



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

REGULAR MEETING

January 28, 2019

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Marilyn Vogler, Planning Advisory Commission Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. The following commissioners were in attendance:

Aaron Cleveland

Marilyn Vogler

Deb Soper

Morgan Ireland

Excused: Brian Smith

Guest: Jeromy Hicks – Mason County Fire Marshall

Barbara Adkins – Mason County Conservation District

Staff: Kell Rowen – Planning Manager

Mariah Frazier – Clerical

2. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES AND AGENDA

Commissioner Ireland stated that the date of the minutes was incorrect; it should be December 17, 2018, not July 16, 2018. Motion was made by Commissioner Ireland and seconded by Commissioner Soper to approve the minutes from the December 17, 2018 regular meetings as amended.

Vote:

4 in favor

0 opposed

0 abstentions

Motion passed

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.

B. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Commissioner Soper mentioned that 2019 officers still needed to be voted on and should be added to the agenda.

Kell mentioned that in the Public Notice that was published to the Journal, it was noted that there would be a rezone request on the agenda. The rezone request had been removed from the agenda after Public Notice was published.

Commissioner Cleveland motioned to approve the agenda as amended to include the election of 2019 officers. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Ireland.

Vote:

4 in favor

0 opposed

0 abstentions

Motion passed

C. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

D. NEXT REGULAR MEETING(S)

February 25, 2019

Kell mentioned the February meeting will be a joint meeting with the Board of Mason County Commissioners. They will discuss the 2019 work plan.

E. COMMITTEE/STAFF UPDATES

None.

F. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

- **Ken Van Buskirk - 6:05 p.m.**

Ken suggested that for the February joint meeting with the BOCC an After-Action Review regarding the PBRs be discussed. He also suggested that the Belfair UGA be added to the work plan, specifically focusing on the subarea plan, as he feels the development of Belfair is being directed by the developers, and not the public. Ken also brought up a copy of the Belfair Mobility Plan which he felt should have gone through the PAC before being issued. Kell stated the Mobility Plan has not yet been adopted, that the copy he sees is a draft and that it is on the list to be worked on in 2019.

Public Comment Closed – 6:10 p.m.

4. PUBLIC HEARING – VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM (AMENDMENT TO TITLE 8, CHAPTER 8.52), AND STANDARDS FOR FIRE APPARATUS ACCESS ROADS (AMENDMENT TO TITLE 14, CHAPTER 14.17)- 6:11 p.m.

Standards for Fire Apparatus Access Roads (amendment to Title 14, Chapter 14.17) - 6:11 p.m.

Jeromy Hicks, Mason County Fire Marshall, introduced himself and explained what his position is within Mason County. Jeromy explained that he made updates to Title 14, Chapter 14.17 with a combination of things that are already being done, things that are in code, and things that the International Fire Code has adopted, in order to make a cohesive, up to date document.

A change was made to section 14.17.140, requiring bridge load ratings to be posted, which has already been in code and something fire departments follow. Section 14.17.150 was updated with the most up to date IFC code rather than out of date UFC code. Sections, 14.17.180, .190, .195, and .200 were added to the chapter regarding access gate lock boxes, fire access road maintenance and marking, and proper road signs.

Commissioner Cleveland asked about vertical clearance, which Jeromy explained was already addressed in section 14.17.070 which was not changed.

Commissioner Vogler asked if there was anything added that is specifically new. Jeromy said it is all taken from already approved and used code but the section on gates, and specifically having to require a key, is somewhat new. Fire code states that gates must have fire apparatus access, requiring a key or key switch is an extra step giving the general populace a direction to what access is.

No Public Comment

Commissioner Ireland made a motion to recommend approval of the changes to Title 14, Chapter 14.17. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Cleveland.

Vote:

4 in favor

0 opposed

0 abstentions

Motion passed

Voluntary Stewardship Program (amendment to Title 8, Chapter 8.52) – 6:24 p.m.

Kell introduced Barbra Adkins from Mason County Conservation District.

Public Comment

- **Ken VanBuskirk – 6:25 p.m.**

Ken asked if it would be appropriate to be allowed to make comments or ask questions throughout the hearing if needed. Commissioner Vogler stated that in this instance it would be fine if comments are short.

Barbara began by explaining the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) and how it works as an incentive program through the State Conservation Commission for agricultural land with critical areas. Barbara stated the VSP was adopted by Mason County in 2012. In 2015 a work group was formed to create a work plan for Mason County regarding the VSP.

Barbara explained that agricultural lands with critical areas are automatically entered into the VSP by Mason County having opted in to the program. The Mason Conservation District will monitor the properties and help property owners conserve their lands.

Commissioner Vogler asked how the Conservation District concluded how much land in Mason County is considered Agriculture Lands within critical areas. Barbara explained that they used a combination of maps from the WA Department of Agriculture, agriculture resource maps from the county, and tax information from the Assessor's office to create a map layer that could be placed over the critical area maps to get a good estimate.

Commissioner Vogler also asked about the wetland maps and how with a no net loss policy, they are able to determine loss or growth with maps that do not show all wetlands in Mason County. Commissioner Ireland explained that it is impossible to inventory 100% of wetlands as they are dynamic and changing, Commissioner Ireland estimated that with any mapping of wetlands, you are likely only seeing 50% of the total due to this. Barbara explained that the VSP requires critical areas to be notated at the same levels as they were in 2011, so they are using 2011 maps as a baseline for comparison and monitoring.

