



THURSTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes March 20, 2024

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

3 Chair Day called the Thurston County Planning Commission meeting on March 20, 2024,
4 to order at 6:30 P.M. Commissioners provided self-introductions.
5

6 **Attendance:** Derek Day (Chair), Joel Hansen (Vice Chair), Kevin Pestinger, Scott Nelson,
7 Barry Halverson, Daniel Bumbarger, Bill Fishburn, Colin Bartlett, Eric Casino
8

9 **Not In Attendance:** Sandy Kaiser (Excused)

10
11 **Thurston Staff:** Leah Davis, Associate Planner, Andrew Boughan, Interim Senior Planner,
12 Ashley Arai, Planning Manager
13

14 **2. 6:32 P.M. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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16 **MOTION: Commissioner Halverson moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner**
17 **Hansen seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**
18

19 **3. 6:33 P.M. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

20
21 **MOTION: Commissioner Bumbarger moved to approve the March 6, 2024 minutes.**
22 **Commissioner Halverson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**
23

24 The audio recording is the official record of the above-dated meeting. The infor-
25 mation herein is provided as an overview of the meeting and a road map to the au-
26 dio recording. Audio is available online on the [Thurston County Planning Commis-](#)
27 [sion](#) website.
28

29 **4. 6:35 P.M. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS (Not associated with topics for which**
30 **public hearings have been held.)**

- 31
32 1. Betsy Norton, Olympia, WA
33

34 **New Business**

35
36 **5. 6:35 P.M. WORK SESSION #9: Thurston 2045- Introduction, Appendices A, C, D**
37 ***(Staff: Leah Davis)***
38

39 Ms. Davis presented Chapter 1 of the Comprehensive Plan as well as appendices A, C, &
40 D. She mentioned appendices B, which is an implementation plan, that will be introduced
41 later in the year after the complex chapters are finished.
42

1 Commissioner Pestinger referring to the presented timeline clarified chapter ten being
2 about historic resources only and wondered if the climate and housing resources chapter
3 would also be presented at the same meeting. Ms. Davis stated that they would cover how
4 those chapters would be approached due to the complexity of them. Ms. Arai added what
5 would be ready for review next meeting. Vice Chair Hansen inquired about the chapter
6 numbers for both housing and climate elements. Ms. Arai stated the housing does have a
7 chapter number however the climate chapter does not due to it being a new addition. She
8 will add the chapter numbers to lessen the confusion on what they are working on. Vice
9 Chair Hansen agreed.

10
11 Commissioner Bumbarger stated the document is using his/her pronouns and wondered if
12 there is an attempt to revise with gender neutral language. Ms. Davis asked where in the
13 document that was noticed. Commissioner Bumbarger pointed to an example in the docu-
14 ment. Mr. Boughan mentioned staff plans to clean up the document as the chapters are
15 worked on. Ms. Arai added there is a running list of minor changes to the full document
16 and that will be added to the list to identify the edits needed as different staff works on
17 different chapters.

18
19 Commissioner Pestinger asked about Appendix A and wanted clarification on if discus-
20 sion was appropriate. Ms. Davis stated Yes, staff is looking for a thumbs up on the
21 changes then the chapter will be put aside. Ms. Arai added staff reached out to Squaxin,
22 Nisqually, and Chehalis tribes and asked to include a narrative for their tribe. The
23 Squaxin tribe did provide one, which is included, and the other tribes may do so at their
24 discretion.

25
26 Commissioner Casino mentioned looking through the list of programs and documents
27 listed in the appendix that are going to inform the Comprehensive Plan. Often, he has
28 seen the language “you can purchase this from TRPC”. He continued, most citizens
29 won’t want to purchase documents and wanted to make sure anything linked would be
30 available to the community members as well as the Planning Commission. Ms. Davis
31 stated yes, the information will be available to the public as well as the Planning Com-
32 mission. Further discussion ensued surrounding older documents that may only have a
33 hard copy available, and fees associated with printing out documents.

34
35 Commissioner Pestinger cited appendix C pg. C-22. Section F, The Olympia Airport
36 Master Plan. He believed that should fall under transportation section A. He was curious
37 if that should be in the discussion since the transportation chapter will be revised during
38 the periodic update. Ms. Davis answered that there were changes done during the 2021
39 Tumwater Joint Plan Update with a reconfiguration of landing pattern zones. Ms. Arai
40 asked if the Planning Commission wanted the airport referenced in the transportation
41 chapter verses appendix C. Further discussion took place regarding how the logic of the
42 airport and Port of Olympia business should be referenced.

