



**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
October 10, 2024**

Public Hearing and Work Session

1

1 **Call to Order**

2 The meeting was called to order by Whatcom County Planning Commission Chair, Kelvin  
3 Barton at 6:32 p.m.

4 **Roll Call**

5 **Present:** Kelvin Barton, Suneeta Eisenberg, Atul Deshmane, Jim Hansen, Frank James,  
6 Dominic Mocerri, Scott Van Dalen

7 **Absent:** Stephen Jackson, Julie Jefferson

8 **Staff Present:** Steve Roberge, Lucas Clark, Amy Keenan, Cliff Strong, Garrett Smith,  
9 Jacqui Sullivan, Douglas Ranney, Kraig Olason, Rod Lamb, Bennet Knox, Rob Ney, Donnell  
10 Tanksley, and Aileen Kogut-Aguon

11 **Department Update**

12 Steve Roberge, Assistant Director of Planning and Development Services (PDS), spoke on  
13 the attendance email that was sent out earlier in the day. There were some formula issues  
14 with the spreadsheet and an updated sheet will be sent out after the meeting. Mr.  
15 Roberge mentioned the resolution the Commission sent forward to Council regarding the  
16 Heavy Impact Industrial Zone (HII). Council is set to discuss it at the next Council  
17 meeting on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. The next items for the Planning Commission meeting on October  
18 24<sup>th</sup> will be Open Space applications and Lummi Height limitations.

19 Aileen Kogut-Aguon, PDS Coordinator and Planning Commission Secretary, presented the  
20 Commission website to the Commissioners and showed them where to find the meeting  
21 materials and public comments for each meeting on the county website. A link to the  
22 Planning Commission page will be sent out to the Commission after the meeting.

23 Mr. Roberge will be leaving Whatcom County at the end of the month.

24 **Open Session Public Comment**

25 There was no public comment.

26 **Commissioner Comments**

27 Commissioner Deshmane stated he is sorry to hear about Steve's departure and extends  
28 best wishes.

29 Commissioner Hansen reported a discussion with council member Galloway about HII in  
30 Bellingham.

31 Commissioner Mocerri asked Steve about his replacement. Steve indicated Mark Personius  
32 will be covering the immediate needs of long-range planning.

33 **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

34 **Timestamp: 18:41**

35 **1 Commissioner Eisenberg moved to approve the minutes from September 26<sup>th</sup>**

36 **Commissioner Mocerri seconded.**

37 **Roll Call Vote: Ayes- Eisenberg, Mocerri, Van Dalen, Deshmane, Barton, Hansen**  
38 **Abstain- James (Ayes- 6; Nays- 0; Abstain- 1). The motion carried.**



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1 **Capital Improvement Program (CIP)**

2 **Timestamp: 18:43**

3 Lucas Clark, PDS Long Range Planner I, presented the Seven-Year Capital Improvement  
4 Program presentation. The county Comprehensive Plan calls for an update of the six-year  
5 CIP every other year. The six-year CIP is being updated in 2024 along with the County  
6 budget. The county requested recommendations from Planning Commission prior to taking  
7 the CIP on to Council for review and approval.

8 **a) Public Hearing Regarding: Capital Improvement Program**

9 **Timestamp: 18:52**

10 Ryan Bowman provided public comment.

11 **b) Work Session: Capital Improvement Program**

12 **Timestamp: 18:54**

13 Commissioner Eisenberg acknowledged Mr. Bowman for his public comment. She asked  
14 that staff consider having a conversation with facilities projects on how to mitigate and  
15 adapt to building codes from the international residential code and making sure to not  
16 only decarbonize but also decolonize the use of native plants in revitalizing culture and  
17 language.

18 Commissioner Hansen requested to see each budget chart so Commissioners can discuss  
19 section by section. He then asked about the budget for parks, trails and facilities and if  
20 there is any consideration on local tax on guns and ammo since lead remediation is a big  
21 part of their budget.

