Kitsap County Planning Commission – March 11, 2008

MINUTES
KITSAP COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
Administration Building - Commissioner’s Chambers
March 11, 2008, 9:00 am

These minutes are intended to provide a summary of the meeting flow and content and should not be relied upon for specific statements from individuals at the meeting.

The Kitsap County Planning Commission met on the above-stated date at the Kitsap County Administration Building – Commissioner’s Chambers located at 619 Division Street, Port Orchard, WA 98366.

Members present: Chair Fred Depee, John Taylor, Vice Chair Linda Paralez, Michael Gustavson, Tom Nevins, Lou Foritano, Lary Coppola and John Hough.
Staff present: Scott Diener, Mike Barth, Nicole Ellis, Dave Greetham, Steve Heacock, Patty Charnas, Angie Silva, Jim Bolger, Larry Keeton, Karla Castillo and Planning Commission Secretary Amanda Walston.
Others present: Tom Powers (CENCOM)

8:59:17

A. Call Meeting to Order, Introductions

B. Adoption of Agenda

Depee: Hearing no comments or changes, the agenda is officially adopted.

C. Public Comments

Depee: Hearing no comments or requests from the public, we will move on.

D. Approval of Minutes

• February 26, 2008

A motion is made by Commissioner Paralez and seconded by Commissioner Foritano to approve the minutes of February 26, 2008.

The VOTE:
Yes: 7
Abstain: Lary Coppola

The Motion Carries

9:00:25

E. Director Update: Scott Diener – Director, DCD

Adams: Gives background, will work with Suquamish Citizens Advisory Council to start.

Diener: Heather will also assist with Code Development. Special Projects is working on the project also, but Titles 16, 17 and 21 will be picked up by Long Range.

(Distributes article on the Growth Management Act’s effect on housing costs).

9:02:10

Diener: At a prior meeting, Chair Depee asked for guidelines on speaker time allotments in public hearings. (Reviews process memo sent to Chair Depee).

First you must establish the number of testifiers. Standard format is to take the number of individuals on the sign-up sheet and add approximately 10 to the total to account for those who have not signed up. The second factor is the topic of discussion and the level of detail or controversy that may be involved; which may necessitate extended time allotments. Minimum testimony should be three minutes.

The Chair also has discretion to ask speakers to conclude if they appear to be off track, repeating comments or using the podium as a political platform. If time is not an issue, you can even allow unlimited testimony time. Ultimately the Chair decides with input from colleagues.

The Planning Commission’s role in a public hearing is to listen and gauge the public’s feelings. To this extent, you may ask clarifying questions, but you are not to debate the merits of testimony or positions, with the public or among yourselves.

A few other guidelines that are helpful include: call speakers in order of the sign-up sheet, avoid friendly banter with the public as they walk to the podium to avoid issues with the appearance of fairness, suggest that the public recognize earlier testimony given so as not to repeat at length a comment or opinion already given, and be firm but polite when instructing the public to end testimony and adhere to the time limits.

I will forward this memo on to Chair Depee, and after his review, I will forward it on to the rest of the Planning Commission.

(Depee calls for questions).

9:05:35

Gustavson: Even when setting a limit, not everyone will use the entire time allotted. The objective and reason the public hearing step exists is to allow the Planning Commission and staff to listen and learn from the public. You should be careful when watching the clock and cutting people off after three minutes, this is a democracy and you want to meet the objective of having the testimony.

Diener: That is part of what you and the Chair will help decide. You can also recall speakers who have more to say once everyone has been given their initial chance to speak.
9:06:46

**Nevins:** I have observed that some people who choose not to sign up to speak do so in order to be last to speak or to have the last word. Is it possible we could give a shortened time frame for those who come in at the end?

**Diener:** The sign-in sheet is a tool used to aid the Planning Commission in the process of the hearing. Requiring them to sign up or placing restrictions on those who do not may be a sensitive issue to pursue, but you can discuss it as a Planning Commission.

**Foritano:** When items are complex or very emotional, an option would be for the Chair to explain that there will only be three minutes to speak, but you may also submit a document for inclusion or later consideration. This can be helpful if someone wants to reference studies or other documentation or to give a greater history or background than time would allow.

9:09:00

**Keeton:** Not much new to report. Fees are going well, volumes are a little low but we are doing quite well. February’s revenues are higher than last year. At last night’s Board meeting, they voted to continue the moratorium on Urban Growth Expansion areas and passed ordinance on the wastewater systems, which will go to the Growth Management Hearings Board on March 24th.