43
44 Commissioner Hansen mentioned the introduction to chapter one and wanted to discuss
45 the language chosen. He would like to see stronger language regarding climate steward-
46 ship. The commissioners continued to discuss the suggestion of Commissioner Hansen’s
47 ultimately deciding to have staff revise the introduction paragraph.

Commissioner Pestinger cited the county history and what is missing. He mentioned Chief Leschi and including his story in the history of the county even if it is not offered by the tribe. He continued that history will generally include stories of the founding “fathers” of an area however the workers are rarely mentioned. He pointed out the strong movements surrounding logging and unionization history in the area. He mentioned The Wobblies and The Centralia Massacre. While that event was not in Thurston County, many events of similarity did happen within the county. He would like to see some of these larger events included. Ms. Davis asked for a list of references for use. He stated he would provide them. Ms. Arai added staff attended the Nisqually River Counsel Meeting. Staff has been penciled in to have a larger conversation regarding the Comprehensive Plan once the chapters are close to completion. She spoke about the running list of questions and will ask if they would like to include Chief Leschi’s story in appendix. It was their preference to omit it at the time. Further discussion ensued surrounding historical events in the county and what may and may not be appropriate to include in Appendix A.

Commissioner Nelson had some concerns surrounding the negative connotation the word “occupation” could have. Ms. Davis asked for feedback on what should be used. Further discussion was had surrounding the need to change the wording. Ultimately the group decided to remove the subheadings and keep the word for continuity throughout Appendix A. Ms. Davis asked Commissioner Pestinger to email staff with the references he mentioned.

6. 7:16 P.M. INDUSTRIAL LANDS STUDY

(Staff: Andrew Boughan)

Mr. Boughan presented the Industrial Lands Study to the Planning Commission. Commissioner Pestinger asked if the study took into consideration the fact that warehouses are used for a myriad of reasons and are those businesses included in the warehouse subset. Ms. Arai answered No, she believed the consultants looked at the different industrial codes. That combined with transportation looks at the large-scale warehouse distribution centers which have larger parcels and access to the highway. She mentioned the consultants worked backwards from where they saw employment growth trends across the state. The BoCC had not set any direction on how they wanted to see industrial growth in the county. The consultants were tasked with working backwards from the trends they saw and provide different scenarios for the BoCC and the community to discuss what they would like to see. Commissioner Casino asked if when the consultant was looking at the inventory, were they determined by use or the zoning. Ms. Arai stated it was industrial land zoning. Commissioner Hansen asked what number of acres are available to the county now. Mr. Boughan answered the county has nineteen hundred acres available. There are fifteen hundred net developable acres. The rest of the four hundred acres represents land that was undevelopable due to flood plains, public ownership, critical areas and the like.

Commissioner Bumbarger clarified if the study showed that the need is not more than what is currently available. Ms. Arai replied that what the study found was that the nuances of what is available and what is needed will highly depend on the county’s economic development plan and vision. It could be, there may not be enough land of a partic-

1 ular size or readily available access to utilities. Just looking at acreage is not enough to de-
2 termine if there is land available for the specific type of economic development the county
3 may want to see in the future. Further discussion succeeded regarding demand for indus-
4 trial lands, the parcel size, access to utilities, and what docket projects were included in
5 the study. Commissioner Halverson asked if the available nineteen hundred acres ex-
6 cluded lands that have agriculture use. Ms. Arai stated that the study would have included
7 the land zoned industrial regardless of what the use was.
8

9 Commissioner Pestinger spoke to employment opportunities and the types of jobs ware-
10 housing brings to a county. He referenced the story Commissioner Hansen told in previous
11 years regarding Lewis County and the experience they have had with adding large
12 amounts of warehouse jobs in their community. Ms. Arai added the study did touch on the
13 history of wages in the warehouse and manufacturing field in Thurston County. Discus-
14 sion followed which included topics such as a job verses employment, pay gaps, and the
15 states median income as it related to Thurston County.
16

