



# THURSTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes March 20, 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 20, 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, Bill Fishburn, Eric Casino  
8

9 **Not In Attendance:** Sandy Kaiser (Excused), Colin Bartlett (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.**  
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19 **3. 6:33 P.M. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

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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.**  
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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. Betsy Norton, Olympia, WA  
33

34 **New Business**

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36 **5. 6:35 P.M. WORK SESSION #9: Thurston 2045- Introduction, Appendices A, C, D**  
37 ***(Staff: Leah Davis)***  
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39 Ms. Davis presented Chapter 1 of the Comprehensive Plan and appendices A, C, & D.  
40 She mentioned that Appendix B, the implementation plan, will be introduced later in the  
41 year after the more complex chapters are worked on.  
42

1 Commissioner Pestinger referred to the presented timeline, clarified chapter ten as being  
2 about historic resources only, and wondered if the climate and housing resources chapter  
3 would be presented at the same meeting. Ms. Davis stated they would cover how the  
4 chapters would be approached due to their complexity. Ms. Arai added what would be  
5 ready for review at the next meeting. Vice Chair Hansen inquired about the chapter num-  
6 bers for both housing and climate elements. Ms. Arai stated that the housing chapter has a  
7 number; however, the climate chapter does not because it is new. She will add the chapter  
8 numbers to lessen the confusion about their work. Vice Chair Hansen agreed.  
9

10 Commissioner Bumbarger stated that the document used his and her pronouns and won-  
11 dered if there was an attempt to revise it with gender-neutral language. Ms. Davis asked  
12 where he noticed them in the document. Commissioner Bumbarger pointed to an example  
13 in the document. Mr. Boughan mentioned that staff will clean up the document after re-  
14 viewing each chapter. Ms. Arai added that the staff created a running list of minor edits to  
15 the document. That suggestion will be added to the list to identify the edits needed as dif-  
16 ferent staff work on various chapters.  
17

18 Commissioner Pestinger asked about Appendix A and wanted clarification on whether  
19 the discussion on the content was appropriate during the meeting. Ms. Davis stated that  
20 the staff is looking for a thumbs up on the changes made, and then that chapter will be set  
21 aside for now. Ms. Arai added that staff reached out to the Squaxin, Nisqually, and Che-  
22 halis tribes and asked to include a narrative for their tribe. The Squaxin tribe provided  
23 one, which was included in the appendix. The other tribes may do so at their discretion.  
24

25 Commissioner Casino mentioned he looked through the list of programs and documents  
26 referenced in the appendix. Often, he has seen the language "You can purchase this from  
27 TRPC." He continued that most citizens wouldn't want to purchase documents and  
28 wanted to ensure anything linked would be available to the community members and the  
29 Planning Commission. Ms. Davis stated that the information would be available to the  
30 public and the Planning Commission. Further discussion ensued surrounding older docu-  
31 ments that may only have a hard copy available and fees associated with printing out docu-  
32 ments.  
33

34 Commissioner Pestinger cited Appendix C, page C-22 Section F: The Olympia Airport  
35 Master Plan. He believed that should fall under transportation section A. He wondered if  
36 that should be in the discussion since the transportation chapter will go through a revision  
37 during the periodic update. Ms. Davis said the change was made during the 2021 Tum-  
38 water Joint Plan Update by reconfiguring landing pattern zones. Ms. Arai asked if the  
39 Planning Commission wanted the airport referenced in Appendix C, the transportation  
40 chapter. Further discussion occurred about how the Olympia Airport, which falls under  
41 the Port of Olympia jurisdiction, would be referenced in the Comprehensive Plan.  
42

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

Commissioner Pestinger cited the county's history and what was missing. He mentioned Chief Leschi and his story's inclusion in the county's history, even if the tribe does not offer it. He continued that history generally includes stories of the area's founding "fathers"; however, the workers rarely are mentioned. He pointed out the area's strong movements surrounding logging and unionization history. He mentioned The Wobblies and The Centralia Massacre. While that event was not in Thurston County, many similar events happened here. He would like to see some of the more significant events included. Ms. Davis asked for a list of references for use. He stated he would provide them. Ms. Arai added that staff attended the Nisqually River Council Meeting. Once the chapters are close to completion, the staff has a meeting scheduled for a larger conversation regarding the Comprehensive Plan. She spoke about the running list of questions established and will ask if they would like to include Chief Leschi's story in the 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 a replacement word. Further discussion took place about 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 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 considered what warehouses could be used for and whether those alternative businesses were included in that subset. Ms. Arai answered no, believing the consultants had looked at the different industrial codes. That, combined with transportation, looked at the large-scale warehouse distribution centers with larger parcels and highway access. She mentioned that the consultant team worked backward 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 backward from the trends they saw and provided different scenarios for the BoCC and the community to discuss what they would like to see. Commissioner Casino asked if when the consultant looked at the inventory, they were 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 remaining four hundred acres represent undeveloped land due to flood plains, public ownership, critical areas, and the like.