**Gustavson:** On that topic, Commissioner Angel made a comment that she is willing to take the issue to Superior Court if the Hearings Board doesn’t approve. Does that mean the moratorium would continue until it is out of Superior Court?

**Keeton:** That would be a question for the Commissioners. I would guess that if that happened, the Board may look at asking us to put some interim ordinances into place. Since this ordinance was patterned after Kingston’s, which was accepted, we are assuming that this one will be accepted as well.

**Taylor:** Has the reduction in work coming through the door allowed you to go back and clean up the current backlog and processes?

9:11:21

**Keeton:** There is not a reduction in work. Our permit activity is actually higher, but they are different kinds of permits. We are still working on the backlog and are moving faster through processes in 2007 and 2008. We are using any extra time on finishing with Paladin process diagrams and how to reconcile County Code with our processes and the steps required. We have also talked to the Board about code and how to revise it to realistically address our issues and still work on process improvements. We will prioritize and go after our top priority items, similar to what Special Projects’ has done.

**Taylor:** Can you put a total number of days it will take

**Keeton:** We are at approximately 31 days.
Nevins: You mentioned possible interim measures if the Hearings Board doesn’t approve our Capital Facilities Plan. I would assume part of that process would involve checking with legal staff to determine whether we have a reasonable approach?

Keeton: It is ultimately a Board decision, and we’ll do what they ask us to. Legal staff would be very involved if we decided to move forward with our approach, examining whether our approach is reasonable. Right now I have hope that our plan will pass.

Depee: With the update of the internet site, the permit status tracking is a key component. When will details be available on who the assigned planner is and what the remaining steps for the permit are?

Keeton: A system upgrade is coming in April or May. We may not ever put the planner name on the site.

Depee: Why?

Keeton: If we list that information, the planners spend a huge amount of time answering questions via phone or email. If we do that, they have less time to actually work on the projects. Instead of figuring out how we can manage those questions with the planners, we want to aim to manage them by providing more accurate, updated information about the project or permit on the website.

Foritano: Does the County have a position on nitrogen emission control on septic systems?

Keeton: Not that I know of. The only bills I know we had discussed or made statements about are an agricultural specialty building bill that would charge $75 for the permit for these buildings. In Kitsap County, the average fee is $750 to $800. There was also a Senate bill we opposed that would require counties to enforce state building code, which we do, but the County could be held liable for not enforcing code in case of an accident.

F. Public Hearing/Deliberations: Addressing Ordinance – Mike Barth, Building Manager, DCD

Barth: The Addressing ordinance before you for consideration is a collaborative effort by the County, cities, Fire District, Sheriff and Cencom. It clarifies and establishes policies for road-naming and moves forward some processes we currently have in place.

This is an effort to prevent issues in future and clean up our system from this point forward. It is not an effort to go back and fix past issues or errors.
Hough: If we are not going back and fixing things, if you have a road with addresses that are missing or out of sequence, or if there is a driveway with four houses and no road name, how will that be handled?

Barth: In cases where there is a current problem, if emergency responders have identified it as it is brought forward as a possible life safety issue, we will go in and look at it and review that instance.

Coppola: Why do some roads have numbers that seem to stop and start over again or suddenly change order on different parts of the same road?

Barth: The County is divided into 6 grids, when roads cross gridlines, numbers re-start. We can’t change the county grids, but we are trying to increase visibility at the point where the road changes.

Coppola questions last county re-addressing effort and recommends other possible models for solution.

Depee closes the floor to questions as this is the public hearing portion of the process and calls for public testimony.

Tom Powers, Cencom: I am here more to answer questions or any concerns anyone has on what the intent was on anything that was of any of the things that was asked for by the collaborative group that put these suggestions forward.

I was informed there were some questions over two word names as opposed to one word names. Basically I want to speak a little bit to the intent of these. Cencom does not have a problem, does not want to limit people’s creativity when coming up with original street names.

We don’t have a problem with two word names that intuitively sound like two word names. We do have a problem with names that sound like they could be one. It is things like Bayview and Clearcreek, that when you hear them, you’re not really sure whether that should be one word or two.

The way the Sound-X system works at Cencom in conjunction with the computer-aided dispatch system, it takes a certain number of correct characters before the computer system is helping the call receiver get that correct, so most of our concern is, I actually brought some examples along such as: Bay Shore Drive NW, which is two words, and then we have Bayview Drive and Baywatch Court, which are one word.

What we are, the main thing I think we are looking for here is the word intuitive. What we’re looking for in street naming is that when somebody hears it the first time, their first guess should be correct.

