

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, February 20, 2024

1:55 PM

Hybrid Meeting

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 2:25 P.M., 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

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

Call To Order

Committee Chair Ben Elenbaas called the meeting to order at 1:55 p.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 Stremmer

Announcements

Special Presentation

1. [AB2024-134](#) Report from the Planning and Development Services Department

Mark Personius, Planning and Development Services Department Director, gave an overview on the following:

- A permitting overview for last year
- Major permitting projects in the pipeline
- The status of the Comprehensive Plan update
- Personnel and staffing in the Planning Department

Permitting Overview

Permit application numbers remained steady in 2023 compared to the year before. Commercial building permit numbers remained about the same, detached structure permits increased, and residential single-family building permits took a slight dip. Administrative use permits increased significantly, primarily due to an increase in accessory dwelling units that were permitted last year. They have a new building code update coming from the State Building Code Council that will come before this Council in March, which is driving an uptick in permit applications coming in prior to requirements that will go into effect after March 15th.

Major Project Permits in the pipeline

He stated major project permits coming up include ABC Recycling, and answered whether it is considered a major project permit application. He stated he believes it is. He updated on activity at Cherry Point, including the Intalco demolition project. He updated on Petrogas for which they anticipate permit application submittals in the second quarter of this year, a sustainable jet fuel project, and improvements at Phillips 66 that will enable them to import renewable diesel fuels.

He answered what the uptick in permits due to the building code update is

about, whether we are starting to see anything about the hydrogen hub at Cherry Point, and whether he thinks by removing additional barriers, they would see an even greater increase in Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in unincorporated areas. He stated there are a couple of bills in the Legislature that would promote more of those in unincorporated areas.

Comprehensive Plan Update

He spoke about the upcoming Comprehensive Plan update, including the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) scoping process, the City & County Elected Officials meetings, outreach to 17 different advisory committees, work on the population, housing, and employment technical reports, and work on the Public Participation Plan. He answered questions about whether the agendas at the City & County Elected Officials Comprehensive Plan update meetings will be different every time and when the next meeting will be, whether they can communicate to the advisory groups that this will not be their only opportunity to participate, the engagement framework with the Tribes, and how to help find solutions in the permitting process.

Staffing Updates

Personius stated they have filled a Natural Resources Manager position with Garrett Smith and he introduced him. They also reclassified the Senior Planner position to a Projects Manager position to help manage some of the big new projects. He answered questions about upcoming projects, and what kind of permits Petrogas is applying for.

This agenda item was REPORTED.

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Ben Elenbaas-via email 3/1/2024

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Ben Elenbaas, Committee Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

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