SAN JUAN COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes of the February 21, 2014 Meeting

The meeting of the San Juan County Planning Commission was called to order by Chair, Brian Ehrmantraut, at 8:30 a.m. in the County Council hearing room, Legislative Building, 55 Second Street, Friday Harbor, San Juan Island.


Planning Commissioners Excused: Mike Carlson
Community Development and Planning Department (CD&P) Staff Present: Shireene Hale, Planning Coordinator; Julie Thompson, Planner III; Lee McEnery, Planner III; and Lisa Brown, Office Manager.

8:30 A.M. Administrative Items

Update from Chair – Brian Ehrmantraut

1. Introduction and welcome of new Planning Commission member, Tom Starr.
2. An opinion letter discussed by the Planning Commission at a previous meeting and subsequently drafted by Barbara Thomas regarding the Open Space Farm & Agriculture Conservation Land Current Use program was presented for approval. Moved by Bob Gamble, seconded by Barbara Thomas to send the letter. Motion passed with Brian Ehrmantraut, Bob Gamble, Karin Agosta, Barbara Thomas, and Tim Blanchard in favor. The letter was circulated for signature.

Update from Planning - Shireene Hale outlined the following points, answering questions from the Commissioners throughout her briefing:

1. Sam Gibboney has been appointed as the permanent CD&P Director.
2. Ms. Hale expects the Council to complete Growth Board revisions to the CAO by next week.
3. Public Works and CD&P will be holding joint open houses on Orcas Island (March 4th), San Juan Island (March 5), and Lopez Island (March 6). Select presentations will be made on the various islands by Linda Kuller, Colin Maycock, Sam Gibboney, and Victoria Compton, of the Economic Development Council. Updates will include the Economic Development Element, the Eastsound Plan, the Lopez Plan, the Shoreline Master Program, and the Critical Area regulations.
4. The Department of Commerce will be providing a short course on planning on March 6. (It was noted by Chair Ehrmantraut that the course is offered at no cost and is open to public.)
5. The SMP is in a holding pattern due to reformating requested by the Prosecuting Attorney and their subsequent review. Ms. Hale expects approval within the next couple weeks, after Critical Area regulations are adopted.
6. Depending on the outcome of open houses and comments received, Ms. Hale’s goal is to bring the Economic Development Element to the Planning Commission before summer.
In reference to Planning Tasks, Tim Blanchard inquired about work on the rural element, as it does not appear on the 2014 Task List. He expressed that it was missed in Council discussions regarding Planning Tasks. Ms. Hale said that Sam has been working with the Council on planning priorities and that it is not on the work plan for this year, but that the protection of our rural character is integrated throughout the existing land use element and is not a stand-alone element. She added that if the Council is going to set different priorities we are happy to work on whatever they ask us to do.

Minutes of November 15, 2013 – Moved by Barbara Thomas, seconded by Bob Gamble, to approve the minutes as submitted. Motion passed with Brian Ehrmantraut, Bob Gamble, Karin Agosta, Barbara Thomas, and Tim Blanchard in favor; Tom Starr abstained.

Election of Officers – Chair Ehrmantraut called for nominations of officers. The following nominations were made by Karin Agosta:
   Chair – Barbara Thomas
   Vice Chair – Karin Agosta
   Secretary – Tim Blanchard
Nominations were closed and a vote by slate was passed unanimously. Barbara Thomas then assumed the Chair.

8:45 A.M. Public hearing and deliberations on the Doran Current Use Open Space Application, San Juan Island, File No. POPNSP-12-0009 – Present: Julie Thompson, planner; Jim Nowadnick, agent; and Jim Skoog, property manager.
Ms. Thompson provided information pertaining to the application, which consolidates the property into a single parcel and reduces allowable development from 3 to 2 units. She provided the OSAT rating, which granted the maximum points available, and recommended the Planning Commission recommend approval to the County Council. Chair Thomas opened public testimony. Mr. Nowadnick and Mr. Skoog provided testimony. No other testimony was submitted. Public testimony was closed. Deliberations were held and the following motion was made:

Moved by Bob Gamble, seconded by Karin Agosta, to approve of the Doran Current Use Open Space Application, San Juan Island, File No. POPNSP-12-0009, along with the findings and conditions. Barbara Thomas offered a friendly amendment, approved by the maker and seconder, that approval is conditional upon the completion of the conservation easement with the San Juan Preservation Trust. Ms. Thompson requested rescoring instead so that it wouldn’t hold up the process from going forward to the Council. Barbara Thomas rescinded her friendly amendment. The original motion passed unanimously.

9:00 A.M. Break

9:07 A.M. Public hearing and deliberations on the Ellis Current Use Farm and Agriculture Conservation Land application, Lopez Island, File No. POPNSP-13-0005 – Present: Lee McEnery, planner; Fred Ellis, property owner.
Ms. McEnery presented her staff report and explained Mr. Ellis’ proposal to transfer his property from Farm & Agriculture (F&A) to F&A Conservation Land. She provided the application materials, maps, and information regarding the conservation easement. Ms. McEnery said the recommendation going forward was 35 points. Barbara Thomas explained her connection to the property in appearance of fairness, asking fellow Commissioners to come forward if they wished to express a conflict. Hearing none, Chair Thomas opened the hearing to public testimony. Mr. Ellis came forward to present the merits of his application related to the features and history of
his property. Public testimony was closed. Deliberations were held and the following motion was made:

Moved by Brian Ehrmantraut, seconded by Bob Gamble that the application for the Ellis Current Use Farm and Agriculture Conservation Land application, Lopez Island, File No. POPNSP-13-0005, be approved, subject to the conditions in the staff report. Motion carried unanimously.

9:15 A.M. Briefing on the status of the Economic Development Element (EDE) by Victoria Compton, Executive Director of the Economic Development Council (EDC)

Victoria Compton and Gary Franklin, EDC Board President, reviewed requirements included in the Economic Development Element draft, in the works since 2007, as part of the Comprehensive Plan. She provided an overview with the data used in drafting the plan. She provided a broad overview and specifics on the goals and requirements of the GMA. She reviewed data for San Juan County and also provided a broader look at economic data and indicators as compared to US averaging. She outlined the major purpose and goals of the plan as follows:

1) Create jobs
2) Improve infrastructure
3) Encourage tourism, preserving environment
4) Strengthen traditional industries

Actions in the plan were also discussed. Ms. Compton, Mr. Franklin, and Ms. Hale answered questions from the Commission and discussion took place. Ms. Compton noted that topping the list for business growth is providing assistance for improvements to current businesses. She stated this is something that the EDC currently does and that it will also be added to the EDE. Ms. Hale addressed zoning for industrial uses. In response to the number one priority in helping to get the County out of the recession, the panel’s response was providing broadband countywide. In order to have a healthy, vibrant community, the County needs families and family wage jobs and Broadband will help to support this, adding that the data throughout the country is clear – the more you improve broadband, the more you improve the economy. Ms. Compton stated that the EDC’s goal is to have the EDE completed and through to the Council by September or October of 2014. It was requested by Karin Agosta that, although there is a separate element for housing, that affordable housing also be included in the EDE.

10:04 A.M. Additional Administrative Item - Karin Agosta requested that any Commissioner wishing to join electronically make arrangements in advance.

Adjournment

The meeting of the Planning Commission was adjourned at 10:05 a.m. The next meeting of the Planning Commission will be Friday, March 21, 2014 at 8:30 a.m., in the County Council hearing room, Legislative Building, 55 Second Street, Friday Harbor, San Juan Island.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Brown