

Mason County Planning Advisory Commission

July 17, 2017

(This document is not meant to be a verbatim transcript)

Call to Order

James called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Roll Call

Present: Aaron Cleveland, Deb Soper, Marilyn Vogler, Vicki Wilson, Jason Bailey, and James Thomas

Regular Business

Approval of minutes-

June 19, 2017- Marilyn had corrections for June 19th. On the fourth page, third paragraph and fourth line, “[...] suppose to be[...].” should be “[...] supposed to be[...].”. Also, this same type of correction needs to be made on the same page in the Public Comment portion. On page seven, “LAMRIDs” should be “LAMIRDs”. On page eight, third paragraph, “Dave explained the lay out[...].”, should be “Dave explained the layout[...].”. On page ten, third paragraph from the bottom, “Vick” should be “Vicki”. She mentioned page ten, for informational purposes only, that House Bill 1683, regarding sanitary sewers, was signed by the Governor on 16th of May 2017. Vicki had corrections for June 19th. On page five, first paragraph, three lines down, “fiber network” should be “fiber optic network”. On page nine, in the Public Comment paragraph, “9000 sq. ft.” should be “9600 sq. ft.”. On page ten, second paragraph, “[...on site management plan[...].” should be “[...on site sewage management plan[...].”.

June 20, 2017 Special Meeting- Marilyn had corrections for the June 20th Joint Meeting. On page three, last paragraph, three lines from the top, Marilyn would like more clarification on the statement, “She talked about the demand for water as less than 1% annually.”

“She talked about the demand for water as increasing less than 1% annually”.

Vicki requested that items in the minutes that required following up with staff or presenters be highlighted, or listed at the end of the minutes.

Jason made a motion to adopt the June 19th and June 20th minutes as amended, motion seconded by Marilyn, all in favor, motion carried.

Approval of Agenda – Vicki would like to add a short conversation to Other under Regular Business to discuss policies and the follow up to the Joint Meeting on June 20th. James asked Paula to discuss if there had been an update on the Hirst decision. Marilyn mentioned that her questions about development regulations would probably occur in the briefing portion of the agenda.

Conflict of Interest – None.

Next Planning Commission Regular Meeting Date, August 21, 2017 – James asked if anyone had a conflict with the next date scheduled for meeting. Marilyn answered that she would not be available this date and wondered if the date may be altered to August 28, 2017. Paula mentioned the revised draft meeting schedule she had handed out and told the PAC if they needed to make changes, they could be accommodated. James asked the PAC for discussion on schedule changes. There was a general consensus that August 28, 2017 would work for all members as the next meeting date.

Marilyn made a motion to reschedule the August meeting for Monday August 28th, 2017. Aaron seconded the motion, all in favor, motion carried.

Vicki noted that the public notice needed to acknowledge the change in schedule for the PAC meeting. James asked the clerk to make sure this was clear in the notice.

Revised Calendar Review and Adoption - James noted that he will have issue with the October 24th scheduled meeting. Deb asked what had changed on the calendar and James replied that there was some doubling up on meetings. Paula said she added the 60 day notice to adopt. The double ups refer to a PAC meeting and a Joint meeting in the same month. Paula stated that the calendar would stay in draft, no need for vote.

Committee/Staff Updates – Paula mentioned Marissa’s involvement in the redesign of the chapter format, as well as her help with the policy document. Marissa handed each PAC member a mock layout of one of the Comprehensive Plan chapters. Feedback and ideas from PAC members are encouraged.

James asked Paula to report on the status of the Planning Policies update. Paula and Vicki have been working on this together.

Other – Vicki voiced her reflections on the Joint Meeting and her discussion about how she was lost in all the policies and that there was a need to make the Countywide Planning Policies and the Planning Policies in chapter 3 more user friendly. Both Vicki and Paula were looking through the document for redundancies without losing substance and value. There is a need to separate policies from actions, differentiating between the two is important. The result was to make a clear statement of how the Countywide Planning Policies relate to the various elements in the Comp Plan. Vicki mentioned the GMA structural components, at the top are population forecast and trends, these support the development of the Land Use Element which provides the foundation for all the other elements. This structure is encompassed in a box, then underneath this box is public participation and expectations and Countywide Planning Policies as a foundation. The next outline is element specific; taking the Countywide Planning Policies that are relevant to an element, and whatever policies that the experts have included, making sure that they tie back directly to the element and the specific policies within the element.

