

Whatcom County Council Planning and Development Committee

**COUNTY COURTHOUSE
311 Grand Avenue, Ste #105
Bellingham, WA 98225-4038
(360) 778-5010**



Committee Minutes - Final

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

1:35 PM

Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers

**HYBRID MEETING - MAY BEGIN EARLY (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE
REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil, OR
CALL 360.778.5010)**

COUNCILMEMBERS

Todd Donovan
Ben Elenbaas
Jon Scanlon

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Cathy Halka, AICP, CMC

Call To Order

Committee Chair Ben Elenbaas called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 3 - Todd Donovan, Ben Elenbaas, and Jon Scanlon

Also Present: Tyler Byrd and Mark Stremmer

Announcements

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2024-785](#) Discussion of and request for motion on recommendation for 2024 Open Space applications

Alexander Harris, Planning and Development Services Department, read from a presentation (on file) and he and the following person answered questions regarding public access in the Open Space Farm and Agricultural Conservation Land (OSFAC) and the Bellingham County Club and other golf courses:
 - Christine Larsen, Assessor's Office
Harris reviewed each of the four properties under consideration. He and the following people answered questions:
 - Lauren Templeton, Planning and Development Services Department
 - Christine Larsen
They discussed with Councilmembers that the RJ Group property would not be able to go back to its previous designation if this designation is denied, that the owners would have to pay seven years of back-taxes if the application is not approved and they are unenrolled from Open Space altogether, whether the property could potentially be developed, what caused that property to not be recommended for approval, and the wish of some Councilmembers that the back taxes could be waived.

Harris spoke about the remaining applications and answered if a property being designated forestland means it will be forested at some point. He stated the owner has to demonstrate that they are planning to commercially log the forest in the future. He spoke about mapping open space parcels and stated they are starting to receive feedback on different ways public access

can be managed on these properties and they will eventually publish a map that shows where the properties are and that links to the rules for each one.

Donovan moved that they recommend approval of the two properties that were recommended by staff and the Planning Commission.

Councilmembers and Council staff discussed that this item is requesting a motion for approval tonight and Donovan repeated his motion.

Donovan's motion that the Request for Motion that they recommend approval of the two properties that were recommended by staff and the Planning Commission carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Donovan, Elenbaas, and Scanlon

Nay: 0

Motion approved that they recommend approval of the two properties that were recommended by staff and the Planning Commission.

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Ben Elenbaas-via email 11/27/2024

Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

Ben Elenbaas, Committee Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Kristi Felbinger

SIGNED COPY ON FILE

