

# Lewis County Planning Commission

## Public Meeting

In-Person & Virtual Meeting via Zoom

**January 10, 2023 - Meeting Notes**

**Planning Commissioners Present:** Lorie Spogen, District 1; Jason Alves, District 1; Gretchen Fritsch, District 3, Corbin Foster, AL; Bob Russell, District 2; Frank Corbin, District 3; Kathy Chastain, District 2;

**Staff Present:** Lee Napier, Community Development Director; Mindy Brooks, Senior Long Range Planner; Megan Sathre, Office Assistant Senior; Barbara Russell, Prosecuting Attorney; Preston Pinkston, Current Planner

### **Materials Used:**

- Agenda
- Draft Meeting Notes – October 11, 2022
- 2023 Docket
- Packwood Subarea Plan

### **1. Zoom Guidelines**

The clerk dispensed with the Zoom Guidelines.

### **2. Call to Order**

A. Determination of a Quorum

7 Commissioners were present; there was a quorum.

### **3. Approval of Agenda**

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Russell made the motion to approve the agenda; second by Commissioner Chastain. The motion carried unanimously.

### **4. Approval of Meeting Notes**

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the meeting notes from October 11, 2022. Commissioner Corbin made a motion to approve; second by Commissioner Russell. The motion carried unanimously.

## 5. Public Comment

There were no members of the public who wished to testify.

## 6. Election of Officers

Commissioner Russell nominated Commissioner Spogen for Chair. The nomination was seconded by Commissioner Chastain. The nomination passed unanimously.

Commissioner Spogen nominated Commissioner Russell for Vice Chair. The nomination was seconded by Commissioner Chastain. The nomination passed unanimously.

## 7. Adopt 2023 Docket

Mindy Brooks, Senior Long Range Planner, provided an overview of the 2023 docket and invited the Commissioners to ask questions.

Spogen: The fact that we can amended and add anything gives us a lot of latitude so looks like everybody approves of what you got on there so far.

Russell: How do we get something added to the docket? I have been interested in simple segregations as to whether there is a good path going forward and I have been asking it for a few years as a developer and a curious citizen. I'd like to see this looked at in the next few years. Relating to that, I was on GIS the other day and I was looking at the zoning map looking at acres zoned RDD-5. What does it take to split and have something go from RDD-5 to RDD-2.5?

Mindy: The team and I keep a list of code updates that we would like to do. It's a pretty long list and the simple segregation one is certainly on my radar as something that you guys are interested in having another conversation about. We will look for opportunities when we can put additional code amendments in that fit with our schedule and keep bringing code amendments back to you guys. There's a lot of work to do in our code.

Russell: And the plate is definitely full.

Mindy: We have a lot. I'm really glad we don't have rezones this year. I think the Planned Growth Committee work, population forecast work, is going to be big and take up a lot of time., but there may be time later in the year so it's not out of the question. Regarding you're question regarding whether we could zone RDD-2.5 instead of RDD-5, there is a general belief – not legal requirement – across the state that rural density if one unit in 5 acres. It's not in the RCW, it's not in the WAC. It isn't a statement that that has to be met, but it is a general belief that one unit per five acres is the minimum rural density that you should not go below that unless you're in a LAMIRD. That doesn't mean that we can't entertain going smaller, we could. We'd have to think about the findings against State law, and we'd have to think about the risk we would incur of appeal. I don't want to take it out of the discussion. I think it's something that we can talk about. I think there are

some places where we already have 2 and a half acre lots that it might be appropriate to right size the zoning for those. Let's keep having that conversation, especially as we go into periodic update. On July 1<sup>st</sup> we start the periodic update and that's a 2-year process for our Comprehensive Plan.

Russell: One of the things I would add to that is the sophistication to make ruling like that was not available a decade ago. My experience is that a pretty fair and accurate ruling can be made with tools that say whether a parcel can be divided or not.

Chair Spogen entertained a motion to adopt the 2023 docket. Commissioner Russell made a motion to approve the docket, seconded by Commissioner Alves. The motion passed unanimously.