Paula mentioned that staff had made progress on cleaning up the chapter 3 Planning Policies. Staff is looking at those policies and pulling out those that are already codified and identifying where they are in code.

Marilyn asked what the fate of chapter three was to be. Paula answered that when they consolidate and determine what action has been taken and has been codified, we cross it off and mark as done. Then we will cull out the remaining work that is still there plus the new policies and put it in a concise piece; it will then become part of the Countywide Planning Policies document.

James asked Paula if there was anything new and revealing concerning the Hirst decision, Paula answered not at this time.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items – Jeff Carey asked if public comment was allowed on any of the items not specified as a public hearing, specifically the Transportation Element. James answered no, due to it being an internal workshop but there will be time for discussion as that element moves forward in the process. Jeff asked if this new Comp Plan document is replacing the 2005 version completely, to which Paula answered in the affirmative. He mentioned the population allocations to the Allyn UGA, and the growth in Belfair in the next twenty years as still not paying for the sewer. He quickly mentioned the economic factor to the transportation element.

Pat Vandahey mentioned the cluster development portion of Paula’s slide presentation. She said that there are sixteen houses in the example and the open spaces between the houses are gone. She said that she hadn’t found any house bills where the definition of “cluster” had been changed. She asked the PAC and staff if they had something more up to date than she had. She said that clusters were originally only made up of 32 houses, each with open space around them. Paula will talk about cluster development during the rural element slide presentation.

Briefing – Mason County Comprehensive Plan Chapter 4 Rural Element and Development Regulations

Presenter(s): Paula Reeves, Planning Manager

Paula talked about the messages being voiced throughout the process, enhance economic opportunity, promote housing choices, value communities and neighborhoods, protect our water quality and quantity, maintain rural character and quality of life, as well as keep the tranquility. She reiterated the agreed upon population projection. She stated that 63% of our land area is rural in nature, which is much different than many counties that show a massive growth in their UGAs because their UGAs cover a majority of their county.

Marilyn mentioned that rural and resource need to be differentiated in the document.

Paula mentioned the housing demand projection, 3800 housing units are projected for development in the rural area.

The focus of the Rural Element is to preserve rural character but still expand economic opportunity. She showed a slide with an example of residential development encroaching on agricultural land and how there is a need to consider those transitional spaces to protect our resource areas. The Rural Element needs to address rural economies and life styles, plan for economic prosperity of rural residents, create opportunities for small business and self employment, compatibility with the wildlife needs and habitat, private preservation of open space, and maintaining rural community quality of life. These are topics that are being emphasized in the policies of the Rural Element. She mentioned a Unified Development Code and how it might be a possibility for Mason County and how it would provide a more organized reference for the public to access.

Mason County has residential tools such as the cluster development regulations. She also talked about transfer of development rights and density transfer for agricultural land. Many people are not taking advantage of many of the tools that are established, therefore the Comp Plan elements need to heighten awareness of these options. Paula added that developing design guidelines is planned for the future, especially sign ordinances. She talked about establishing conservation easements on inholding lands.

Two pieces that Paula believed needed more attention are planned action EISs and voluntary stewardship.

Master Plan Developments have been a big topic, especially around a big company hoping to consolidate or transfer their development rights, as well as preserving a lot of open space and a long term conservation easement. Marilyn added that much of that land is one residence per twenty acres and that what the master plan development does is group a greater amount of residences in one area and includes community retail; it preserves a big area of open space that can not be developed because they gave up those development rights.

