



THURSTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes August 2, 2023

1
2 1. 6:32 P.M. CALL TO ORDER

3 Chair Casino called the Thurston County Planning Commission meeting on August 2, 2023,
4 to order at 6:32 P.M. Commissioners provided self-introductions.
5

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

9 **Thurston Staff:** Maya Teeple, Ashley Arai, Jeremy Davis
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12 2. 6:33 P.M. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
13

14 **MOTION: Commissioner Halverson moved to approve the agenda.**
15 **Commissioner Simmons seconded. Motion was approved.**
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18 3. 6:34 P.M. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
19

20 **MOTION: Commissioner Halverson moved to approve the July 19, 2023 meeting**
21 **minutes. Commissioner Simmons seconded. Motion carried, with a vote of 6 yea and**
22 **1 abstain.**
23

24 **The audio recording is the official record of the above-dated meeting. The information**
25 **herein is provided as an overview of the meeting and a road map to the audio record-**
26 **ing. Audio is available online on the [Thurston County Planning Commission](#) website.**
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29 4. 6:35 P.M. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS (Not associated with topics for which
30 public hearings have been held.)
31

- 32 1. Maria Trevizo, Olympia
33 2. Jeff Merryman, Rochester
34 2. Marylin Franzen, Yelm
35 3. Sally Cloninger Lacey
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37
38

39 **New Business**

40 None
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44

1 Continued Business

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3 5. 6:44 P.M. WORK SESSION #6: LONG-TERM AGRICULTURAL ZONING UPDATE
4

5 Ms. Teeple reviewed previous decisions made at the July 5th and July 19th planning commis-
6 sion meetings. There are a few remaining decision points: the first decision point is on code
7 changes for flexibility and clarity; the second is whether to exclude 4s soils altogether or to
8 exclude the 4s soils if the National Commodity Crop Productivity Index (NCCPI) productiv-
9 ity rating is below 0.5.

10
11 Ms. Arai presented a summary of code updates, including expanding uses in the long-term
12 agriculture zoning district. This change would give farmers flexibility to diversify income,
13 strengthen the agriculture economy, and streamline permit processes. She also spoke about
14 an update to the agritourism overlay district, which helps to clarify uses and development
15 standards, remove barriers like minimum parcel size and streamline permit processes.

16
17 Commissioner Simmons asked if adding cannabis to the proposed primary uses is something
18 that was discussed. Ms. Arai states that cannabis has its own chapter in the Thurston County
19 Codes, and it is not currently treated as agriculture. It could be something that is reviewed;
20 however, it would take place as a separate docket item. This update on agriculture zoning is
21 narrow in scope and did not go to stakeholders around cannabis. Mr. Davis added historical
22 knowledge of why cannabis has not been considered an agricultural use at the time regula-
23 tions were adopted. Ms. Teeple states that there is an application for a code amendment that
24 will be presented as a docket item in 2024. Commissioner Day asks if addressing the use of
25 cannabis for agriculture use in the Planning Commissions' finding would help support the
26 BoCC adding this to their docket. Commissioner Pestinger and Chair Casino were in support
27 of the idea. Commissioner Pestinger asks about agritourism and parcel size. Ms. Arai voiced
28 the updated code that was presented does not have a minimum parcel size. Commissioner
29 Day questioned special use language in code 20.08A.025 "or cannot be readily accessed
30 without adversely affecting the primary agriculture use." He believed there could be a benefit
31 in addition to "or due to other sight constraints as in a wetland buffer other than the primary
32 farmland would make it hard to site." Ms. Arai agreed and stated that language is more than
33 just in special uses and is also used for secondary uses under 20.08A.022. The purpose of
34 that language is that somebody has a critical use area or a different designation in the far cor-
35 ner of their parcel that is still designated at LTA. Chair Casino noticed that horses are being
36 moved out of special use; however, canines are not. Ms. Teeple mentioned that kennels his-
37 torically have been considered a special use in Chapter 20.54 for agriculture and other zones.
38 She noted that when commercial kennels apply, it goes to the Hearing Examiner, where it
39 can receive public feedback and have a public hearing process. There has been interest in
40 commercial kennels from the public in the past, so the Hearing Examiner process is appropri-
41 ate.

