



MASON COUNTY

PLANNING ADVISORY COMMISSION

MASON COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES

615 W. ALDER STREET, SHELTON, WA 98584

Meetings held at: Commissioners' Chambers

411 N. 5th Street Shelton, Wa 98584

SPECIAL MEETING

March 14, 2018

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Commissioner Neatherlin called the special meeting to order at 5:59 p.m. Attendance is as presented below:

**Aaron Cleveland
Marilyn Vogler
James Thomas**

**Deb Soper
Brian Smith
Commissioner Neatherlin**

**Jamie Bariekman
Commissioner Shutt
Commissioner Drexler**

Excused: Jason Bailey

2. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Paula mentioned that there was an error on the Agenda, the Briefing is only 10 – 15 minutes, not an hour.

B. WELCOME BY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

The Commissioners welcomed the PAC and the public to the meeting, thanked them for their work, and participation.

C. OTHER BUSINESS

Dave Windom also announced that Paula Reeves would be leaving Mason County for another position with DOH, her last day would be the Monday March 19th regular meeting. Commissioner Neatherlin and James Thomas thanked Paula for all her hard work and service to the County.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

- **Tom Davis**

This is a short summary of the action that took place during the meeting. The audio recording of the meeting can be found on the Planning Advisory Commission page of the Mason County website.

- Mr. Davis mentioned his advocacy for a PBRs and the need for a system that allows everyone participating a fair evaluation of their Open Space and a clear benefit to the public. In comparison to many other counties using the PBRs, Mason County is much more rural with most of it being forest land, thus the County's PBRs may look quite different than other examples. The County must be careful that they are not subsidizing the privileged.
- **Ken Van Buskirk**
 - Mr. Van Buskirk read from a letter he submitted into the record earlier in the day. Some of the main points in the letter were his opinion that there was pressure to adopt a PBRs too quickly, the staff burden of implementing a new system, PAC/BOCC dislike for current system, notification of current participants in Open Space program, and his desire for a grandfather clause.

4. BRIEFING – Staff overview and discussion of progress and next steps in developing Mason County's Public Benefit Rating System

Paula Reeves talked about the Agriculture and Forest Timberland programs administered by the Assessor's office. She noted that to be in compliance with GMA the County needed to have an Open Space plan, Public Benefit Rating System was optional. She showed slides depicting the differences in properties using the Open Space credit, incentives for protection of resources, guidance by state law, pointed out RCW 84.34.037 would not allow grandfathering of properties currently in the program, RCW 84.34.145 and its language regarding active farming community to advise the Assessor, cost of implementation would be up to the BOCC, and that evaluating these properties may be similar in focus as a rezone. Commissioner Thomas noted that if the burden of proof was placed on the applicant to show that they met all the requirements, it may help the evaluation.

This complete briefing and resultant discussion is on file (via audio) and will be made available on the Mason County website.

5. WORKSESSION – Discussion, guidance and direction

Commissioner Neatherlin opened the worksession to discussion among the PAC and BOCC. He addressed a few of Mr. Van Buskirk's comments and asked the members at the table if they had any issues with the PBRs that they haven't communicated previously. Commissioner Vogler mentioned that the PBRs could help to emphasize the value of preserving land, the program should be easy to enroll in but hard to get the high tax break. Commissioner Drexler noted that zoning and the critical areas ordinance already prevent the development of people's property to a point. Public access was noted as a very desirous public benefit.

Commissioner Thomas voiced Commissioner Bailey's written comments about a five year review cycle to make sure properties still qualify for a tax break. There was a general agreement that it would be beneficial to include the Conservation District and to have stricter guidelines. Commissioner Neatherlin went around the table and asked each member their thoughts on the current draft PBRs and any concerns. They talked

about the fact that without a bonus option in the PBRS, getting max points was almost impossible.

The Mason County Commissioners each stated aspects of the PBRS document that they thought should be concentrated on. Dave Windom talked about technology helping in regards to compliance. General consensus was that the point system needed to be fleshed out further, but could benefit from such partners as the Conservation District. The PAC and BOCC talked about state law requirements and how the document addressed them. They also talked about the location of Open Space in the Comprehensive Plan and that the requirements of law were met in that regard, but could always be improved upon. In wrapping up the meeting Commissioner Drexler mentioned helping to notice those already receiving a tax exemption under Open Space and Commissioner Shutty noted that the Commissions' fifth Tuesday meetings in Belfair may be a good time to do further outreach on the topic.

This complete worksession item and resultant discussion is on file (via audio) and will be made available on the Mason County website.

6. ADJOURN

Commissioner Neatherlin called meeting adjourned at 7:33 pm.