The rural area, according to the Economic Development Council, is a big employer. The rural area has about 682 employers with about 6,000 employees, out of the County it encompasses 77% of the employment taking place. This ties back to many people having their own internet businesses as well as cottage industries. Paula talked about the three Rural Activity Centers, Hoodspout, Union, and Taylor Towne and how employment projection numbers were appearing positive for these areas.

She showed a slide depicting Mason County's opportunity to step up as a vocational leader in the region. We have higher numbers than the state average, regarding people with high school diplomas and people with some college education. The County is looking at 75% of our projected jobs requiring some kind of vocational training. Marilyn asked Paula if she had been working with Olympic College; there had been talk of slimming down on resources at the college. She is concerned that if Mason County is forecasting a higher need for vocational training that Olympic College will not be able to accommodate this need. Vocational training and education is up over the past five years, at the national level and the state level. James asked about the enrollment in Mason County for vocational training because it seems to contradict with Marilyn's mention of cut backs at Olympic College. Paula called it latent demand, she said the programs in Mason County have to meet the demand with the right vocational programs.

Rural tourism in Mason County supports low impact, which also follows the Growth Management Act goals for a rural area and includes such activities as trails, hiking, camping, and cultural aspects.

Paula pointed out a slide that showed the minimum requirements that the County has to address in the code. She listed the following requirements:

- Limit non-agricultural uses to agricultural lands less suited for agricultural purposes
- Ensuring continued public involvement in the Comprehensive Plan, including annual and any emergency amendments made
- Exclude artificial features, irrigation delivery systems, irrigation infrastructure, canals, drainage ditches from our fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas
- Ensure zoning consistency with the shoreline master program
- Allow family daycare providers in residential and commercial zones
- Permit electric vehicle charging stations in all zones, except residential, resource, or critical areas

The PAC then picked up on the last point in the preceding list regarding electric vehicle charging stations. The group was provided with a handout titled 17.03.021 Electric Vehicle Infrastructure. James mentioned a sentence under section A. Purpose that he would like changed.

This section provides opportunities for electric vehicle infrastructure in for all zoning districts in the county.

Vicki had two different versions of the document, the latest one can be differentiated by section B. Applicability 1.b. This section should no longer have zones like CR-1, CR-2, R-30, and so forth, but should have zones such as commercial, mixed use, business park, etc. Vicki mentioned the exceptions in B. 1.a, that critical areas are not a zoning district. Since there was confusion with which version of this document was the latest, Vicki decided to make a general comment that in relation to zoning districts within the document, consistency is key.

Paula stated that it is a boiler plate ordinance that had been adopted by a lot of communities. The confusion seems to be with the levels of charging stations, the lower voltage systems are an accessory use in all zones and then when you get to the kinds of charging stations that will charge your car quickly, the powerful stations, those are located within Urban Growth Areas, where the commercial, mixed use, business park, industrial tourist, master planned resort, or multi-family residence is located. The battery exchange stations are a different type of facility and are governed under section E. 3.

3. New battery exchange stations require a review process consistent with Mason County Code Section 8.48.050.

Aaron asked if Washington had any active electric vehicle battery exchange stations. Paula answered that it was a proactive measure to make sure the County was ready for that type of project.

Vicki stated that the areas where these stations are allowed or disallowed need to be clear.

James stated that this electric vehicle ordinance would not come to a vote tonight. The ordinance was tabled till a further meeting of the PAC.

Work Session – Transportation Element Amendment

Presenter(s): Loretta Swanson, Technical Services Manager, Public Works. Thera Black, Transportation Planning Manager, SCJ Alliance.

Loretta introduced herself and Thera to the PAC. She stated that Elisabeth Wooton, a transportation planner for SCJ, was also instrumental in putting together the Allyn Transportation Plan. She talked about their presence before the PAC a year ago regarding the Transportation Element update for the Comp Plan. She said the Transportation Plan got a little ahead of the rest of the Comp Plan and had had some recommendations for Capital Facilities and also some follow up work for sub-areas, Allyn and Belfair being those areas. Loretta serves as the staff for a transportation advisory committee, TIP-CAP, with Jeff Carey as Vice-Chair. TIP-CAP and the Commissioners recommended advancing the Allyn transportation sub-area work quickly in order to be prepared for things such as the Belfair Bypass and also over concern with Allyn's status as an Urban Growth Area and promoting the infrastructure that goes with that status. This is basically an update of the Transportation piece with focus on the Allyn sub-area plan.

