



THURSTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes March 6, 2024

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

3 Chair Day called the Thurston County Planning Commission meeting on March 6, 2024,
4 to order at 6:30 P.M. Commissioners provided self-introductions.
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6 **Attendance:** Derek Day (Chair), Joel Hansen (Vice Chair), Kevin Pestinger, Scott Nelson,
7 Barry Halverson, Daniel Bumbarger, Sandy Kaiser, Bill Fishburn, Colin Bartlett
8

9 **Not In Attendance:** Eric Casino (Excused)
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11 **Thurston Staff:** Leah Davis, Associate Planner; Miriam Villacian, Education & Outreach
12 Specialist; Ashley Arai, Planning Manager
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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. Motion carried unanimously**
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19 **3. 6:35 P.M. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

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21 **MOTION: Commissioner Fishburn moved to approve the amended minutes. Com-**
22 **missioner Nelson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.**
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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. 6:40 P.M. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS (Not associated with topics for which
30 public hearings have been held.)**
31

32 1. Phyllis Farrell, Olympia, WA
33

34 **New Business**

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36 None
37

38 **Continued Business**
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40 **5. 6:42 P.M. Work Session #2: Tumwater UGA Code Update**
41 ***(Staff: Leah Davis)***
42

43 Ms. Davis provided the struck-out version of the City of Tumwater design guidelines to

1 the Planning Commission. She explained the city would like the county to adopt the guide-
2 lines for future annexations so properties will fit into the aesthetic the city is creating. The
3 question was posed to the Planning Commission what part of the design guidelines they
4 feel are appropriate for the county to adopt. Commissioner Kaiser asked if other municipi-
5 palities have a similar document. Ms. Davis responded that she doesn't believe there are
6 separate design guideline documents. However, their design guidelines are built into the
7 code.

8 Commissioner Kaiser stated she understood why some things were struck through, but she
9 was unsure of others. Ms. Davis responded that perhaps she was referencing the document
10 and removing items already in the Thurston County Code. She did not make explanatory
11 comments as it was a reference from which she could work.

12 Commissioner Bumbarger stated that, in option 2, adopting the paired-down version of the
13 document made the most sense to him as the document has a lot of guidelines that do not
14 fit within building codes. He continued that the items written for functionality, safety, eco-
15 logical, and accessibility impact should stay. However, Thurston County should not be
16 concerned with the aesthetics of buildings.

17
18 Commissioner Halverson asked if they were development codes or guidelines. Ms. Davis
19 replied that there are some "shall", some "should", and some "please". Mr. Halverson stated
20 the Thurston County codes are not written in that manner, and to the point of Commissioner
21 Bumbarger about how that correlates. Ms. Davis responded that the County has a small
22 section of design guidelines in its current code, and she could try to sort every line out and
23 determine if it is a requirement and is appropriate from the county's perspective. For ex-
24 ample, each zoning district has guidelines around interior parking landscaping. The county
25 already has a code for parking landscape, so does the county want a different standard for
26 each zoning district, and if so, why? The same is true for landscaping in general. Thurston
27 County already has landscaping requirements for various uses. Types one, two, three, and
28 four depend on land use and neighboring land use. If it is an industrial zone and the adjacent
29 parcel is residential, there should be a larger landscape buffer. She stated it is difficult to
30 input the design guidelines into the established code.

31
32 Ms. Arai asked if it would be appropriate to reference the document in the parking and
33 landscaping portion of the code if the planning commission recommended a more nuanced
34 approach instead of trying to incorporate it into the code. Ms. Davis stated that staff time
35 and the document's usability would be easier. Ms. Arai continued that if it was adopted by
36 reference, developers would understand how to use the document to meet requirements
37 instead of going through multiple code sections to determine the commercial standards.
38 That would be one benefit of a user experience.

39
40 Commissioner Day asked if there was a development in the county under these guidelines
41 that required, through some concurrence, new pedestrian amenities that fall under that pe-
42 destrian orientation designation. Or would it be a designated place and designed as such?
43 Ms. Davis responded that it was up for debate as a lot of the guidelines are designed around
44 pedestrian spaces, which is not in the county code. She posed the following question: Do
45 we want to have commercial developments like restaurants and shopping centers with pe-
46 destrian or open spaces for people?

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48 Ms. Arai showed part of a Tumwater map where a signature road exists. A discussion took

1 place about signature roads, pedestrian gateways, the effect of affordability on the neigh-
2 borhood, and accessibility to lower-income residents.

3
4 Each planning commissioner favored option two, which is a pared-down version of the
5 guidelines that will be referenced in the code.

