

Whatcom County Council Planning and Development Committee

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



Committee Minutes - Draft Minutes

Wednesday, November 9, 2022

3:20 PM

Hybrid Meeting

**PLEASE NOTE START TIME CHANGE TO 3 P.M. HYBRID MEETING -
ADJOURNS BY 4:30 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
Kaylee Galloway

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

Call To Order

Committee member Todd Donovan called the meeting to order at 3 p.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 3 - Todd Donovan, Ben Elenbaas, and Kaylee Galloway

Absent: None

Also Present: Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, Carol Frazey, and Kathy Kershner

Announcements

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2022-597](#) Discussion of the Buildable Lands Report

The following people presented (presentation on file) on some of the key findings of the Buildable Lands Report (BLR) issued in July 2022 and answered questions:

- Matt Aamot, Planning and Development Services Department
- Chris Behee, City of Bellingham

They answered whether it is the Urban Growth Area (UGA) in Bellingham city limits which is not annexed that is not meeting the planned density, whether the “Planned and Achieved Densities” information in the presentation is really a density chart and not necessarily a chart that tells whether the city of Bellingham is building enough units to take care of the population, why are we planning for densities of 6.0 units per acre for the County portion (UGA) within the City of Bellingham when that is not even possible, whether any of the acreage under the achieved density column on the “Planned and Achieved Densities” slide flooded during the last two floods and whether we will continue to develop in those areas, why the consideration of available land being subject to flood or other climate-related impacts would not be relevant for the BLR as we are looking to project for the next eight years, whether the two floods in 2021 went above the floodway (which the cities used discretion on whether to include in deductions from the land available) and the flood plain, whether the numbers on the slide titled “Population” are taking into account the city and the UGA or just the UGA, where they got the population estimations, and why developers are not building on the buildable lands in the city in light of the housing problem.

Kershner stated she encourages the City of Bellingham to make it an emergency to get as much housing capacity and zoning as possible and as quickly as possible.

The speakers answered whether it has been taken into account how many houses are second homes (not primary residences) and vacant for a large part of a year, how on paper it seems like we are meeting our goals for density and growth and then in reality we are still experiencing hardship and crisis, what the reasonable measures are to achieve densities in Birch Bay and Blaine, what happens if we increase the densities but the market is not going that way and people are not developing at those densities, whether reasonable measures would be adopted during the Comprehensive Plan update, and whether there are things that can get docketed for reasonable measures without having to wait for the Comprehensive Plan process.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2022-586](#) Discussion and motion to approve the Public Participation Plan for Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulation Amendments

Matt Aamot, Planning and Development Services Department, briefed the Councilmembers. He stated project D-8 (Lake Whatcom Watershed Overlay District Amendments) was approved by Council in Ordinance 2022-061 so this project should be deleted.

Galloway stated an ordinance regarding wireless service facilities is also on the Council's agenda tonight and asked if those references should be deleted from the plan also if the ordinance is adopted.

Councilmembers asked if they dealt with deleted projects D-18 Surface Mining of Dry Meander Zones and D-17 Surface Mining Pipeline Buffer.

Galloway moved to recommend to the full Council that they approve the Public Participation Plan for Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulation Amendments striking projects PLN2021-00005 (Wireless Communication Facilities) and PLN2021-00008 (Lake Whatcom Watershed Overlay District Amendments).

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Galloway, Elenbaas, and Donovan

Nay: 0

Aamot answered whether he cross-checked the list of “Governmental/Quasi-Governmental Groups” with the Resolution establishing priorities for Whatcom County's 2025 Comprehensive Plan update that Council approved in August. He stated he did.

This agenda item was FORWARDED TO COUNCIL WITH RECOMMENDED MOTION(S).

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:49 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Ben Elenbaas, Committee Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription