

**Lewis County Planning Commission  
Lewis County Courthouse  
351 NW North St.  
Chehalis, WA 98532**

**February 8, 2011  
Meeting Notes**

**Planning Commissioners Present:** Mike Mahoney, Rachael Jennings, Jim Lowery, Richard Tausch, Arny Davis

**Planning Commissioners Excused:** Bill Russell, Bob Guenther

**Staff Present:** Bob Johnson, Jerry Basler, Pat Anderson

**County Commissioners Present:** Ron Averill

**Others Present:** Please see sign in sheet

**Handouts/Materials Used:**

- Agenda
- Meeting notes from January 11, 2011
- Memo from Jerry Basler re: Map Amendments
- Chapter 17.200

**I. Call to Order**

Vice Chair Lowery called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Commissioners introduced themselves.

**II. Old Business**

Vice Chair Lowery entertained a motion to approve the meeting notes from January 11, 2011. Commissioner Mahoney made the motion to approve; Commissioner Davis seconded; the motion passed.

**III. New Business**

Mr. Johnson stated the Assessor's office is going through the Public Benefit Rating System committee review of open space applications and Ms. Susan Johnson from that office asked about LCC 17.140, specifically the rating table. Mr. Johnson did not believe it was acted upon by the Board. He asked if the Planning Commissioners received something to amend the process and the tables that were used.

Commissioner Mahoney recalled something was changed at the State level. Ms. Anderson stated the Lewis County Code limited the time a property can be classified as Open Space to ten years. This is contrary to state law and Ms. Dianne Dorey proposed to eliminate the ten-year limitation from the Code.

**A. 1<sup>st</sup> Workshop on Zoning Maps**

Mr. Jerry Basler stated last month he briefly discussed the zoning maps. There are currently 111 maps and staff has talked about how to consolidate those maps to avoid confusion and errors. Staff would like to see only one official zoning map. There will be urban growth maps for the cities and the industrial areas but they will not be considered "official" zoning maps.

Mr. Basler stated some proposed language was added to Chapter 17.200 under "Purpose" that states the official zoning map would be housed at the BOCC office and that the Community Development Department would interpret the zoning districts and boundaries.

Discussion followed and Mr. Basler explained that the map would be available on the County web site and that portions of the map can be enlarged and printed if someone needs specific information about an area. Mr. Basler stated there is a CD of the map at the Auditor's office that can be accessed there as well.

Mr. Johnson stated he would like to see, and the County Commissioners would like to see, consistency in the zoning code and without making policy changes make it more user friendly. The Comprehensive Plan and the zoning maps initially were done in anticipation of appeals. They served their purpose but they are difficult for the planners to use.

Commissioner Lowery asked about the UGA and Industrial maps and if they could be included in the same official zoning map. Mr. Basler explained that the cities need individual UGA maps. The official zoning map would include the city UGAs.

Mr. Johnson stated the purpose of the UGA and industrial maps is for convenience. If a resident wants to know what a city's UGA is that map can be pulled up easily rather than trying to manipulate and print from the large map.

It was suggested that the UGA and industrial maps could be included as an appendix to the county code.

#### B. Discussion on Subarea Plan

Mr. Basler stated understanding where the Plan is and after consulting with staff, a consultant was hired to help with public involvement. Mr. Mike McCormick has met with staff a couple of times already. The first steering committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 09, 2011 to introduce Mr. Basler and Mr. McCormick and to get input as to how to move the Plan forward.

An item for discussion is to look more closely at properties that are close to I-5. There are several property owners who are not happy with the plan along SR 505 and those individuals will be cut out; no one will be forced to be zoned. Mr. Basler is hopeful that he will be able to work with some of the property owners who were confused about the commercial/industrial zoning concepts. The plan will be re-worked with a heavier emphasis on commercial and more of an emphasis on a 20 to 30 year plan.

Another concern of the property owners is the tax rate. Mr. Basler is working on that issue to get a straight answer and let the property owners know how zoning changes will affect them.

Commissioner Lowery stated he thought the steering committee and staff did a great job of doing outreach. A lot of the people at the public meeting had been involved in the process. Some misinformation came out just before the public hearing and confused and upset people. The proposed UGA at Jackson Highway and SR 505 is the one that had the most objections; however the I-5 proposal seemed to be acceptable to most people. Commissioner Lowery believed the process was okay; the information did not get addressed properly. It is important to include people whose property is going to be impacted. He also stated that his property was zoned commercial years ago and his property taxes have not changed at all. He understood that the change would come when the property was sold. He would like to ensure that this is true.

Mr. Basler stated staff is also looking at options as to how public outreach can be accomplished. The first steering committee meeting will be very general and no decisions will be made. Commissioner Jennings asked if the public had been notified of this meeting. Mr. Basler stated no, although he has had some telephone conversations with some of the property owners and they are aware of the meeting. Commissioner Jennings stated that has been the public's biggest complaint: they have not been notified from the beginning. If they are left out of the beginning stages, there will be an issue with that and that is what the Planning Commission hears about. Commissioner Jennings would like to be able to say that the public did have the opportunity to participate at every meeting. Mr. Basler stated tomorrow's agenda is to introduce himself and Mr. McCormick, discuss how to conduct outreach and workshops and how to notify people.