James would rather use this time to have the PAC members ask questions of Loretta and Thera than hear a presentation. James and Vicki are not sure what the PAC can add to this discussion of the Transportation Element.

Marilyn asked for further context on the presentation of this element.

Loretta stated that they worked to make the plan consistent with the Countywide Policies. The hope for this sub-area plan was to carve out an action plan that tied back to the policies. She asked the PAC for any specific recommendations that would help this plan move forward.

Jason asked Thera Black if those areas depicted on a map as safety concerns had been addressed with specific solutions. Thera talked about the safety issues at specific points in Allyn, different solutions to provide safer turning and merging, as well as including the pedestrian and their access to the waterfront. She mentioned that the only roundabout being seriously entertained would occur where SR3 and North Bay Road come together. James mentioned that SR3 is a state highway, that SCJ and public works have already put a lot of work into this plan, and that he still isn't sure what the PAC can contribute.

Jason mentioned that he thought roundabouts were a safe option, but he wondered if there was enough space. Thera mentioned that space was something that they looked at and that roundabouts can also be oblong in form and they have been working with people at DOT to see what would be involved in making that happen. The advantage on that north end, using a roundabout, would be to slow the traffic down coming in to Allyn. Thera also mentioned that

35mph down through Allyn detracts from the feeling that you are entering a downtown. The roundabout can serve as a gate way and as a way to slow traffic down to 25mph. Jason stated his appreciation that something was being done to create a safer environment in down town Allyn.

Vicki mentioned there is no parking in Allyn when events are taking place, or even on the weekend, which deters more people from stopping and taking advantage of businesses. She pointed out that some communities have overhead pedestrian walkways, though the expense may be great. James thought it may detract from the aesthetics. Thera did state that they are very expensive and if you can only locate one, where are you going to locate it and then you might be moving pedestrians away from the businesses. Thera mentioned that with a greater sidewalk allowance on the waterside of the road, slowing the traffic down, and increasing the visibility of the crosswalks, a more pedestrian feel can be achieved.

Marilyn said they had talked about passing this document on without recommendation or comment. She did ask Thera if there was anything that the PAC should or should not do in order to move this through a process that would be accepted by the DOT. James interrupted to mention that the County Commissioners have already seen this document and that they referred it to the PAC. After review, James believed that the PAC didn't seem like they would have much to add.

He stated that unless a PAC member had strong objection, his recommendation was to forward this onto the County Commission with their blessing, but with no particular comment attached. Jason stated "so moved", Aaron seconded the motion, all in favor, motion carried.

Public Hearing – Amendment to Mason County Code, Section 14.22, Mason County Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance

Presenter(s): Paula Reeves, Planning Manager.

Paula reviewed the staff report, told the PAC that the purpose of the Flood Ordinance that the County had adopted was to ensure that we take into account flood hazards, that they are known and in all official actions relating to land management and use in order to keep people safe. When FEMA supplies a community with flood hazard information, the community is required to adopt a flood management ordinance that meets or exceeds those requirements. The last time that this occurred for Mason County was 1998, it was an amendment to the mapping that had taken place in 1988. Much of this map did not contain base flood elevations. Far better technology is being used by FEMA to collect new data to make better decisions when advising on buildings. Paula said the primary edits of the new ordinance give new definitions that FEMA had included in their current version mapping, she noted that this ordinance is not asking to adopt a new map. She said the code directs us to continue to use the best available science, the County sought advice from our insurer, the letter was included in the PAC member's packets. It determines whether or not the County has the authority to use the best available data, the attorneys stated that the County should be using this data to advise and keep the public safe from flood hazard. Other new changes in the ordinance include, the inclusion and definition of coastal hazard zone, the striking of "any reasonable use exception", requiring tie downs for or securing of RVs that

are parked, and the inclusion and definition of shallow flooding area. She added that FEMA has reviewed this new ordinance and given their blessing.