## **8. Workshop – Packwood Subarea Plan**

Mindy Brooks, Senior Long Range Planner, gave a presentation on the Packwood Subarea Plan. Packwood Subarea Community Advisory Committee Members Dennis and Kim accompanied Mindy in the presentation. *See presentation for details.* The following questions were asked throughout the presentation.

*What is a Subarea Plan and why do one? - Mindy*

Russell: Critical areas are a concern of mine and I am sure are a concern of the people of Packwood. The area is beautiful and surrounded and filled with critical areas. I see the need for a plan because if you are not protecting those up there you can end up with some really bad development that hurts critical areas and that costs a lot to repair.

Mindy: That is one of the later goals and policies Kim will touch on a little but under our recreation and environment topic. I think the people in Packwood are keenly aware of the critical areas because of flooding and fire and wind issues and I think people are pretty understanding of the fact that when you put structures in flood plains, you're just asking for problems.

Russell: I've heard over the years from developers from out there that they've had a real hard time and I know the departments work really hard to make their lives easier. I read about how the sheriff needs an outpost out there in order to regulate. I'm putting in a plug here for the county that we need somebody who doesn't have to race up and down the road all the time. There's a lot that goes on out there with septics and you name it. So when they get a desk out there maybe you could get somebody in the outpost.

Chastain: I noticed on one of your slides the concern for drinking water. Can you give a little bit of background? Do they have a treatment center? What are your concerns with the water with the amount of people coming in?

Mindy: We'll talk a little bit more about that too as we get into public facilities. There are a lot of rules around public facilities. Lewis County Water Sewer District 3 serves the bulk of the subarea. Not everyone is hooked up to it. I'll jump to the chase. The septic systems in that space were pretty much all installed before most of our public health rules were in place. That's why we are doing sewer. There is a concern about making sure that we don't end up with a contaminated water source

Spogen: What will this board be voting on? Your slide shows Phase I and II of the plan. What are we doing for the phases?

Mindy: Phase I is one is an amendment to the Lewis County Comprehensive plan to incorporate subarea.

Spogen: So your team that's been working on this is going to come up with advice and bring it to us?

Mindy: We are giving it to you right now. This is their recommended plan. You will hear from the public on their thoughts about this recommended plan, and you will need to then decide if you recommend that the Board of County Commissioners adopted it as an amendment to the Comp Plan. So you will be voting on this plan and then later in Phase 2 you'll be voting on the development regulations. So the plan is legislative, it's not quasi-judicial, meaning you are free to talk to your constituents about it.

Russell: So the actual action taken that is going to be proposed that goes to the County Commissioners in Phase I is what?

Mindy: Adopting the Packwood Subarea Plan. You are adopting goals and policies. Think of it as a mini comprehensive plan. A comprehensive plan is goals and policies. That is what you are literally adopting. Once we have amended our comprehensive plan with these goals and policies, all of the development regulations must be consistent with it. So once we have those goals and policies in place, we write our development regulations to match. You are literally proposing to adopt these goals and policies as potentially amended by you. After you hear from the public, you can choose to make amendments to those goals and policies based on what you hear, but that is what you're recommending.

Preston: An example of this is that we have goals for rural economies, supporting rural and agricultural businesses. That would be the goal and policy and then an example would be that in our uses for Agricultural Resource Land we allow agricultural retail services, composting facilities, and agro tourism. So those are the actionable items that come later, but the policy is that we want to support something and then staff creates code that drives that a later date.

Russell: It's interesting because you're adopting a policy and ideas that sound really good, but the unintended consequences we haven't determined yet, because the action are going to come off that right?

Mindy: That is why the code will come to you afterwards. Once we've adopted goals and policies, we'll write development regulation to implement them and you will again have those in front of you before those get adopted.

Russell: So say one of the goals is to increase density and it comes to us and we say, no, we don't want to increase density. Now we had these goals and policies that we said we wanted to do but we are forced then to make sure we get an action that meets that?