The other thing that I think came up recently was why we have an objection to using common names, or proper names I should say. Again, it’s a matter of intuitive spelling.
Tom Powers, Cencom: We don’t have a problem with a name like Timothy being used as a street name, it’s intuitive and the moment somebody hears it they know how to spell it correctly. Where we do have a problem with proper names, we have already in the county, Audree Lane (spells Audree), and we have Audrey Avenue (spells Audrey). We have Jennie Avenue spelled with “i-e”. Even relatively short things like Jimi Place (spells Jimi).

So again, what we’re looking for here as the main guideline on all of the points that were requested in here, I think the keyword should be, we’re looking for intuitive spelling on these things. If I can answer any questions as to the intent on the other eight items, I will.

9:29:40

Taylor: So I understand it is your preference that you have it as one word, like Baywatch Court?

Powers: That’s correct. If we know going forward to try a one word option first, it saves the call receiver time.

Hough: Part of the motivation you’ve explained is to assist First Responders in locating, very quickly, the source of an emergency. Can you provide a recent history or track record of people being denied services because of access? Can you give a scale of the issue?

9:30:34

Powers: It’s almost a daily issue, and I’m sorry I don’t have examples in front of me. There are a lot of different confusions over identical street names with the same address ranges. I came from the dispatch floor before I went to the IT department and became the master street address coordinator and I’ve made these mistakes myself on the dispatch floor when I’m talking to somebody. Usually about 40 percent of our calls now are from cell phone, so we’re not getting an address on the computer system of the person we’re talking to except for verbal questions.

What comes to mind are Madison Avenue in Suquamish and Madison Avenue on Bainbridge Island with the same address ranges in certain portions of them. So even when somebody has given us an address and a street name, we’re still not there unless they tell us what community they’re calling us from. There are lots of examples like that, and they come up every day with call receivers and dispatchers. There is a review of everything that is dispatched that takes more than 30 seconds to dispatch, so there are actually quite a bit of examples that could be provided and every one of those is investigated and followed up on.

9:32:07

Foritano: An observation in support; I needed to have a service at my house and much to my surprise, within five blocks of my home, we had three street names with six suffixes for my own street.
Powers: Some of the worst examples we have, not to pick on Bainbridge Island, we have Billpoint Bluff NE, Billpoint Circle NE, Billpoint Crest NE, NE Billpoint Court, NE Billpoint Drive, NE Billpoint Hill, and I’m actually not done yet, it’s like “Okay, we’ve used that, let’s move on and try and find another street name we can use here”.

The other things that are really confusing are when a directional is used as part of a street name. When a call taker hears North Tiger Lake Road, they don’t know whether that’s the word north, in this case that is the word spelled out, it is not a directional it’s part of the street name. As in the case of Northeast West Kingston Road and Northeast West Port Madison Road where directions have to be spelled out as part of the street name or again that Sound-X system that’s supposed to be helping the call receiver doesn’t work.

It’s a lot of memorization; it causes approximately a one year ramp up for new people hired at Cencom. There’s a lot of memorization and geography they have to study and a huge part of that is memorizing these odd street names in these situations and we’re just trying to make that a little bit easier.

Gustavson: The house number specification was listed as black on white, but DCD issues white on blue; they need to be consistent. I have a concern with five jurisdictions and one county all operating together, but no one is in charge of naming the roads. It doesn’t matter to me who it is, but someone has to be named.

You’ve mentioned that there are some places around the county such as Bainbridge and Indianola that have the same road names and addressing ranges, but how many are there? Perhaps that should be addressed. Life safety is a big issue here, and maybe that should be addressed.

Powers: Seven or eight years ago, when enhanced 911, the system, first came to the County, there would have been an opportunity there, and often is when they first bring the system in the first time, to re-address the entire County, but it is an extremely expensive thing to do. And that was, I was not with Cencom at that time, but the best I’ve been able to find out the history of that, it is the fact that we were dealing with five different jurisdictions, the city jurisdictions as well as the County, and all of those are separate addressing authorities.

So, again, what we are trying to do with this collaborative effort by having all of those people involved, we figured we would try to start with a County Ordinance that the other naming jurisdictions would voluntarily adhere to. If there is some way we can specify who those final naming, or a final naming authority. At this point it is not Cencom, the addressing authority is with those individuals.

Gustavson: Somebody needs to take charge and say, if you cannot negotiate an acceptable option; this is the name of the road.
(Depee calls for any other speakers and hearing none, closes the public hearing portion and opens the Deliberations portion of the Addressing Ordinance.)

