habitat buffers along the perimeter of lawful development. Fencing may also be required when there is an adjoining use that may threaten the functions of a wetland habitat area or buffer. The signs and fencing accordingly must be designed and placed to minimize impacts to wetlands, wildlife habitat, wildlife travel and connectivity.

Surety Agreements, Emergency Authorization and Amendments then were shortly discussed with questions of staff. The rest of the draft chapters should be completed by the end of March and then will be handed out to the commission.

7. **7:47 P.M. CALENDAR**

March 16, 2011 – Ed Fleisher may not be in attendance

8. **7:48 PM ADJOURN**

With there being no further business, Chair Lane adjourned the meeting at 7:48 p.m.

Prepared by Carrie Toebbe, Recording Secretary

Chris Lane, Chair