Mindy: Yes. The full entirety of the State law requires that you have a comprehensive plan and the regulations to implement it. There are two steps for everything – there's the goals and policies and then the regulations to implement them. Once you have adopted these goals and policies, our next job is to adopt the regulations to implement those. Some of the goals and policies you are going to see in here are not land use regulations. There's a lot of stuff in here that's very outside of our world and that's fine. Those will be other people's things to implement, but we will be writing regulations in Phase 2. So if we say to increase density, we have to write the rules to allow that to happen. Those rules will come before you and you will vote on those and then it's the market that decides if the density actually happens. We don't force development, we create rules that allow things to happen.

*Public Engagement & Community Advisory Committee – Mindy*

Spogen: I think I can speak for the Board when I say that we really appreciate both of you taking your time to help us understand this. You've communicated that even though you didn't all agree on everything that you did come together, and I think that's important information, because it seems to me like there could be some wild opinions either way.

Mindy: You will hear the opinions. The advisory committee, however, really hashed through topics and came up with areas of agreement for the most part. There's a few items that the committee would admit to not completely agreeing with, but if you asked them, they would say that this plan on the whole is the right thing to do and a number of them will undoubtedly provide testimony as we move into the next steps.

*Dennis – Community*

Spogen: You mentioned a school. Was that sold or is it still available to be an elementary school?

Dennis: It was sold to the museum. The school is now the Packwood museum. It will not be school again, I don't believe.

*Land Use – Mindy*

Russell: When that developer of the old mill site proposes a project will it be a year long process that comes to us?

Mindy: No, not for this because we are going to change their zoning. We are going to do the work instead of them.

Russell: Currently, they would need to come to us with a big plan for that if they wanted to change their zoning ahead of the plan?

Mindy: Yes. As you know, the mill site sold after sitting on the market for 20 years. Staff have been working with the developers on this one because this is a major redevelopment site for Packwood. The new owners reached out to me and shared a slightly updated future land use map (staff *displayed the map on the screen*). The concept adds more housing options and reduces the area of larger scale commercial development. I will ask the Community Advisory Committee to review it prior to our next meeting and it will be provided as testimony.

Spogen: What is a commercial use?

Mindy: A restaurant, a mercantile, grocery store, pub, etc.

Spogen: So your plan is to kind of move the core of the city kind of down.

Mindy: It's to keep the downtown core, that red space on the map, the way it is and keep it the scale of development that it is now - it's pretty small scale. Blanton's is the largest at 11,000 square feet, but most of the structures there are much smaller commercial. They are 7,000 ish square feet or under, and the plan is to keep that as a small scale downtown core. If larger commercials ends up deciding to come to Packwood, then it would go at the mill site or across the street near the airport.

Spogen: So you would envision the Flea Market space would remain or fill in more?

Mindy: I think it will be there as long as the property owners are making more money renting land as a flea market than they will make by selling it to someone else to develop it. At some point that will flip. At some point the property values in downtown Packwood, with or without this plan, will be worth more to the owners to develop. There'll be a market factor for them that will incentivize them to do something different than they are today. Until that happens they will continue to rent those properties for flea market.

Fritsch: On the future zoning map you have things categorized at high, medium, low, and very low. Is that just because those are not set numbers yet or they don't translate to the other map?

Mindy: Yes, that is right. They are not set. There is a table in the plan on the page right before the future land use map that describes each of those and it has a range of densities that the Advisory Committee is proposing. But you're right, until we actually create the zoning and the regulations there isn't a formal density associated with those.

Fritsch: So those do not exist in our plan to date - there is nothing in the comprehensive plan?

Mindy: These zones do not exist in Lewis County. In Phase 2, We'll be writing new zones, new development regulations if this goes through.

### *Design Guidelines – Kim*

Spogen: Are you allowing the McDonalds and other chains in or will it remain local businesses?

