

# **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 9, 2024  
11:15 AM  
Hybrid Meeting**

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY NOON; MAY BEGIN EARLY  
(PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT  
[www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil](http://www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil), OR CALL 360.778.5010)**

### **COUNCILMEMBERS**

Todd Donovan  
Ben Elenbaas  
Jon Scanlon

### **CLERK OF THE COUNCIL**

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

## **Call To Order**

Committee Chair Ben Elenbaas called the meeting to order at 11:31 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

## **Roll Call**

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

Also Present: Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, Kaylee Galloway, and Mark Stremmler

## **Announcements**

## **Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council**

1. [AB2024-245](#) Resolution docketing Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulation amendments

The following people spoke and answered questions:

- Mark Personius, Planning and Development Services Department Director, gave an overview.
- Lucan Clark, Planning and Development Services Department, read from a presentation (on file) about completed items removed from the docket, new docket items, and previously docketed items that are still active.
- Cliff Strong, Planning and Development Services Department, answered questions.

Personius answered whether there is a timeline posted for items that are new on the docket and those that are still remaining so that the public can see when they will come up. He stated when you docket something there is no timeline associated with it. It is just a giant to-do list and the Planning Department has to figure out what they can process efficiently given their resources and the other work on their plate.

Scanlon stated he thinks there are still things to look at with Cherry Point. As the Parks Department brings on a new multimodal trail planner, that may reopen some opportunities with the Coast Millennium Trail. The Birch Bay Parks and Recreation District also has some ideas for some of the connections between Blaine and Birch Bay. Since BP has acquired property in the area, he would like to get back to discussions on that land and to bring the Lummi Nation into the conversation as well.

Personius stated they are actively working with Parks and Recreation, as part of the Comprehensive Plan update, to specifically look at the regional

trail system, and that is how they envision keeping that conversation alive. Cliff Strong has had some outreach already with Parks on those issues.

Strong suggested maybe amending the language of the docket item because it says “Review and, if necessary, revise county code and the Comprehensive Plan,” and he does not think they need to do that. He stated he thinks our codes and Comprehensive Plan are set up properly already and the issue is whether the Council adopts the final plan for the Coast Millennium Trail and/or puts money toward purchasing easements.

Elenbaas stated they received an email regarding new ownership of the property and would recommend that Parks reach out to the new owners and see if they are more willing to participate than the previous owners were.

Donovan asked whether the Mineral Resource Lands (MRL) item at the bottom of the list is going anywhere, because they have done a Comprehensive Plan update since it was added and it is still on the list. He also asked about the timing of the Heavy Impact Industrial (HII) Zone Uses within City Urban Growth Areas (UGA) matter and when there are going to be opportunities for the public to be engaged with that.

Personius stated, the for MRL docket item, there were several site-specific ones that had been put on the docket some years ago and which had been delayed after a notice of additional requirements. There is no particular timeframe for the item, so what they have done is add a county-wide MRL land review process to create a bigger bucket and look at all the MRLs. They are hoping to address those issues further than they have been able to in the past. For the HII, he stated they understand it is an issue of particular public interest so they anticipate initiating that review this year. It is just looking at potential changes to the HII zone uses where that HII zone lies within a city’s UGA. He answered whether the review includes a consideration of changing the HII designation in some of those places and he stated the Council resolution language was very specific about just looking at the uses allowed in the HII zone so that is what they are going to focus their review on as part of that particular docket item. They will look at other issues as a part of the Comprehensive Plan update as well so he is sure they will get some public input on that as a part of that process.

Personius answered whether the cannabis retail item is for a specific UGA or whether they are looking at all UGAs. He stated he thinks they are looking at all UGAs and he described what they will be focusing on.

Scanlon spoke about looking into ways to allow cannabis retail in Point Roberts. He also asked about the status of the wedding and special events item.

Elenbaas stated that is mainly his hold up because there are some concerns, with the way the language was written, that it would hinder how business is run right now. He wants to make sure the new regulation is not going to shut anyone down.

Personius answered more questions about the MRL review process, how many of the docketed issues will be addressed through the Comprehensive Plan process, and which will be on an independent course and why.

**Donovan moved that the Resolution be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Donovan, Elenbaas, and Scanlon

**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 12:01 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

**Ben Elenbaas-via email 5/2/2024**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

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Ben Elenbaas, Committee Chair

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Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

SIGNED COPY ON FILE

