1. **6:30 P.M. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Lane called the August 1, 2012 meeting of the Thurston County Planning Commission to order at 6:30 p.m. Commissioners provided self-introductions.

**Attendance:** Chair Chris Lane, Commissioners Jennifer Davis, Scott Nelson, Bill Jackson, Kathleen O'Connor, Liz Kohlenberg, Christine Spaulding & Chris Earle

**Absent:** Ed Fleisher

**Staff:** Jeremy Davis & Christy Osborn

2. **6:30 P.M. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

3. **6:30 P.M. STAFF UPDATES**

Mr. Davis provided the following staff updates:

- The Growth Management Hearings Board decision was handed out on the mineral lands decision. The decision stated that the County has to follow the minimum guidelines and consolidated all of the previous rulings on what the guidelines are and came up with a new direction on it. Because of this it makes the County non compliant with the act in our designation of long term forestry mineral lands. They also said that the County has to co-designate mineral lands and critical areas in our Comprehensive Plan but don’t have to designate them in the Development Regulations.
- The CAO has been finished.
- A Comp Plan Amendment in the Olympia UGA and the Medela Rezone will be coming before the PC in the next couple of months
- A draft Comp Plan element from the Parks Plan will also be coming before the PC in the next month as well as the CFP.

As a side note Chair Lane asked to have the time for public communication moved to 6:35 or at the end of the agenda so everyone that comes to the meeting will have a chance to speak and not be missed.
4. **6:37 P.M. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS** (Not associated with topics for which public hearings have been held.)

   1. Petra Lewin & Robert Brown – 9145 Prather Road Centralia, WA 98531 – Spoke in regards to their Ag Reconsideration application and the rezoning that was done in 2008.
   
   2. Judy Schrader Rogers – 6331 Murray Court NW Olympia, WA 98502 - Spoke in regards to her Ag Reconsideration application and the rezoning that was done in 2008.
   
   3. Marlene Voss with Weyerhaeuser – P.O. Box 9777 PH2 Federal Way, WA 98063 – Spoke in regards to two properties that are within the rezone that was done in 2008 and Weyerhaeuser’s Ag Reconsideration application.

The official audio is available on line at:

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

**Note:** The meeting minutes for this date are not verbatim but are detailed to contain action items and discussion along with research of explanation.

5. **6:53 P.M. Work Session: Ag Reconsiderations**

   **Staff:** Christy Osborn & Jeremy Davis

Ms. Osborn started the work session. In 2005 the Western Washington Growth Hearings Board ruled that the County’s agricultural lands criteria 3 & 5 failed to comply with GMA, parcel size and designation criteria. 2007, the Washington State Court of Appeals decision upheld invalidity ruling for designation criteria and the County amended in 2007. Then in 2007 the Growth Board found the County failed to apply designation criteria to lands that had not been previously designated as long-term commercial agriculture. The County implemented a GIS analysis and applied criteria to land based on reviewing prime farmland soils, wetlands, and slopes. The criteria did not exclude agricultural lands based on soil depth. Again in 2007 the County designated 2,346 acres of additional long-term agricultural lands. There was an allowance to request reconsideration of long-term commercial agricultural designation and the requests are to consider change in land use and zoning designations from LTA (long-term agriculture).

Resolution No. 14180 adopted December 29, 2008 amended the Natural Resource chapter of the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan and established revised criteria to be used to designate long term commercially significant agricultural lands. The Resolution also designated additional lands as agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance. The criteria that were established did not exclude agricultural lands designated based on soil depth. In response to this omission, applicants were allowed to request reconsideration of their designation
of Long Term Agriculture (LTA). The requests would change the land use and zoning designations from LTA. The review of these applications has previously been on hold pending the completion of the adoption of revised critical areas regulations and staff availability.