Mindy: The discussion of franchise businesses and large national brands took up many of our meetings and we had quite a few long conversations. There's a very big mix of emotions about it and it boils down to this – nobody wants a McDonald's or Starbucks in Packwood. Not a single person that lives there really wants that, but you can't ban those because when you ban franchises you've also banned Ace Hardware, NAPA Auto Parts, and a pharmacy since those are usually Walgreens or Rite Aids. So you lose an opportunity that the community needs and wants by saying no to those other things. What we've done in the plan is we are going to set some boundaries. One of them is a size limitation when you are in downtown Packwood. Having a size limitation, making sure downtown Packwood is the scale of the existing businesses, means you're not going to have a Walmart, because it's just huge and it doesn't fit. We're going to have size limitations that narrow the scope of what might show up there. Then through design guidelines you can require businesses to look like other business, rather than a 1970s style McDonald's. Design guidelines can really help force those national brands to look like the neighborhood they're in.

Spogen: It's not a Washington State Law you are referring on for that right? You can't make a law that says you can have some franchises but not others?

Mindy: You can't target. I can't say no Walmart's, McDonald's, and Starbucks. We could potentially put a law together that says in this geography, in the boundary, no franchise businesses with more than 10 locations, for example, in Washington State can locate here. It has to be all businesses. So then you start to lose opportunities of things people in town would really like to see. This is why we've debated it with the advisory committee. It's hard to figure out the right balance.

Spogen: I know we've talked about the community that I'm familiar with in Montana – Red Lodge – and they have successfully kept them all out. I think they do have an Ace Hardware and a Subway that they snuck in somehow. It's really been a boom for them because they are quite unique.

Mindy: Most of the stuff that we are going to talk about and that you will read in more detail about is to discourage national franchise types of businesses, but not outright prohibit.

Russell: We're talking about putting in some language so that we can create some structure for Packwood. What about the discussion that Packwood would like to be their own town and make their own rules? Sometimes the rest of the county thinks one thing and two or three people don't like it.

Mindy: In order for Packwood to incorporate, they need a population of 1,500 permanent residents based on the census. They are not currently near that population. One step towards becoming an incorporated city is first, you must have an urban growth area placed. So one of the implementation measures that we'll talk about in Phase 2 is that we will need to place an urban growth area around at least a portion of the Packwood suburban boundary. These are all steps towards a point where there's the population and the community decides that they want to incorporate and become autonomous. That can happen in the future, but it will not happen as part of this. We are moving towards that direction.

Russell: At some point, people from the town are not going to want people from Chehalis and Centralia making policy.

Mindy: One might argue that right now they don't want people in Chehalis making policy for them. The question of becoming a city is a big deal because when you do that you then have to change the way you tax, because now you have to provide urban services. Oftentimes with the autonomy of being a city comes increased taxes so there's give and take. This plan gets us a few steps closer to this potentially happening in the future. Phase II of this project will likely include placing an Urban Growth Area around a portion of Packwood, which is a necessary step towards incorporation.

Corbin: When we talk about an Urban Growth Area for Packwood, are you trying to think long term so that we don't have an area that's too small that has to be revisited in the near future? Is the approach to go for a small area or a large area?

Mindy: State law actually requires that your UGA accommodates 20 years of population growth. Placing an Urban Growth Area is not a foregone conclusion, but it is a likely conversation that we will have in Phase II. If the UGA is placed, it will need to be based on 20 years of growth. I know we've seen this past year the cities plan for their UGAs in an incremental way, not in a comprehensive way, but we won't be doing that.



Corbin: Often times the 20-year forecast either far exceeds or falls short and so I'd like to make sure that we take a good realistic view of that. Also planning for a UGA that perhaps allows people with bigger visions to be able to plan more for their futures. I'm thinking for the benefit of the community to think big in this area if it can be justified by the numbers.

Mindy: Yeah, absolutely. Every 5 years we get these population forecasts, which we will be talking about this year, and we look to see if it is appropriate to adjust the comprehensive plan around the UGA. 5 years is an appropriate increment of adjustment under the state law.

Corbin: Will there be any incentives for existing businesses to conform to proposed design plan because there are some businesses there that I've seen that could certainly use a face-lift. If there was some incentives to you know to get them to conform to a new standard. Every community I go to, that's something that I look at. Now, I like Leavenworth because the community rallied around a theme and they latched onto it with everything in their hearts. I like that concept whether I like German everything or not. It's what the community wanted. Winthrop is another great example. They chose the Western motif. Communities in southern California go for the Spanish stucco. It's what the people want and that's what I would like to see everywhere in Lewis County in the process of updating our appearance. We should consider what makes a community unique and I love the fact that you've chosen the Northwest motif. I think there should be some incentive. I think that is should occur organically. If a business looks really nice and they are doing well maybe that would be incentive to another business to upgrade.