Barth: Minor changes have been made. On page five, Section 16.60.070, there is an editorial change mentioned. On page seven of eight, the examples listed will read: black on white or white on blue. This will make it consistent with what the County issues.

Gustavson: Which is it, black on white or white on blue?

Barth clarifies that the colors specified are listed as part of an example of contrasting colors that are considered acceptable and will say black on white or white on blue.

A motion is made by Commissioner Nevins and is seconded by Commissioner Paralez to recommend adoption of the Addressing Ordinance, subject to any amendments made and agreed upon.

Taylor asks for clarification on which colors will be required for signs.

Barth: The text of this piece of the ordinance is giving examples of contrasting colors, for example: black on white or white on blue, not specifying a color requirement.

Gustavson: Will you be adding parentheses after each building classification, such as “R” and “U” to reference what they mean?

Barth: On page three, both of these building classifications as well as residential and commercial occupancy classifications are defined.

The VOTE: (to recommend adoption of the Addressing Ordinance, subject to amendments made and agreed upon)

For: Unanimous

The Motion Carries

G. Work Study: Overview of Existing County Code: Trees and Viewsheds – Steve Heacock, Senior Planner, Environmental Review

Heacock: Handout provided regarding County policy on Danger Tree Removal and View Corridor protection. We’ll start with Danger Trees. (Cites Kitsap County Code Section 19.100.130c) The Department may allow danger tree removal where a threat to human life or property is demonstrated. In protected critical areas, a buffer shall be re-planted in an area to be reviewed with Staff and homeowner. We work in unison with the property owner; for eagle related issues we also work with Department of Fish and Wildlife specialists.
Coppola: Who determines when a threat is demonstrated?

Heacock: When it is within a tree length and one half of any habitable structure such as a home, garage, outbuilding or others, it is considered a threat.

Coppola: But who determines the threat?

Heacock: Department of Community Development staff.

Depee: So this is really trying to define what is considered a danger tree and the processes for removal on properties that have critical areas.

So if there are no critical areas, no forest practice application is required to take down a tree that is within a tree length and a half from any structure?

Heacock: Correct.

Gustavson: Questions why the ordinance does not specify that it is danger tree removal within a critical area. The title doesn’t say anything about critical areas.

Heacock: This is the language taken directly from the ordinance.

Gustavson: What science was used to declare a tree length and a half as the distance?

Heacock: Department of Natural Resources guidelines.

Gustavson: I think we are overreaching under the umbrella of environmental stuff when there is no justification.

Heacock: The half a tree length provides more flexibility for safety reasons.

Gustavson: Why? The tree won’t fall there.

Heacock: I have seen instances with high wind storm issues.

Gustavson: But you wouldn’t go up and take down a tree in a high wind storm.

Heacock: We’re not talking about taking down a tree; we’re making a determination on whether it would affect life, limb or property when it falls down in a wind storm event.

Gustavson: Who is liable if it falls and kills someone before the County can decide if the tree can be removed?
Heacock: I think if a concerned public individual had an imminent threat, we would have no problem with them removing the tree.

Coppola and Gustavson call to have that statement written into the ordinance.

9:52:04

Point of order is called by Commissioner Paralez.

Depee: Mr. Heacock will resume his presentation and questions may be asked at the end

Heacock: When a danger tree is within a critical area, the burden of proof is on the property owner to provide an arborist or certified forester to certify that said tree is a danger tree. If yes, we may ask that the tree be modified (trimmed down) so it does not allow wind circumstances or that a high stump is left.

9:55:05

Taylor: For the record, this issue is too complicated. Property owner should be allowed to cut trees if they want to. The Silverdale memorial tree is an example.

Depee: What happens if someone is in violation?

Heacock: If trees are removed on a slope or wetland habitat, Code Compliance can be called. Kitsap is a complaint based County. If called, they will go investigate, if the violation is confirmed, we work with Code Compliance to come up with a resolution.

9:57:10

Coppola: What if this happens on Friday afternoon or after County hours, you say they could take it down if threat is imminent. I’d like to see that in here.

Heacock: If threat is imminent, we can go back and look at the situation later. What we really need to keep an eye on is if it is in an eagle management area.

Coppola: If you are a property owner, why would you take a chance while waiting for the whole process to be completed?

9:58:47

Hough: Our objective should be to protect the critical areas in a reasonable, meaningful way. I find it hard to believe that if someone thinks a hazard tree will fall, risking life or property; that they would run out with a chainsaw and take that risk themselves. Chances are, they would hire a company to come out and do it piece by piece, which takes time. I would oppose language being written in this way that could be abused.

Heacock: What this code really allows is that within a tree and a half, without critical areas on the property, you are allowed to take those trees down. The caveat is if you have critical areas, including eagles and eagle management areas.
**10:01:10**

**Gustavson:** The critical areas ordinance has so many arguments. Someone who knows the code could go down and buy a hundred trees and advance plant and then face the consequences. I think it’s a property rights issue. If I paid for it, I should be able to do what I want with it and they will do what they can to get around it.

**Foritano:** The concept of "my property" and "my rights" may not be as simple as viewed by the property owner. The owner's primary rights can be affected by the County's Critical Areas Ordinance and Homeowners' Association Covenants.

**Coppola:** I think Commissioner Hough may have an idealistic point of view, since he missed the Critical Areas Ordinance process that we all went through. If there is a threat, and it is after county hours, who will be the one to make that determination? I think it is a reasonable question to ask who is liable if something happens while the property owner is waiting for county to make a determination.

**Paralez:** I think the consequences of cutting down the tree in that case are that you will be asked to mitigate the damage to the habitat. So what is the big deal?

**10:05:20**

**Heacock:** A View Corridor issue is a development standard. It is basically a modification to a buffer or a setback. A good example would be someone with a shoreline property that wants to be afforded a potential view of Mount Rainier. We work with applicant to develop a view corridor plan to provide that flexibility in the code.

*(Reads KCC 19.40.04.15 Sections D: Report Recommendations and Vegetation Removal, E: Seasonal Restrictions and F: Field Marking.)*

**10:09:18**

**Foritano:** Do these apply to Site Development Activity Permits in progress?

**Heacock:** Yes.

**Foritano:** Is there grandfathering, if the application was started a year ago, but has had no activity on the site?

**Heacock:** It depends on the project.

**Foritano:** Using bluff top property, with a view of Hood Canal that was clear-cut and has a pending Site Development Activity Permit, is a geotechnical report required? All these

**Heacock:** Yes.

**Depee:** In my case, I had staff out there six times and I was still cited for a violation. Why we would need a professional engineer?
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Heacock: When dealing with slope stability issues and top of slope buffers, there are requirements for native vegetation in place to be able to provide the rooting necessary to keep that slope there.

Depee: In my case, I did take it out and I was cited for clearing out blackberry bushes. The real world application and the requirements on paper are different issues. I can discuss this with you later.

10:12:18

Gustavson: A few years back we addressed that words restricting vegetation to native versus non-native may be problematic.

This document implies that it only applies to a parcel that is owned by the person making the application. There are cases also where it can actually be applied for by neighbors that are looking for view corridors through others’ property, which can affect more than just the applicant’s property. I think the geotechnical report should be provided for all the properties.

Heacock: We have done that in some cases. We would incorporate both owners.

Gustavson: I don’t think that agreement would ever come before you, it is a private agreement between neighbors, so maybe you should include that in the draft.

10:15:06

Nevins: Just to clarify what we are doing here, are you planning to revise this?

Heacock: No, this is existing code. I am just providing an overview of the ordinance as requested by the Planning Commission.

H. For the Good of the Order: Chair Depee

Gustavson: For Larry or staff, we are supposed to review the code, but we haven’t had a copy of what is being looked at.

Keeton: We are identifying with the taskforce which items we want to address first and prioritize. Title 21 will probably be addressed as a whole. Title 17 will be broken into critical items.

Gustavson: What is the schedule?

Keeton: We’re waiting for the report to come back from Paladin on business processes, we will take that to the taskforce and select the most important items. Once that is done, we will take those to the Board to get direction and approval. You will start seeing portions of it probably in late April, but you won’t get them all at one time.
Gustavson: We had an outside review of what were the most important code related issues to address. Where is that list?

Keeton: Eric Baker has taken the list to go through and review it.

Gustavson: Is there a timeline for when we will see it?

Keeton: I can’t answer that at this point.

Paralez: I’d like to remind our members to ask for recognition by the Chair before directing comments or questions to staff or the public.

Depee: Time allotments are being added to the agenda items and we will try to adhere to them as much as possible. These are not concrete, but it is an attempt to manage our time. We have done well today.

A motion is made by Commissioner Paralez and seconded by Commissioner Taylor to adjourn the meeting.

The VOTE:
Yes: Unanimous

Time of Adjournment: 10:20:26

EXHIBITS
A. Newspaper Article on Growth Management’s effect on Housing
B. Danger Tree, View Corridor fact sheet

MINUTES approved this _______ day of _______ 2008.

Fred Depee, Planning Commission Chair

Amanda Walston, Planning Commission Secretary