

**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, December 6, 2022**

**2:40 PM**

**Hybrid Meeting**

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 3:40 P.M.; MAY BEGIN EARLY  
(PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON AT 311 GRAND AVENUE SUITE 105, SEE REMOTE  
JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT [www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil](http://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 Chair Ben Elenbaas called the meeting to order at 2:41 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, and Carol Frazey

## **Announcements**

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

Elenbaas asked that they go out of agenda order and discuss this item first.

1. [AB2022-627](#) Resolution approving recommendations on three applications for open space current use assessment

Joshua Fleischmann, Planning and Development Services Department, presented and answered whether the OSP2021-00004 - Intalco #1 acreage is in the Heavy Industrial Zone area but probably could not be utilized because of wetlands, and whether all three applications had both Planning Commission and staff recommendations in favor.

***Donovan moved*** that the Resolution be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL.

Fleischman answered why the Intalco land was not already zoned as Open Space Land and whether there will be a difference in tax collection, whether the Open Space designation on the Commercial Forestry property (OSP2021-00003 Whatcom Land Trust) will affect the ability to harvest, whether that property would still be in the inventory of the County's resource lands if it is no longer harvestable, and whether the Open Space designation would stop Whatcom Land Trust from actively managing the forest if they decided to do that.

**Donovan's motion that the Resolution be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL carried by the following vote:**

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

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

## Committee Discussion

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

The following people spoke:

- Perry Eskridge, Whatcom County Association of REALTORS
- Darcy Jones, Jones Engineers, Inc.

They voiced concerns that the report has no discussion about housing availability and affordability and no reasonable measures included for a housing affordability problem, the need for a specific finding addressing infrastructure gaps, constraints on lands they are placing future density on which may take away from real housing that could actually happen, and permitted single family housing which may not necessarily be truly detached single family homes and may not meet the 2016 Comprehensive Plan goals.

The following people answered questions:

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

They answered whether the City of Bellingham is counting a remodeled basement Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) as a single family residence, whether the Council should be amending the findings of fact or requesting the Planning Department to evaluate the questions and see if they want to change their findings of fact so that there is a process and the facts are substantiated, finding a way to close the gap between what is being said on paper and what the community-lived experience is, what the City of Blaine is saying about reasonable measures and whether the Council can do anything if a city says their numbers are fine and they do not want to add land capacity, how we fix this so that our documents (which paint a picture that everything is good and there are not a lot of reasonable measures we need to take in regards to available housing) match what we need to be doing on the ground, and a concern that 85% of the marketplace is looking for a single family residence while 85% of the permits in the City of Bellingham were multi-family and that does not match.

Councilmembers and staff discussed the next steps, having the discussion in Committee again and coming back with some revised findings, and pulling the related item (AB2022-641) from introduction to give time to amend the findings.

*Donovan moved* to recommend that the Council pull the item from Introduction.

Councilmembers discussed whether they will need more than one Committee session to be able to vote on it, and whether the County would be out of compliance with any sort of deadlines if they push it off until the end of January.

The motion carried by the following vote:  
Aye: 3 - Donovan, Galloway, and Elenbaas  
Nay: 0

**This agenda item was DISCUSSED AND MOTION(S) APPROVED.**

**Items Added by Revision**

There were no agenda items added by revision.

**Other Business**

There was no other business.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:43 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

**Ben Elenbaas-via email 12/9/2022**

\_\_\_\_\_  
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