Mindy: This is a hot topic too. Should existing businesses have to conform to this or not? We ended up with some really gentle language around encouragement, not requirement.

Corbin: That's what I'm talking about too, is encouragement - incentives.

Kim: I don't know if we can require it because a lot of people live in East Lewis County for a reason and a lot of people have the attitude of "get off my lawn." So yes, encouragement would be great. Possibly, there could be requirements if someone was doing major improvements that required permitting, but that would be something discussed during Phase II. Again, we are still in the encouragement sort of fluffy language right now.

Corbin: I'm absolutely the last person that would want to do anything that would try to force people to comply with big government of whatever their objection is. What I do like to see though is a community come together and unite on something, and maybe incentive is seeing how good the business next to theirs looks. I don't know if there's any other incentives that could be strategically placed and that could encourage compliance. Again, a way to bring voluntary cooperation into the heart of the community.

Kim: Kind of the “we belong together” look.

Corbin: We are just talking about the downtown corridor, not all of Packwood. I served on the city council in Cascade Locks, Oregon and we were discussing these same things. How so we decide on what kind of motif we want for our community? And how do you deincestivize the use of blue tarps covering old cars in people’s front yards? I’ve been involved in those kinds of discussions and they can be very difficult. If the community can’t rally around an idea and a theme positive peer pressure works to a certain extent, but there’s pride in community. If you can show that the guidelines are in a fairly concise limited area it could be a source of pride in the community – a real show piece. Then the rest of the community can be however people want it.

Spogen: Not to be the devil’s advocate, but there’s some places there that haven’t changes since I was started skiing when I was 10 and it’s fun to go to the same places that look the same way.

#### *Economic Development – Dennis*

Spogen: Have you discussed your particular burden that you have seasonal use of the town, which will make it difficult to keep full time employees, buy food for restaurants, etc.? Are you going to somehow guide what will come in there that would be successful?

Dennis: I totally understand what you’re saying with the smaller businesses coming and going. Entrepreneurs give it a shot and they fail. Others are wildly successful. We have a seasonal economy, but the seasonality has really expanded to a significant portion of the year. Right now White Pass is selling out their daily tickets and maxed out their season passes. The skiers are coming back and a good percentage of those folks are staying in Packwood. They are staying in short term rental homes, the Hotel Packwood, and other hotels and motels. The shelves at the store on a Monday are almost empty any week of the year because my weekend friends have nabbed all the good stuff. I think the seasons are melding together more and more. Our summer tourism includes Mt. Rainier, hiking, recreation in the mountain camps, hunting in the fall. We are seeing more and more excitement from businesses in the community as they say they think they can make it here. We’ve had a new restaurant, Nacho’s, open up and on the weekends it’s a two hour wait. We are hopeful to get more higher-wage jobs coming into the area with affordable housing that’s going to bring more seasonal workers.

#### *Housing – Kim*

Russell: Earlier we were looking at a map to increase the density with bright red in the middle and then it was lighter pink, and the rest of that. Is that where we think someone might build a duplex for a couple of workers? Or do we think that is going to be a short term rental?

Kim: There is a table that's located within the subarea plan in the land use section that talks about some of the different zoning designations that are in there. Right now there are no regulations or limitations on short term rentals verses long-term rentals verses permanent standalone homes. I don't think we can accurately predict what is going to be designated as STR or LTR in the future.

Russell: Is the goal is to provide more affordable housing to those who work in Packwood? There must be a policy or something to put in place to drive that to happen or are we just going to hope that those people find some housing?

