



## THURSTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes January 17, 2024

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2 **1. 6:31 P.M. CALL TO ORDER**

3 Chair Casino called the Thurston County Planning Commission meeting on January 17,  
4 2024, to order at 6:31 P.M. Commissioners provided self-introductions.

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6 **Attendance:** Eric Casino (Chair), Derek Day (Vice Chair), Kevin Pestinger, Scott Nelson,  
7 Sandra Kaiser, Joel Hanson, Daniel Bumbarger

8 **Not In Attendance:** Barry Halverson (excused)

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10 **Thurston Staff:** Andrew Boughan, Associate Planner; Amelia Schwartz, Associate Plan-  
11 ner; Ashley Arai, Planning Manager

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13 **Guest: Commissioner Menser**

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15 **2. 6:33 P.M. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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17 **MOTION: Commissioner Casino amended the agenda to allow for County Commis-**  
18 **sioner Menser to address the Planning Commission. Commissioner Pestinger moved**  
19 **to approve the agenda as amended. Commissioner Nelson seconded. The motion**  
20 **passed unanimously.**

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22 **3. 6:33 P.M. COMMISSIONER MENSER INTRODUCTION**

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24 Commissioner Menser highlighted the Planning Commission's importance in land use  
25 decisions shaping Thurston County's identity. He mentioned taking pride in the Plan-  
26 ning Commission's work and continuity with new appointees. He reminded the com-  
27 missioners of the BoCC's expectations of the Planning Commission for the greater good  
28 of the community.

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30 **4. 6:38 P.M. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

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32 **MOTION: Commissioner Nelson moved to approve the amended December 6, 2023**  
33 **minutes. Commissioner Day seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

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35 **The audio recording is the official record of the above-dated meeting. The infor-**  
36 **mation herein is provided as an overview of the meeting and a road map to the au-**  
37 **dio recording. Audio is available online on the Thurston County Planning Commis-**  
38 **sion website.**

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40 **5. 6:39 P.M. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS (Not associated with topics for which**  
41 **public hearings have been held.)**

- 42  
43 1. Phyllis Farrell – Olympia, WA  
44 2. Jeff Merryman – Thurston County

3. Matt Huff – Thurston County

**New Business**

6. **6:49 P.M. ELECTIONS**

Commissioner Casino asked if the Commission wanted to take nominations at this meeting and vote at the next meeting. He asked staff to confirm whether the new chair would take over at the meeting they are elected. Staff confirmed.

Commissioner Pestinger recommended tabling the election nominations for the next meeting to be considerate to the newly appointed Planning Commissioners who would most likely be attending the next meeting. Commissioner Nelson suggested holding elections at the current meeting since there is a quorum.

**MOTION: Commissioner Pestinger moved to table the elections until the next meeting. Commissioner Bumbarger seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

7. **6:52 P.M. PLANNING COMMISSION TRAINING**

*(Staff: Amelia Schwartz, Andrew Boughan)*

Mr. Boughan explained the role of Planning Commissioners in land use matters, including listening to public input and drafting recommendations for the Board of County Commissioners. Staff members then present Planning Commissioner's recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners for final review and approval.

Ms. Schwartz reviewed the Community Planning departmental organization chart for the commissioners and the purpose of the resource binders. A discussion ensued about additional training resources from MRSC for onboarding new planning commissioners. Commissioner Pestinger shared insight on the public comment process, emphasizing clarity on when and where the public can comment on docketed items. Ms. Arai stated that Ms. Villacian, an Education and Outreach specialist within the department, is working on a communication strategy to help clarify how the public can engage with the department. Ms. Arai asked the tenured planning commissioners to share some words of wisdom with the new commissioners.

**Continued Business**

None

**Other Business**

8. **7:41 P.M. STAFF UPDATES**

*(Staff: Ashely Arai, Andrew Boughan)*

Ms. Arai highlighted new agriculture program manager Kevin Jensen's experience, expressed excitement around the Working Lands Conservation Strategy, and working that into the comprehensive plan update. Mr. Boughan handed out the preliminary docket



list that will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners before the next planning commission meeting. Then, he provided a short presentation on the docket items. Commissioner Pestinger asked about the document's title being reviewed and wondered where the Comprehensive elements fit. Mr. Boughan responded that the information in the document is there in a drafted version. Ms. Arai stated a final document would be presented to the Planning Commission after it had been reviewed and finalized by the BoCC. She reviewed upcoming meeting topics as well as updated the Planning Commission on the consultant search for help with updating the 2045 Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Pestinger asked how many open staff positions there were within the department. Ms. Arai stated none.

Ms. Arai addressed Mr. Merryman's question from the public comment period of the meeting. Mr. Merryman is seeking clarification on a motion that was made during the August 2<sup>nd</sup> Planning Commission Meeting. The topic of the work session was the Long-Term Agriculture Zoning Update. He asked to have a recommendation made to include cannabis and hemp to be included in the primary agriculture use definition as well as the agritourism definition for use.

Ms. Arai researched the motions made during the August 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting and where the findings can be found within the recommendation letter. During the meeting, Ms. Arai continued to explain that the staff reported cannabis and hemp codes are regulated differently than those for agriculture. Addressing Mr. Merryman's request would require a deeper dive into it, which would be more in-depth than simply adding the words to the definitions. The project's scope and public outreach only focused on long-term agriculture zoning updates. The finding states, "The Planning Commission finds the county should consider reviewing cannabis and hemp regulations as a future docketed development code item," Ms. Arai continued to explain that a comprehensive review would address all comments received. Including but not limited to comments that were received during the current meeting as well as including the minimum amount of acreage needed to establish a new cannabis outdoor operating facility. Ms. Arai continued that Mr. Merryman submitted a docket proposal to address his request, and it has been officially placed on the preliminary docket for the BoCC's review. When this is presented to the BoCC, the planning commission recommendation will also be submitted for consideration for the addition of approved docket items for staff work. Further discussion continued surrounding the intent of the Planning Commission recommendation, how Mr. Merryman's request can move forward, and the staffing requirements needed to update the sprawling code that regulates cannabis and hemp use in Thurston County.

**9. 8:13 P.M. CALENDAR**

February 7, 2024: *Introduction to Joint Planning*

*Update on 2024 Docketing Process*

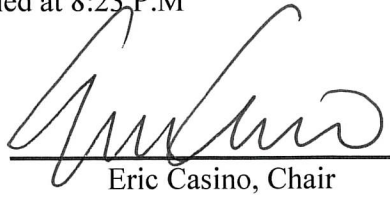
February 21, 2024: *Intro to Subarea Planning/Nisqually Subarea Plan*

**10. 8:17 P.M. GOOD OF THE ORDER**

None

1 11. 8:23 P.M ADJOURN

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3 With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:23 P.M

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9 Eric Casino, Chair

Prepared by Tosha Knight