Commissioner Bumbarger clarified whether the study showed that the need was not more than what was currently available. Ms. Arai replied that the study found that the nuances of what is available and what will be needed will highly depend on the county's economic development plan and vision. There may not be enough land of a particular size or readily available access to utilities. Looking only at acreage is not enough to determine the land available for the specific type of economic development the county may want to see.



Further discussion succeeded regarding the demand for industrial lands, the parcel size, access to utilities, and what docket projects were included in the study. Commissioner Halverson asked if the available nineteen hundred acres excluded lands that have agricultural use. Ms. Arai stated that the study would have included the land zoned industrial regardless of the use.

Commissioner Pestinger spoke about employment opportunities and the type of jobs warehousing may bring to a county. He referenced Commissioner Hansen's story from a year ago stating he remembered Lewis County concluding that growing warehouses and warehouse jobs were not good for the local economy at all and asked Commissioner Hansen to share the story. Commissioner Hansen explained the details of the story for the new planning commissioners. Ms. Arai said that the study touched on the history of wages in the warehouse and manufacturing field in Thurston County. Discussion followed, which included topics such as jobs versus employment, pay gaps, and the state's median income related to Thurston County.

Chair Day asked how far off the mark the county is in terms of the types of parcels and utilities available. How much of a reduction in the number of acres available? Ms. Arai replied that the staff does not have the technical skill to speculate whether the county is optimal in terms of utility readiness. The number in the study reflected county-wide, including in the cities, UGAs, and rural areas. She continued that public comment supporting any policy made by the county to take active steps in establishing new areas of economic development where utilities are needed and mitigating for critical areas would be the best route. Commissioner Day clarified that the policies wouldn't be pulling in new industrial lands; it would be incentivizing the development of the land, and then the utility expansion would have to be a part of that. Ms. Arai referred to Maytown and the surrounding area zoned for industrial use. However, the land could be underutilized if not connected to sewer or water. Ms. Arai mentioned Appendix F of the Industrial Lands Study and how it broke down the number of parcels available per size and whether they are utility-ready. Further discussion followed regarding traffic, quality of jobs, storm/wastewater treatment facilities, and previous docket projects.

### **Continued Business**

#### **7. 8:06 P.M. General Thurston 2045 Update** (Staff: Ashely Arai)

Ms. Arai explained that the climate and housing meetings between staff and the consultant team have happened. The consultants are trying to map out an outreach strategy to reach community members in the south county. The staff is considering an open house summit in the Grand Mound/Rochester and Yelm area in the first or second week of June. The date will be shared with the Planning Commission once established. Commissioner Pestinger asked who the regulatory oversight is of the Chehalis Western Trail within Thurston County and if that falls within the Comprehensive Plan. He brings up the topic due to the advancement of electronic/combustion engine bikes and scooters. Mr. Boughan replied that it would not fall within the comprehensive plan. It would likely fall within the Parks Department's general rules or policies, and the enforcement would fall under 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)*  
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8 Ms. Arai announced that a senior planning position was posted. She continued that the  
9 role would focus on engagement and strategic planning. The person who fills the role will  
10 oversee the Education and Outreach team and the employees who work on policy. She  
11 also included an update on the new county manager's first day of employment and invited  
12 the Planning Commission to the meet and greet on April 5 from 4:30–6:00 P.M.  
13

14 Mr. Boughan mentioned that the comprehensive and developmental dockets comment pe-  
15 riod has closed and provided the next steps. He highlighted that over thirteen hundred  
16 comments were received in the comment period, much higher than in any previous cycle.  
17 He attributed the influx of comments to a new survey-style comment form, a consolidated  
18 webpage, and the outreach effort from the county staff and other parties of interest.  
19

20 **9. 8:18 P.M. CALENDAR**  
21

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

24 *April 17, 2024: Work Session #11: Thurston 2045 - Capital Facilities (6) & Utilities (7)*  
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26 **10. 8:19 P.M. GOOD OF THE ORDER**  
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28 Commissioner Pestinger updated the Commission on the Rules & Procedure subcommit-  
29 tee. Staff provided the Microsoft Word copy and edits they felt were appropriate. He  
30 mentioned having the redlined version for the Planning Commission to discuss at the next  
31 meeting.  
32

33 Commissioner Nelson mentioned the calf tours on his farm on March 30 and April 13  
34 from 10:00 - 1:00 P.M.  
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36 Commissioner Fishburn explained that the Timberland Regional Library is hosting a free  
37 drop-in service and support from the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project at the main li-  
38 brary on April 12 from 2:00–4:30 P.M. Also, the Hispanic Round Table will be planning  
39 the Latino Youth Summit and looking for people interested in planning. The meeting will  
40 be held at Equal Latin. The date and time had escaped him.  
41

42 Commissioner Hansen mentioned that the Port of Olympia's new executive director had  
43 started. There will be a community meet and greet on March 27 from 5:30–6:30 P.M.,  
44 which he believes will be held at the Percival Plaza Olympics Room. For more infor-  
45 mation, go to the Port of Olympia's website.  
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3 **11. 8:27 P.M ADJOURN**  
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5 With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:27 P.M by Chair Day.  
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15 Prepared by Tosha Knight  
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Derek Day, Chair