Kim: No, housing is definitely a huge part of what's going to be in the policies and if you look at the different designation that are within that table that's in the land use component it talks about Mixed Use, which would have businesses on the bottom and residences on the top. It's going to be a smaller scale than a full single family residence so those might be more geared towards 1-2 person homes versus large families with multiple kids. There are ways to build houses that provide more opportunities that don't necessarily look like apartment buildings. Think about your houses in college where someone took an old house from the twenties and chopped it up into 3 or 4 different units, and it still look like a house from the outside except for the 4 or 5 mailboxes on the front. It still looks like a home and it looks like it would fit into your community. There are different ways to provide homes or to structure the design of homes and units so that you could fit a couple of more residents within the same lot size. Bringing sewer to Packwood would help, because then you don't have to deal with the extra space required for a drain field. Our goal is to provide a range of affordable housing for residents at all income levels, because we've got people who are waitresses and then we've got people who are engineers or who are developers. You need to be able to provide homes for people at all income levels to be living safely and comfortably affordable housing. Affordable housing means there are housing options for people making a minimum wage to median income. So again, we need to provide opportunities for everyone in our community because Packwood is made it, as every community is, of a large diversity of people from different backgrounds, different income levels, that kind of stuff. If you work in Packwood, we feel that it's pretty reasonable that you should be able to live in Packwood as well.

Spogen: Is the fact that everybody in Packwood has a septic systems preventing people from building ADUs?

Kim: As Mindy said earlier, the septic systems are old and funky. They do take up a lot of space.

Spogen: I traveled last summer and went into a museum where they said that if you walk around town you'll see all these little houses in everyone's backyards because back in the

day when there was a mill, they had an explosion of people and built these mini houses in their backyards. They didn't have to worry about septics.

Kim: The lots that are in what we consider downtown Packwood aren't very big and they have small backyards consumed with their septic and drain field so they are limited.

Spogen: What does it mean to have housing options for people making minimum wage? How much can they pay a month in rent?

Mindy: \$750 per person.

Preston: There is currently one house available for rent on Zillow in the Packwood area. It is \$1,800 a month with two bedrooms, one bathroom, and makes up 1,100 square feet.

Spogen: You can rent out an RV space for \$850 so how are you going to get someone to build an apartment and rent it for \$750 per month?

Mindy: Right now the RV park in town is occupied by people who are seasonal workers. This can be an issue because there it's not always reliable access to services – septic, water, heat, etc. It's not ideal, but it happening. The RV parks around town are part of the picture. The picture around housing is huge. It includes everything you think of as housing. We will absolutely dive a little bit further into this one, but keep in mind with zoning what we're doing is we're creating a space where things can happen and then the market has to make those things happen. Right now, in in pretty much everywhere in the State of Washington, there are 2 housing types that are permitted. You're either an apartment or you're in a single family residence. You hear a lot about missing middle. Missing Middle is a big key term. It is everything between an apartment and a single family home, and most cities don't allow middle house, most counties don't allow them. We're missing that in between housing that's everything from an ADU to a duplex, triplex, forplex, cottage style, mini houses, all that creative stuff is missing because our codes don't allow it. So what we're trying to do with this stuff is open it up again, especially where sewers come in. Where there's sewer and we can get out of this conundrum of septic, then we have more of an opportunity.

Fritsch: Looking at the policies under housing and I am really noticing things that have to do with the actual structure, and being creative in that way. However, I don't really see anything land use wise that would encourage someone to build a house to live or rent long term and not chose to do short term rental. Is there any policy that you could possibly have or put in place to discourage that business from taking over the entire town? Was there any talk in your committee discussions about what can be done and what policies we can ask for?

Mindy: The advisory committee decided to not tackle short term rental because it's a larger issue than a Packwood issue, even though arguably Packwood is really where the issue is happening in the county. They sort of felt like that should be a larger

conversations that's that is not just about Packwood. So you're not going to see any policies in the plan about short term rentals. You're going to see a lot of enabling more housing options. There is no reason why during Phase II, when we're starting to write the regulations, that we couldn't have a conversation as a community with Packwood about short term rentals. There could be portions of Packwood where short-term rentals are not allowed or are regulated in some other way. So I don't think that's off the table. I think there's no policies in here about it because they felt like it should be a larger policy discussion with the Board of County Commissioners. I think we'll hear a lot about this during testimony.

