



## THURSTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes June 7, 2023

1  
2 **1. 6:30 P.M. CALL TO ORDER**

3 Chair Casino called the Thurston County Planning Commission meeting on June 7, 2023 to  
4 order at 6:30 p.m. Commissioners provided self-introductions.  
5

6 **Attendance:** Eric Casino (Chair), Derek Day (Vice Chair), Barry Halverson, Helen Wheatley,  
7 Joel Hansen, Jim Simmons, Kevin Pestinger  
8

9 **Absent:** Scott Nelson  
10

11 **Thurston Staff:** Jeremy Davis, Dana Bowers, Ashley Arai  
12

13 **2. 6:32 P.M. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

14  
15 **MOTION: Commissioner Halverson moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner**  
16 **Hansen seconded. Motion carried with one abstained, as amended.**  
17

18 Chair Casino added a report out of the subcommittee to the good of the order and a calendar  
19 update.  
20

21 **3. 6:35 P.M. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

22  
23 **MOTION: Commissioner Halverson moved to approve the May 17, 2023 meeting**  
24 **minutes. Commissioner Hansen seconded. Motion carried with one abstained.**  
25

26 **MOTION: Commissioner Halverson moved to approve the May, 22, 2023, meeting**  
27 **minutes. Commissioner Simmons seconded. Motion carried with one abstained, as**  
28 **amended.**  
29

30  
31 The audio recording is the official record of the above-dated meetings. The information  
32 herein is provided as an overview of the meeting and a road map to the audio record-  
33 ing. Audio is available online on the [Thurston County Planning Commission](https://www.thurstoncountypa.org/PlanningCommission) website.  
34  
35

36 **4. 6:40 P.M. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS (Not associated with topics for which**  
37 **public hearings have been held.)**  
38

- 39 1. Lynn Fitz-Hugh  
40 2. Julie Ratner, Olympia WA  
41 3. Esther Kronenberg, Olympia, WA  
42 4. Marianne Tompkins, Olympia, WA  
43 5. Lee Riner, Olympia, WA  
44 6. Christy White, Olympia, WA

1 7. B. Norton, Olympia, WA

2  
3 **New Business**

4  
5 **5. 6:35 P.M. WORK SESSION #1: UPDATE FOREST CONVERSION ORDINANCE**

6 *(Staff: Dana Bowers, Ashley Arai)*

7  
8 Ms. Bowers presented the proposed Forest Conversion Code Update. She highlighted that the  
9 commission is only working on phase one of the broader Healthy Forests project. Staff is com-  
10 pleting a tree canopy study, which will inform later phases of the project.

11  
12 Commissioner Hanson asked about hazard trees and if the 5,000 board feet applies to those. Ms.  
13 Bowers stated that the removal of hazard trees falls outside the 5,000 board feet and is allowed.  
14 Ms. Bowers also mentioned that the Planning Commission last August wanted some protections  
15 built in for wildfire resiliency. Staff indicated that the new Tree Preservation Chapter (17.27  
16 TCC) requires property owners to consider reducing wildfire risk for planned developments.  
17 Mr. Davis mentioned the County's requirement to have the wildland urban interface require-  
18 ments be implemented as part of the State's new building code. Ms. Bowers recalled the first  
19 limit being 30 ft from the house with a mature tree. Then out 50 ft with a tree being limbed and  
20 having proper treatments for fire retardation. Than 100 ft for a basic open lot. Ms. Arai men-  
21 tioned that while hazard trees are not specifically called out in phase one of the Healthy Forests  
22 project, staff could look at this during phase three alongside other things like the protection of  
23 oak woodlands in the critical areas ordinance and the removal of hazard trees in buffer areas.  
24 Commissioner Pestinger asked about the timeline of the canopy study and when that may be  
25 completed. Ms. Bowers stated that the data was received on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. There has not been enough  
26 time to upload all of it into the GIS system for staff to look at.

27  
28 Commissioner Pestinger asked about controlled burns. He was unsure if this was the time to  
29 mention that practice. Ms. Bowers stated it is a forestry practice that could be implemented with  
30 DNR regulations regarding forest cycles and management of the understory. She will check her  
31 notes to find out what level of permit one would need for that practice. He is also concerned with  
32 the misinformation citizens have received when it comes to harvesting timber for lump sums of  
33 money. Ms. Bowers mentioned a grant won by the conservation district to help educate forest  
34 landowners and address this misinformation.

35  
36 Commissioner Pestinger also mentioned enforcement of the rules and the cost of permitting. He  
37 has witnessed trees being taken down overnight and developers or constituents saying there is  
38 next to no enforcement. Or if there is enforcement, the penalty is minimal. He mentioned it  
39 sounded as if there was a lot of public comment about enforcement and is hoping something can  
40 be added that provides an actual incentive to keep the trees.

41  
42 Commissioner Day clarified conversion option harvest plan would require a development plan  
43 moving forward. Ms. Bowers clarified that the COHP is for folks that don't know if they are de-  
44 veloping or not. Once they decide to develop and receive the development permit, then they  
45 would work with the tree conservation plan to ensure the tree density is correct.