22 Bennet Knox, Whatcom County Parks Director, responded to Commissioner Hansen's  
23 inquiry by explaining their process in applying for grants through Ecology to cover  
24 approximately 50% of the budget. Parks currently do not have plans for the taxes  
25 Commissioner Hansen spoke of, but that is something that can be considered.

26 Commissioner James asked why the county is spending a large amount of money for a  
27 facility that is being utilized by a small portion of the citizens.

28 Mr. Knox responded stating that this funding is just for the lead clean up that has  
29 accumulated for the past 50 years.

30 Commissioner Hansen weighed in on the question from Commissioner James, stating that  
31 if the county does not provide a facility for safe shooting, the county occupants are more  
32 likely to do unsafe shooting all over the county.

33 Commissioner Hansen asked why there was "other sources" listed under the Corrections'  
34 budget table. He stated that it seemed vague that it was not specific as to where the  
35 money would be going to. He also asked about the juvenile division.

36 Rob Ney, Project and Operations Manager for Whatcom County Facilities Management,  
37 outlined the bonding process for the funding of the new jail and cited that while the  
38 bonding covers the square footage that was originally outlined, there was additional  
39 funding that could be requested for proposals for things that have yet to be designed.  
40 Donnell Tanksley, County Sheriff, responded in regards to the juvenile court, stating that  
41 it is under the supervision of the superior court and is separate from the actual sheriff's  
42 office, thus being a separate budget.



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1 Commissioner Deshmane addressed the public comment regarding aspects of the CIP  
2 being incomplete due to the Comp Plan being incomplete.

3 Mr. Clark responded that the CIP has to be updated every two years and amended every  
4 year, regardless of the Comp Plan. After the Comp Plan update, there may be  
5 amendments to the CIP.

6 **2Commissioner Deshmane moved** to recommend approval to the county council along  
7 with the finding of facts.

8 **Commissioner James seconded.**

9 **Roll Call Vote: Ayes- Hansen, Deshmane, James, moceri, van Dalen, Eisenberg,**  
10 **Barton**

11 **(Ayes - 7; Nays - 0; Abstain - 0). The motion carried.**

12 **Titles 20 and 22: SSB 5290 Work Session**

13 **Timestamp: 19:23**

14 Cliff Strong, PDS Senior Planner, provided a recap of the amendments to Titles 20 and 22  
15 to comply with the state requirements for SSB 5290. Mr. Strong then reviewed those  
16 sections of the draft code that staff updated based on the BIAWC comments, then  
17 requested that the Commission recommends approval and move it on to Council.

18 **3Commissioner Deshmane moved** to adopt amendments to Titles 20 and 22 to comply  
19 with SSB5290 along with the findings of facts.

20 **Commissioner Hansen seconded.**

21 **Roll Call Vote: Ayes- James, Moceri, van Dalen, Eisenberg, Hansen, Deshmane,**  
22 **Barton**

23 **(Ayes - 7; Nays - 0; Abstain - 0). The motion carried.**

24 **Timestamp: 19:52**

25 **Unfinished Business**

26 Commissioner Chair Barton spoke on the attendance log that was presented to the  
27 Commission via email before the meeting.

28 Mr. Roberge cited section 2.4 of the business rules: "Four consecutive absences per year  
29 may be grounds for recommending removal of a Board Member to the County Council."

30 Commissioner Van Dalen mentioned the calculations on the spreadsheet were off and  
31 Secretary Kogut-Aguon agreed to edit the document and resend to the Commission.

32 Commissioner Chair Barton stated that the Commission will look at the document and will  
33 discuss it further at the next meeting.

34 **Adjournment**

35 **Timestamp:**

36 The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

37 Minutes prepared by Aileen Kogut-Aguon.

38 WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION ATTEST:

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40 \_\_\_\_\_  
Kelvin Barton, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_   
Aileen Kogut-Aguon, Secretary