42
43 **Commissioner Halverson motions to recommend approval of agricultural zoning up-**
44 **date and amendment designation criteria as discussed by previous Planning Commis-**
45 **sion decision points and further move to recommend and approval of associated code**
46 **changes in chapters 20.03, 20.08A, 20.08G, and 20.54 to increase flexibility for agricul-**
47 **tural operations, streamline the permit process, and clarify procedures to include the**
48 **cannabis recommendation by Commissioner Day. Commissioner Simmons seconds the**

1 **motion. Commissioner Pestinger moves to table the motion until later in the meeting**
2 **when 4s soils are discussed. Chair Casino tables motion.**
3

4 Ms. Arai and Ms. Teeple presented 4s soil types and answered previous questions about
5 what the existing 4s soil types are. Commissioner Wheatley asks what the three soil types
6 are. Ms. Teeple said the Spanaway gravelly sandy loam, the Spanaway -Nisqually complex,
7 and the Nisqually loamy fine sand. Each has a rating from the NCCPI of 0.5 or higher.
8 Commissioner Wheatley asked if there were any other soil types that are in existing farms
9 that did not meet the NCCPI criteria that were used. Ms. Arai stated that the Indianolas,
10 which are typically the area that transitions from the prairies to the woodland. When those
11 were looked at, the NCCPI rating was much lower than the three mentioned in the previous
12 comment. The estimated acreage for the two Indianolas equals approximately 6,000 total
13 acres, and they are made up of approximately 20 and 34 percent of existing farms.
14

15 **Commissioner Pestinger moves to include the three 4s soil types that have the NCCPI**
16 **rating over 0.5. Commissioner Wheatley seconds. With a vote of 5-2, the motion passes.**
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18 Chair Casino restates the previous motion to include the 4s soils.
19

20 **Move to recommend approval of the agriculture zoning update and amendment to des-**
21 **ignation criteria as discussed by previous Planning Commission decision points. Fur-**
22 **ther move to recommend approval of associated code changes to Chapters 20.03,**
23 **20.08a,20.08G, and 20.54 to increase flexibility for agricultural operators, streamline**
24 **permit processes, and clarify procedures, which included the three 4s soil types as well**
25 **as Commissioner Day's finding on cannabis and hemp. With a vote of 5-2 the motion**
26 **passes.**
27

28 Chair Casino asked to have Ms. Arai write a separate resolution that the Planning Commis-
29 sioner would like to see the BoCC work on a compensation program for citizens who have
30 a loss of development rights. Ms. Arai responded that staff could put something together
31 and could tie it to The Habitat Strategic Initiative Lead Grant that the County should be
32 getting a draft contract from the state.
33

34 **Other Business**

35 **7. 7:24 P.M.: STAFF UPDATES**

36
37 Mr. Davis reminded commissioners on August 3, 2023; there is a wireless code
38 briefing and ground mound sub-area briefing.
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41 **8. 7:25 P.M.: CALENDAR**

42 *August 2, 2023: Worksession # 6 Long-Term Agriculture Zoning Update*
43 *August 16, 2023: Public Hearing Forest Conversion Ordinance*
44 *Work Session #1 Capital Improvement Program*
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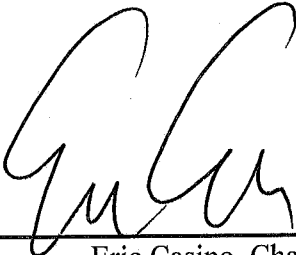
46 **9. 7:28 P.M.: GOOD OF THE ORDER**

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48 Commissioner Pestinger expressed his dislike for having more than two meetings in a month.
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2 **10. 7:30 ADJOURN**
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4 With no further business, Chair Casino adjourned the meeting at 7:30 P.M.
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Eric Casino, Chair

Prepared by Tosha Knight