Now that the work plan is complete, monitoring can begin. Barbara stated that it is the County's responsibility to make sure that the numbers stay above the 2011 levels. Because the VSP is voluntary, property owners do not have to implement best management practices and are also no longer subject to the resource ordinance. Therefore, the VSP puts the responsibility on the County to protect the critical areas and not the owners.

- **Ken VanBuskirk – 6:37 p.m.**

Ken asked if the members of the work group that put together the work plan were members of the agricultural community. Barbara responded that most were, some were just interested land owners and stated there are seats available.

Commissioner Ireland asked if there were any participants in the program at this time. Barbara stated that there are currently no individual stewardship plans, but that individual plans are part of the VSP. Individual owners can go to the Conservation District to ask for help regarding their properties and implementing best management practices on a lesser level. Those individual

properties would then be added to the map and be able to be monitored within the rest of the program. Barbara went on to explain that for reporting purposes, the VSP output data is at the watershed level, not individual.

Commissioner Ireland asked what penalties there are for property owners choosing to leave the program early or not adhering to suggested best management practices. Barbara explained that on an individual level people can drop out whenever they want, and that on an individual level the impact would most likely not be large enough to impact the reporting levels. Barbara explained that the VSP is not a regulatory document and that through the resource ordinance, agricultural property owners are already mostly unrestricted. Agricultural property owners, however, tend to want to conserve their lands as they rely on it and would not intentionally do anything to harm the critical areas.

Barbara continued to state that for the most part, the VSP is most valuable on the eastern side of the state where there is much more agricultural land, rather than Mason County where only 2% of the land is considered agricultural. The overall impact of the VSP to Mason County landowners will be minimal in her opinion.

Commissioner Vogler stated she is fond of the idea of conservation specialists being able to work with property owners of agricultural lands but asked if there was any tax exemption related to the VSP program, as there is with Open Space. In the Open Space program property owners get a tax reduction for enrolling but if they decide to opt out there are monetary penalties. Barbara answered that there is no tax incentive to the VSP. Commissioner Cleveland asked what incentives there were to which Barbara explained there is funding available to property owners for conservation projects.

Commissioner Vogler expressed her concern about agricultural property owners not having to adhere to the resource ordinance and how enforcement would look if they decided to destroy the critical areas. Kell explained that as enforcement is complaint driven someone would have to bring it to the county's attention to trigger a case. Commissioner Vogler wondered if the Conservation District would report or submit a complaint to the county. Barbara stated they most likely would not report someone to the county as it is not their purview, but the Conservation District could refer the property owner to the county for further information as they similarly do for the Shoreline Stewardship Program.

Commissioner Vogler asked if there would be a list available of all parcels included in the program in order for the county to keep track of activities. Kell and Barbara clarified that it is the county that has opted in to the VSP meaning all agricultural lands with critical areas on them are included. It is not on an individual basis. Kell likened the process to the National Flood Insurance Program for reference.

Commissioner Ireland asked why the entire resource ordinance is then being amended to advertise for the VSP if it's already implemented. She admitted that the additions made it confusing and had some suggestions on how to make it clearer, including rewording the

definition, and including mention in the section on Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation where it talks about incentive programs. Otherwise, a lot of the additions she felt seemed unnecessary.

Commissioner Vogler stated she was uncertain of where to go with the conversation on VSP at this point and invited Ken VanBuskirk to express his thoughts as a property owner of agricultural lands.

- **Ken VanBuskirk – 7:21 p.m.**

Ken expressed his support for the VSP stating that it would reduce the conversion of agricultural lands to other uses. Ken showed the PAC a copy of *Capital Press*, a newspaper for farmers which had an article about the VSP and how it works. He confirmed Barbara’s sentiment that most farmers are stewards of the land they own and do not want to do anything to harm it. Ken stated if anything, he would suggest making sure reference of the 2011 baseline is included so property owners understand where the numbers are coming from. He also suggested the county could help the Conservation District in reaching out to property owners in the Open Space and Farm and Agriculture programs for involvement in the program as well as their interest in joining the work group to help shape the project in the future.

Kell asked Barbara if there was a specific time limit or financial obligation the Conservation District has in getting the amendments done. Barbara explained there wasn’t and that the PAC could take their time going over the changes to the ordinance to make it more cohesive. Kell suggested that if PAC members had comments or ideas, they could send them to her and then her and Barbara would review and revise and bring back at a later date.

Commissioner Cleveland made a motion to table the public hearing until the March regular meeting. Motion seconded by Commissioner Ireland.

Vote:

4 in favor

0 opposed

0 abstentions

Motion passed

5. ELECTION OF 2019 OFFICERS – 7:35 p.m.

Commissioner Cleveland asked if anyone felt any particular need to change. Everyone stated they were fine with the current officers. Commissioner Cleveland then made a motion to nominate Commissioner Vogler as Chair. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Ireland.

Vote:

4 in favor

0 opposed

0 abstentions

Motion passed

Commissioner Vogler made a motion to nominate Commissioner Cleveland as Vice Chair.
Motion was seconded by Commissioner Ireland.

Vote:

4 in favor

0 opposed

0 abstentions

Motion passed

6. ADJOURN

Commissioner Vogler called the meeting adjourned at 7:37 pm.