Commissioner Mahoney stated definitions of terms need to be made very clear. "Industrial" covers a wide area of activities and heavy industrial use such as saw mills is what upset the people. The terms that are used must be made clear as to meaning.

Commissioner Mahoney supports the I-5 area because at least the first half mile from the freeway already does not have the quiet, rural atmosphere that people talked about keeping. Looking at that location would take away a lot of the concerns of the residents who live further away from the freeway. He went on to say that notification has been a concern for many years. Public notices do not get the job done. He does, however, believe that the process to notify people was done properly.

Mr. Basler stated there was a lot of industrial language in the plan. An industrial land assessment has been done and perhaps a commercial assessment could be done. Regarding notification, post cards have been considered, a phone tree and other ideas.

Commissioner Davis suggested using the Town Crier in the Winlock area for notification also. Commissioner Lowery suggested asking people at the meetings how they get information and using those mediums. Commissioner Jennings said e-mail is the most cost-effective way to get information out. Not everyone has access to e-mail but many people do.

Mr. Johnson stated this is not just a Lewis County issue. Public outreach was discussed at the annual planning conference; there will always be people who say they did not know about a meeting. There is a very large expense to publishing legal notices, which is a requirement, and many people never see those. He also stated the issue about taxation of properties needs to be clarified.

Mr. Basler stated Mr. McCormick suggested involving the Department of Transportation. The utility element needs to be considered and how that will run parallel to the Subarea Plan.

#### **IV. Calendar**

The next meeting will be on February 22 with a workshop on open space. Mr. Johnson stated there may be some more discussion on the subarea plan. The more meetings that are held the better it will be for the public.

#### **V. Good of the Order**

Mr. John Bruenn, Toledo, stated his property was included in the south county UGA proposal. It is only six acres and he did not think it should have been included and does not want industrial zoning in that

area. He agreed with Commissioner Jennings about e-mail notification and he did not think it was unreasonable to send a notice in the mail to property owners whose property would be affected.

Vice Chair Lowery requested that Mr. Bruenn speak to his neighbors and let the county know what they think that area should look like in 30 years. Mr. Bruenn said he would like it to look the same as it does now.

Mr. Gene Butler stated he supported the proposal to consolidate the zoning maps. One thing that needs attention is the scale of the official map. The nine foot map is 1" to a mile and that scale allows delineating parcels down to a couple of acres and for most purposes that works quite well. The color scheme needs to be consistent throughout the planning area with a lot of thought going into putting the colors together. When he examined the maps in the south county UGA the maps used different colors than the general map of the county which made it inconvenient to compare the proposal as to what would change and what would remain the same.

Mr. Butler stated on-line information needs to be very clear in distinguishing the different RDD zoning, etc. Colors on the computer may not be the same as on a printed map.

Mr. Butler stated he read the LCC 17.200 that was included in the Planning Commission packet. It mentions Birchfield and he thought Birchfield was no longer a project being considered. He also thought that the I-5/US 12 industrial area was found invalid by the Growth Board. He is unsure about what is being proposed there and hoped the county was not trying to resurrect a dead issue.

Commissioner Ron Averill stated a change coming about in the legislature is how critical areas ordinances should impact agriculture. This is the result of the Ruckelshaus Study which involved farmers, environmental people, tribes and others. The legislation provided that agriculture would be exempt from critical areas ordinances while the Ruckelshaus studies were going on. The work has been concluded and a bill was dropped in the legislature with some proposals on what they want to do.

To summarize the bill, it will provide for two options. One is that counties would opt into a voluntary plan whereby the county and agricultural and state agencies would work up a plan of protection of critical areas that would be strictly on a voluntary basis: the farmers who choose to participate in that plan would work on these plans. These plans would be done by the watersheds. The counties can opt out of the plan in which case they would return to regular growth management procedures. The critical areas ordinances would need to be reopened and the county would need to determine how agriculture would apply in those specific cases and then those decisions would go through the Growth Management Board.

More details are not available at this time. The Farm Bureau and the Washington State Association of Counties, who have been working with the Ruckelshaus Study, are supporting the legislation. Commissioner Averill expects to see something come out of this session and then there will be some choices to make. He will brief the Planning Commission when he has more details. Once the bill has passed the county has to start planning because it has six months to make its decision.

Commissioner Mahoney asked Commissioner Averill if there will be state funding available for this. Commissioner Averill stated the legislation requires that there has to be funding for any requirements that are set out on agriculture to apply for the voluntary program. The critics are suggesting there may

be two or three years before there is money available to do anything. Without the money, nothing happens.

Mr. Johnson stated that six months from the effective date of the legislation, the county has to decide which way it wants to go. Money is the critical factor. If there is no funding and the county opts into it then there is a specified period that it can opt out. It could be problematic for a bill to go through with no certainty for funding and yet there is a requirement that the counties make a decision within six months as to whether they want to voluntarily opt in. The County Commissioners will make that decision.

**VI. Adjourn**

The Planning Commission business was concluded and a motion was made and seconded to adjourn. Adjournment was at 8:03 p.m.