Marilyn asked how often best available data is updated. Paula mentioned the last real data came out in 1988 and then a minor amendment in 1998, and then there was a study funded in the Skokomish Valley, so very infrequent revisions come along in regards to this type of data. Paula wanted to bring this ordinance to the PAC to bring awareness to the public that the 90 day comment period begins in Mason County starting August 3, 2017, then people can comment to FEMA. If they have had surveys done which result in issues, they can speak directly to FEMA. FEMA may choose to modify their maps with information provided.

Aaron asked if this data is only represented through GIS layers. Paula answered that that was correct. For clarification purposes, Paula read the following:

“The areas of specific flood hazard identified by the Federal Insurance Administration in a scientific and engineering report titled *The Flood Insurance Study for Mason County Washington* dated May 17, 1988 and revised December 8, 1998 with accompanying flood insurance rate maps and any amendments which may hereafter be made by FEMA or Federal Insurance Administration is hereby adopted by reference and declared to be part of this chapter.”

It will be a long time before Mason County has 100% survey data, we will always be estimating on into the future and people can always appeal to FEMA.

James asked for discussion.

Vicki asked about the definition of “floodway” and “floodplain”, since there are no definitions by FEMA people could be confused. Paula answered that FEMA doesn’t define floodplain, they only define floodway. Vicki asked if there was any implications to taking out the “reasonable use exception”, has it ever been used, and when it has been used what did people get it for. Paula answered that it was used quite a lot. The hearings examiner had a significant role in that area. And it was the result of public outcry about people not being able to use a large portion of their property. But it currently does not meet the requirements for FEMA and if we don’t meet their requirements they can take flood insurance for the County away.

James asked if adding a one sentence definition of floodplain would cause a problem. Paula responded that she didn’t know. Marilyn stated that there was a definition of floodplain in the glossary. She stated its definition, “that area of land adjoining a body of water that has been or may be covered by flood water”. Paula asked if the definition has a citation next to it, such as an RCW. Marilyn answered that it did not. Paula stated that FEMA may be trying to define the term “floodplain” with the ordinance itself.

Marilyn made a motion to recommend the adoption of the amendment to Mason County Code, Section 14.22, Mason County Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance, Jason seconded the motion, all in favor, motion carried.

Paula introduced Ross McDowell, Emergency Management Director for Mason County. She asked him to talk about the FEMA work that he was doing and if he knew why the word floodplain was not defined. He replied that there were different kinds of floodplains and that they are basically anywhere that gets water. They are given different degree ratings such as A, which defines how much water an area is going to get. The 100 year and 500 year flood event has nothing to do with time, it is the measurement.

Ross explained that Emergency Management is in the middle of their multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plan, the city is involved, PUD 1 and 3, Central Mason Fire, and also Mason County Fire District 4. They are looking at what are the number one hazards here in the County, which are earthquakes and flooding. He said that twenty-one FEMA events have occurred since 1959 till now. They are also looking at landslides, North Shore is a bad area for this, as well as Highway 101. He will be bringing back a condensed version of their emergency management plan for the PAC to review.

New Business – The PAC and Paula had a brief discussion about the future review of the development regulations related to zoning and land use development. Marilyn asked if that piece encompassed switching what was allowed to what was not-allowed in the zoning, Paula answered in the affirmative; Title 15, 16, and 17 would be the primary areas of review.

James asked how the Rural Element fit into the schedule further out. Vicki reminded everyone that Paula asked for comments on that section up until the end of the month. They agreed that those comments should be compiled and then a Work Session scheduled.

James asked if any of the members had any thoughts on the Rural Element before the next meeting. Marilyn's biggest concern was the economic heaviness in the Rural Element, rather than rural character. She felt that the connection wasn't strong enough regarding the nature of the cottage industry and the establishment of the rural character.

Adjournment

Vicki made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m.