Barbara Russell: The landscape around short-term rentals is rapidly evolving right now. There's people looking at it at state and local levels and there's different local areas approaching it different ways. I absolutely agree with Mindy that we're going to hear more about it, it's going to be developing.

Mindy: There's at least one State Bill too, that I'm monitoring that may touch on it that that has been introduced.

Corbin: I thought I saw something about that bill. I was wondering, since there seems to be so much more movement, even at the state level, that perhaps there's some creative thinking that we can do to jump ahead of this and to formulate our own plan. Once the laws pass we will be restricted to what the law is, but if we do it now we could write our own destiny at this point.

Mindy: Yes, I agree. When I broached the subject with the Board of County Commissioners a few months ago they were pretty reticent to put any restrictions on short term rentals. There was a strong feeling that if people want to use their place as a short-term rental they should be able to. I understand that. In our conversations about design guidelines and all that stuff we kept coming back to that. There is this desire that we want people to be able to use their property. We don't want to put too many restrictions on it. I do think that we, as a county, need to acknowledge that in certain spaces like Packwood, the booming short-term rental market is going to make it impossible for people who work in Packwood, to live in Packwood. It is driving up property value and as it does that, we know there is a relationship between property value and property taxes and people are feeling that pinch as well. We have people on fixed income who have been there for 40 or 50 years. If they're on fixed income, at some point they're not going to be able to pay their property taxes, not because they've improved their property, but because the world is changing. I think we, as a county, are going to need to acknowledge that because we want people who live here to be able to stay. We want people who work here to be able to live here. So there's a lot coming, as Barb said, on this issue. The basic answer is, no, there are no policies right now in the plan around short-term rentals.

Kim: There was a general concern in our committee that multifamily housing would not fit into Packwood because there's no apartment buildings in Packwood. There's no large, obvious buildings that are used for multifamily purposes. There are some, but those generally are some of the motels that cater to long-term residents. Those are generally fixed income or lower income people.

Corbin: In the yesteryear of logging, there were logging camps in some immigrant communities where there's lots of need for agricultural workers that are all seasonal. I think that we can put on our creative thinking caps and come up with a zoned area that would accommodate such housing.

Kim: Absolutely because that's not dissimilar to the seasonal workers that we have in the Packwood area, whether it's Mt. Rainier or up at the pass or kind of anywhere in between. As Dennis alluded to, the seasons are sort of softly combining. Ski season last year went until the beginning of May. There's not these really distinct seasons anymore. People historically have been able to jump from profession to profession while staying in the same location, but they are seasonal workers. One of the ideas and concepts that we're working with is finding some solutions to offer to all of these people. It might be something like a tiny home community or you these houses that are chopped up into different pieces. It doesn't have to look like a standalone single family residence. It could be these tiny little homes that more traditionally are associated with agricultural communities.

Corbin: I grew up in a logging community. In its history, the logging companies would provide housing and have a common kitchen, cafeteria style facilities. Perhaps a modified version of that could be a potential business for someone if they wanted to provide that kind of housing for seasonal workers. Then during the non-season time, perhaps change the focus to some other type of short-term dwelling to keep it going year round. It just seems to me like there are opportunities that the private sector could help solve this problem. If we think in terms of what has been historically done in the past and marry that with the tiny home villages. I drive past these tiny homes by I-5 every day and they sell for \$140,000 apiece. That is still becoming outrageous for some people on some income levels. Let's go beyond the tiny home idea. Once the sewer system comes in it'll be a whole lot easier, but perhaps maybe there's room for a type of logging camp type option for the low income and that need the temporary housing.