1 Chair Casino asked what the moratorium release waivers cost now and if there will be a change  
2 when this update goes through? Ms. Bowers stated that the fee study now underway could poten-  
3 tially change those fees but that it would not necessarily be part of this code change.

4  
5 Chair Casino stated that one of the County's permits takes 180 days vs. the 30 days it takes the  
6 state. Why is that? Ms. Bowers stated that part of it has to do with the fact the County does not  
7 employ foresters. Also, the time it takes to move through each department for permit review. Ms.  
8 Arai mentioned there is more than likely a critical areas study that must take place first.

9  
10 Commissioner Simmons asked if each phase of this project would have a similar workflow as  
11 other projects, each phase having multiple work sessions and public hearings. Ms. Bowers stated  
12 that yes, minus the canopy study. Because the BoCC is asking for that, and the findings will go  
13 directly back to them. However, the Planning Commission would see the study multiple times as  
14 it will be used as a resource to inform other phases in this project. He also asked about the term  
15 residential dwellings. Does that mean development of a single-family home on a 5-acre plot? Ms.  
16 Bowers stated this phase is not focused on subdivisions of plots. That will be included during  
17 phase three of the project.

18  
19 **MOTION: Commissioner Day moved to approve the public hearing on July 19, 2023**  
20 **on the Forest Conversion Ordinance. Commissioner Nelson seconded. The motion car-**  
21 **ried unanimously.**

22  
23 **Continued Business**

24  
25 6. None

26  
27 **Other Business**

28  
29 7. None

30  
31 **8. 8:38 P.M. STAFF UPDATES**

32 Mr. Davis mentions the June 14<sup>th</sup> post public hearing briefing to the BoCC. They  
33 will cover the public comments Mr. Deffobis received as well as high level wor-  
34 ries.

35  
36 He also mentions that on May 27<sup>th</sup> Community planning staff attended Dia da la  
37 Familia. There were approximately 300 people that attended the event. Planning  
38 staff was able to reach around 150 people. There were 10 people who were sur-  
39 veyed for Thurston 2045. Materials were translated into Spanish and there was an  
40 interpreter there to help with public outreach.

41  
42 **9. 8:39 P.M. CALENDAR**

43  
44 June 21, 2023: Public Hearing - Pogue Site Specific Land Use & Zoning Amendment  
45 Public Hearing - Long Term Agriculture Zoning. Commissioner Hansen  
46 may not be present.

47  
48 July 5, 2023: Work session #4 - Long Term Agriculture Zoning. Commissioner Halverson  
49 may not be present

July 10, 2023: Special Meeting - Yelm Joint Plan Public Hearing. The meeting will start at 6:45 p.m. Commissioners Halverson and Day may not be present.

**10. 8:46 P.M. GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Commissioner Pestinger reported on the subcommittee and its recommendation for the comprehensive plan. The subcommittee voted on its own leadership. Commissioner Pestinger was voted Chair, Vice Chair is commissioner Day, and Commissioner Wheatley is also a member. They met twice and provided notes of those meetings. They focused on new legislation to ensure marginalized, underrepresented, and negatively impacted groups have input on the comprehensive plan. Commissioner Pestinger also mentioned The International Association for Public Participation and would like to see the staff use some of those strategies for public participation.

**MOTION: Commissioner Pestinger moved to forward the sub committees recommendation to staff and the Board of County Commissioners to look over and consider the sub committees recommendations into their work plan. Commissioner Halverson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

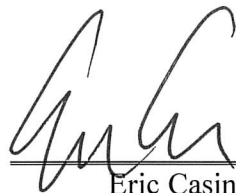
June 21<sup>st</sup> at 9:00 a.m. the Planning Commission will be meeting with the BoCC for a briefing. They compiled a list of the topics listed below. Commissioner Wheatley and Commissioner Halverson will not be able to attend.

1. Recommendation from sub committee
2. Opening all options of the comp plan
  - a. Adding to PC budget to ensure PC has the resources it needs
  - b. Is staff asking for enough budget- seems to be a reoccurring theme
3. Communication between the BoCC and the PC
  - a. Is the PC carryout the vision of the BoCC?
4. How does PC process work with staff? Is there a templated workflow that defines this?
  - a. IE. Scope, definition of constraints, research, public comment, then debate and discussion. Does the BoCC have an opinion on that?
  - b. A template style process/document has been asked for by PC members
5. How does the PC communicate directly with the BoCC?
  - a. Is there a formal process that PC can reach out directly to a commissioner.
  - b. Is staff put in a difficult position if they are the go between?
    - i. Mr. Davis mentioned recommendation letters with attaching findings are one way to communicate.
    - ii. Asking for staff help to put the findings together.
      1. Is that a resource drain?
6. Wants to see findings
  - a. Wants AIS? sent in the packet mailed to PC

1 **11. 9:05 P.M. ADJOURN**

2  
3 With no further business, Chair Casino adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m.  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9

10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16 Prepared by Tosha Knight  
17  
18

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Casino", is written over a horizontal line.

Eric Casino, Chair

