

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, April 28, 2026

11:30 AM

Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers

**HYBRID MEETING - MAY BEGIN EARLY/LATE - ADJOURNS BY 12:00 P.M.
(PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT
www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil, OR CALL 360.778.5010); AGENDA
REVISION 4.24.2026**

COUNCILMEMBERS

Elizabeth Boyle
Barry Buchanan
Ben Elenbaas
Kaylee Galloway
Jessica Rienstra
Jon Scanlon
Mark Stremmler

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Cathy Halka, AICP, CMC

Call To Order

Committee Chair Jessica Rienstra called the meeting to order at 11:48 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 7 - Elizabeth Boyle, Barry Buchanan, Ben Elenbaas, Kaylee Galloway, Jessica Rienstra, Jon Scanlon, and Mark Stremler

Announcements

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2026-330](#) Resolution approving recommendations on Open Space applications

Rienstra stated one of the applications was removed.

Alexander Harris, Planning and Development Services Department, read from a presentation (on file). He gave an overview of the open space land program, how the public benefit rating system (PBRs) works, and that they are in the process of updating it (after 35 years). He spoke about the open space criteria and how it is relevant to the application they will be considering today. When there is a property that has documented endangered species, the department automatically recommends approval and with no public access.

He spoke about the applications that were submitted and stated the OSP2025-003 application for the BP property was withdrawn. For the OSP2025-002 Lane application, the landowners submitted a petition for waiver of public access and the petition was supported by the Whatcom Land Trust. He spoke about the property, the landowner's request, and how this case intertwined with other processes (fish passage barrier culvert removal) happening in Public Works.

Elenbaas stated, as he looks at the State law, it does not look to him like public access is required, even for this type of scenario.

Harris answered questions about the scoring formula, whether any other mechanism was considered in order to conserve this land, if there is a mechanism in place that, once approved, they can come up with a public access plan for a property, and whether approving this prevents building a trail. Harris stated that will be something they consider in the open space update.

Galloway moved and Scanlon seconded that the SUBSTITUTE Resolution,

which approves the Lane open space application with waiver of public access requirements, be **RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL**. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Jessica Rienstra-via email 5/7/2026

Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

Jessica Rienstra, Committee Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Kristi Felbinger

SIGNED COPY ON FILE