17 Chair Day asked how far out of line is the County with the types of parcels and availably
18 of utilities? How much of a reduction in the number of acres available? Ms. Arai replied to
19 the staff does not have the technical skill to speculate whether the county is in an optimal
20 place in terms of utility readiness. The number reflected county wide which would include
21 the cities, UGA's, and rural areas. She continued, public comment supports any policy
22 made by the county to take active steps in establishing areas of economic development
23 where utilities and mitigating for critical areas if the county decides that is the best route.
24 Commissioner Day clarified the policies wouldn't be pulling in new industrial lands it
25 would be incentivizing that to be developed then the utility expansion would have to be
26 apart of that. Ms. Arai referred to Maytown and surrounding areas that are currently zoned
27 for industrial use. However, the land could be underutilized if not connected to sewer or
28 water. Ms. Arai mentioned Appendix F of the Industrial Lands Study and how it broke
29 down the number of parcels available per size and if they are utility ready or not. Further
30 discussion followed regarding traffic, quality of jobs, storm/wastewater treatment facili-
31 ties, and previous docket projects.
32

33 **Continued Business**

34 35 7. [8:06 P.M.](#) **General Thurston 2045 Update** 36 (Staff: Ashely Arai) 37

38 Ms. Arai explained both the climate and housing meetings have happened between staff
39 and the consultants. The team of consultants are trying to map an outreach strategy to
40 reach the community members in the south county. The staff is considering an open house
41 summit in the Grand Mound/Rochester and Yelm area in the first or second week of June.
42 The dates will be shared with the Planning Commission once established. Commissioner
43 Pestinger asked who the regulatory oversight is of the Chehalis Western Trail within
44 Thurston County and if that falls within the comprehensive plan. He brings up the topic
45 due to the advancement of electronic/combustion engine bikes and scooters. Mr. Boughan
46 replied that it would not fall within the comprehensive plan. More than likely would fall
47 within the Parks Department general rules or policies and the enforcement would fall to
48 the sheriff's department.

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2
3 **Other Business**
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5 **8. 8:10 P.M. STAFF UPDATES**

6 *(Staff: Andrew Boughan, Ashely Arai)*
7

8 Ms. Arai announced a Senior Planning position has been posted. She continued to state
9 this role will focus on engagement and strategic planning. The person who fills the role
10 will oversee the Education and Outreach team as well as the employees who work on pol-
11 icies. She also included an update on the new county managers start date and invited the
12 Planning Commission to the meet and greet that will be held April 5th from 4:30-6:00
13 p.m.
14

15 Mr. Boughan mentioned the comprehensive and developmental dockets comment period
16 has closed and provided next steps in the process. He highlighted that over thirteen hun-
17 dred comments were received in the comment period which is much higher than any pre-
18 vious cycles. He attributed the influx of comments due to a new survey style comment
19 form being utilized, a consolidated webpage, and the outreach effort from both the county
20 staff as well as the applicants whose projects are being considered.
21

22 **9. 8:18 P.M. CALENDAR**
23

24 *April 3, 2024: Work Session #9: Thurston 2045- Historic Resources (10) Climate &*
25 *Housing Approach*

26 *April 17, 2024: Work Session #11: Thurston 2045 - Capital Facilities (6) & Utilities (7)*
27

28 **10. 8: 19 P.M. GOOD OF THE ORDER**
29

30 Commissioner Pestinger updated the Commission on the Rules & Procedure subcommit-
31 tee update. Staff provided the Microsoft Word copy as well as edits they felt were appro-
32 priate. He mentioned having the redlined version for the Planning Commission to discuss
33 at the next meeting.
34

35 Commissioner Nelson mentioned the calf tours on his farm March 30th and April 13th
36 from 10:00 - 1:00 pm.
37

38 Commissioner Fishburn explained that the Timberland Regional Library is hosting a free
39 drop-in service and support from the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project at the main li-
40 brary April 12th from 2:00-4:30 p.m. Also, the Hispanic Round Table will be planning the
41 Latino Youth Summit and looking for people interested in planning. Meeting will be held
42 at Equal Latin. The date and time had escaped him.
43

44 Commissioner Hansen mentioned that the Port of Olympia's new executive director had
45 started. There will be a community meet and greet March 27th from 5:30-6:30 p.m. which
46 he believes will be held at the Percival Plaza Olympics Room. More information can be
47 found on the Port of Olympia's website.

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2 **11. 8:27 P.M ADJOURN**
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4 With no further business Chair Day adjourned meeting at 8:27 pm.
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Derek Day, Chair
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Prepared by Tosha Knight