6
7 Ms. Arai asked that the Planning Commission recommend what they would like to see as
8 a mandatory item in the code so staff does not have to guess. Chair Day asked about the
9 Thurston County drainage manual referenced in the guideline document and considered
10 deferring to the City of Tumwater's DDECM since they would inherit the infrastructure.
11 Ms. Davis responded that she believes the stormwater drainage manual is identical to the
12 design guidelines and will confer with development services, specifically CPED's storm-
13 water review team, to ensure the drainage manual is the appropriate document to reference.

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15 **6. [7: 39 P.M](#) Work Session #8 Thurston 2045: Schedule, 2023 Survey, and**
16 **Public Comments**

17 (Staff: Miriam Villacian, Ashley Arai)

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19 Ms. Arai introduced Ms. Villacian and started the presentation with a project timeline. She
20 stated that the deadline for completing the comprehensive plan was moved to December
21 2025. Commissioner Pestinger asked about the health element and where that fits into the
22 timeline. Ms. Arai stated that the optional elements, which included health, were not funded
23 for the periodic update. She also suggested that the Planning Commission review the draft
24 updates to include minor digestible updates vs. one significant update.

25
26 Ms. Villacian presented the public outreach that was done in the community during the
27 summer of 2023. Commissioner Fishburn asked about translating materials into Ukrainian
28 and The Friday Five. Ms. Villacian explained that the materials are translated into three
29 languages: Spanish, Vietnamese, and Korean. The Friday Five is a weekly newsletter that
30 the Thurston County Public Information Officers put out on Fridays that talk about the top
31 five things in the county. Commissioner Bartlett asked about the monthly round tables with
32 the Tribes and who was involved. Ms. Arai replied that the Tribal partners requested the
33 meetings at the staff level currently. Based on the review of the chapters, they will decide
34 if there are topics they would like to elevate further to the Tribal council and then will
35 engage with the County Manager's office. Commissioner Halverson asked about the out-
36 reach done through the school district. Ms. Villacian responded that they used Peach Jar,
37 which is what some school districts use to send flyers out. Commissioner Halverson men-
38 tioned the school district superintendent's office, which has an email list of teachers, staff,
39 and parents. Commissioner Fishburn mentioned school counselors as a good resource for
40 reaching parents. He also asked about Jolt News. Ms. Arai stated that the Jolt has picked
41 up CPED stories, mainly at the BoCC level. Commissioner Bartlett asked if outreach would
42 be done at Olympia Pride or the County Pride event. He mentioned it being a potentially
43 good venue for reaching people not typically engaged in local government. Halverson men-
44 tioned adding date, time, and event location during staff updates. Ms. Arai mentioned the
45 publicly available calendar that is published on the county website, as each event staff will
46 be at will be open to the public. Commissioner Pestinger questioned the data being col-

1 lected in the survey and whether any feedback was received. Ms. Arai agreed that collect-
2 ing demographic data was important; however, staff wanted to remove as many barriers as
3 possible when collecting survey responses; therefore, only zip codes were collected to en-
4 sure all areas of the county were being surveyed.

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6 **Other Business**

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8 **7. 8:18 P.M. STAFF UPDATES**

9 *(Staff: Ashley Arai)*

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11 Ms. Arai provided a staff update to the Planning Commission. She highlighted Senior
12 Planner Brad Murphy's retirement and invited the Planning Commission to a future
13 BoCC meeting celebrating his contribution to the county. She touched on the docketing
14 comment period and explained the next steps of the process. The Planning Commission
15 asked for a standing agenda item added for updates to the Comprehensive Plan.

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17 **8. 8:23 P.M. CALENDAR**

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19 *March 20, 2024: Work Session 10: Thurston 2045 – Introduction, Appendices A, C, D,*
20 *E, F, and Industrial Lands Study Briefing*


21
22 *April 3, 2024: Work Session 1: Thurston 2045 – Historic and Archaeological Resources;*
23 *Climate / Housing Analysis Approach*

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25 **9. 8:26 P.M. GOOD OF THE ORDER**

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27 The Rules & Procedures subcommittee met on March 5, 2024, and reviewed minor
28 changes. A marked-up version of the Rules & Procedures will be presented at the next
29 Planning Commission meeting for potential change. Discussion occurred regarding as-
30 signing county email addresses to the Planning Commission, the associated cost, and
31 alias emails instead of a county-hosted email.

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33 **10. 8:33 P.M. ADJOURN**

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35 **MOTION: Commissioner Pestinger moved to adjourn. Commissioner Nelson se-**
36 **cinded. The motion passed unanimously.**

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Derek Day, Chair

Prepared by Tosha Knight