RCW 36.70A, the Growth Management Act requires local governments to maintain and enhance natural resource based industries, including agricultural lands by the conservation of productive agricultural lands and to discourage incompatible uses. This goal is implemented through the provisions contained in WAC 365-190 that establishes the minimum guidelines for classifying and designating agricultural resource lands and criteria established by local government. Chapter Three of the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan contains the designation criteria used by the County to designate agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance and include:

1. Soil Type
2. The Availability of Public Facilities and Services
3. Land Capability and Tax Status
4. Relationship or Proximity to Urban Growth Areas
5. Predominant Parcel Size
6. Land Use Settlement Patterns and Their Compatibility with Agricultural Practices
7. Proximity of Markets
8. Agricultural Diversity
9. Environmental Considerations

The Comprehensive Plan also establishes criteria for the re-designation of agricultural lands. These criteria are:

A. Changes in surrounding land use severely inhibit or severely interfere with continued agricultural use;
B. Changes in market conditions severely reduce the economic viability of agriculture use; or
C. Changes in regulatory requirements severely reduce economic viability of agriculture use; or
D. Site specific evidence conclusively indicates the land does not meet the criteria for designation as agricultural land.

Chapter 20.08A of the Thurston County Zoning Ordinance contains provisions that guide the use, subdivision standards and design standards for lands zoned LTA.

The four applicants that have requested consideration of property designated as long-term agricultural lands are:
Weyerhaeuser #1 — End of Mountain Vista Drive, Assessor’s Parcel # 22611110200, approximately 40 acres in size.

Weyerhaeuser #2 — End of Mountain Vista Drive, Assessor’s Parcel # 22611110600, approximately 40 acres in size.

Lewin — 9005 Prather Road, 98531 Assessor’s Parcel # 13521230000 and 13521230100, approximately 40 acres in size.

Schrader Crown Ranch - 20015 128th Avenue SE 98597, Assessor’s Parcel #22602420000 (Total of seven parcels), approximately 338 acres in size.

The Planning Commission (PC) asked for maps that displayed the zoning to these properties and areas pre 2008 before the zoning changed to be in within the next packet.

Each application and property where discussed. It was also brought up through the discussion that when the soils were looked at they looked at prime and unique soils for agriculture but the importance is not only the soil type but the soil depth. This was not one of the considerations when the land was rezoned. Therefore as part of that process the County decided that they would provide a mechanism for people to come back in and apply to get their lands re-designated with a different zoning. Now this is not just based on the soil type and depth there are many different criteria used to designate ag lands.

Commissioner Davis asked that a memorandum be written clarifying exactly what was promised to property owners as a de-designation process, using soil type and soil depth as one of said reasons.

The staff reports for the four applications should be completed for the PC to review sometime in September. Commissioner O’Connor requested that the PC set the public hearing date now so that the time line is not so long from the next work session. Mr. Davis suggested that they wait and put the setting of a public hearing for this on the next agenda so any further questions and inquiries can be made prior to the date of the hearing which would be September 19th.

Commissioner Kohlenberg explained to the members in the audience the appeal process, how a work session with the Planning Commission works with staff and also how to get a hold of staff when they need further information.


*Staff: Christy Osborn & Jeremy Davis*

Both of these areas are within a moratorium. The moratorium was put into place to respond to the 2005 Growth Hearings Board decision. They have been held under moratorium due to some potential environmental constraints and concerns that need to be taken a look at before moving forward. The BOCC recently had a public hearing on the moratorium and continued it until December 14, 2012.
The work plan for staff is currently to do environmental review, coordinate with the City of Olympia as required by the County wide planning policies. A briefing with the City of Olympia’s Planning Commission will be happening sometime in September of this year. After the briefing a joint hearing with the City’s and the County’s Planning Commission will be arranged in October. The regular work sessions with the PC and the board will also be happening.

Analysis factors that need to be looked at are coordination with the City of Olympia Growth Management Act, the county wide planning policies and the county code. Critical areas issues need to be looked at, provisions of available services and also the affordability of providing services to the areas.

Pictures of the revised boundary areas were then observed by the PC during the power point presentation. The current zoning was also shown.

The two alternatives that were provided by staff were one; to leave the areas under the current zoning or consider revised zoning and two; potentially removing the property from the urban growth boundary.

The PC will be visiting both areas and taking pictures of services and road types that will be provided to the PC. The PC was also encouraged to go for a drive around both areas.

Commissioner Nelson asked if staff can find out within the Chambers area what the maintenance on the ditch is like. Staff will be looking into finding out the information.

6. **7:48 P.M. CALENDAR**

August 15, 2012 – Commissioner O’Connor will not be in attendance

7. **7:48 PM ADJOURN**

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

Chris Lane, Chair

Prepared by Carrie Toebbe, Recording Secretary