Kim: Absolutely. This is meant to be a general guideline. Right now we're kind of stuck. We don't have sewer and we're working within the confines of the existing regulations. Yes, the STMU regulations are super broad, but by providing a little more direction to where we want these places to go like right maybe a couple of blocks off the middle of town. So when you look at the proposed zoning map it does provide some different opportunities within the definitions. Since we're dealing with all new zoning designations that we're proposing we can write however we want to write it, and we can encourage or

discourage certain uses. Within them we can gear towards duplex and triplex and fourplex or tiny home villages. Right now we have the power to guide things to how we want it - not necessarily restrict development or encourage development, but guide it into places that we feel might be a little more appropriate. We also consider the environmental issues, as Commissioner Russell talked about, because Packwood is confined by National Forests on three sides, the Cowlitz River, countless wetlands and other streams. So we have to keep all those things in mind, which is why we looked at all the different environmental factors when we placed the proposed designations on there.

Mindy: One of the structures – the old bunk house at the Packwood Station - is currently being used as housing for some of the workers at the ski resort, and that is a private endeavor. I do think there is quite a good private market in Packwood for providing a huge variety of housing. We just need to figure out how to enable that.

#### *Transportation – Dennis*

Russell: I like everything that I see except that Highway 12 is running right through town with a vision that the town is going to get even bigger. Towns like Skamania have a little bypass that drops in around it. I hate creating a zone and then knowing capitalism, we end up looking like Deadwood, Colorado in downtown with 18-wheelers needing to go back and forth across the state of Washington.

Dennis: Early on in our review process, a bypass route was proposed. We have a lot of environmental constraints around the perimeter and the periphery of town that would make building a bypass road a very expensive ordeal. These other transportation elements that we do have proposed, which we think are affordable, will be able to help achieve a lot of the necessary safety precautions - to separate and keep traffic speeds reduced for the protection of everybody.

Spogen: How come your future pedestrian/bike route stops and doesn't go over the river?

Dennis: That was a big cause of disagreement for the CAC. The bridge crossing the river has a 30 inch wide sidewalk now on one side of it. To widen that bridge is a huge economic challenge. That bridge is currently being used by pedestrians, and cyclists coming in from High Valley and everyone on that side of the river and they share the road. There's a common law sense of community. You better slow down because we have a bicyclist out here in the driving lane, which is a narrow driving lane.

Spogen: So why wouldn't you just continue the path on the other side of the bridge?

Mindy: This is the area of focus for the next 20 years. There's nothing precluding anything else from happening. Don't view the concept as this is what's going to happen to nothing else. The concept is where we need to focus our energy and our dollars because it's expensive. This is probably the most affordable stuff that we can do, but it's

still really, really, really expensive. We need a lot of grant money to make it happen. Nothing in any of this plan would necessarily say that you couldn't do more in terms of transportation improvements. At some point that Bridge might need to have some upgrades done. It does get damaged during floods and so forth. Usually it's good to couple things together, so if it gets to the point that that bridge needs an upgrade, I think the community probably will let us know at the county.

Spogen: They're probably going to have to try and figure out how to get the city water, over there and the sewer eventually.

Mindy: I would say that's definitely outside the 20 year scope. If we look long term, such as 50 years out, High Valley septic systems are going to fail too. So there's going to be a need to think about those kind of things long term.

Spogen: Does this bike route go down to the Thrift & Gift store? It needs to go to there because it's one of my favorite places.

Mindy: That is one of my favorite spots, too. Yes, the route goes to the Thrift & Gift.

Kim: There's also an existing bike path on the opposite side of the river called Cannon Road Pathway where that bridge is. It's an it's an existing bike path that's along Cannon Road, which it goes up to High Valley. The High Valley community has like 800 lots in it.

Spogen: I just ride on the road, but I wouldn't let my own kids go there on their own along the highway.

#### *Public Facilities - Mindy*

Fritsch: Is it public knowledge where those two wellheads are that are servicing the current water district?

Mindy: Yes, those are available on the county map, but they are not on this Subarea map.

Preston: Both of them are located just south of the airport.

Russell: You said that the area of septic sewer is smaller than the water. How much? Do you know about where it's supposed to be?

Mindy: It is still in the works, but the last time we looked at sewer out there in 2013 the geography of that was the downtown core, the area right around Highway 12, from the hotel down, and the airport through the community hall. It was a very narrow strip around Highway 12. That geography is what was used with the State to get the appropriation. If the system is going to serve something larger now we're going to need more money. Part of the RFQ that we put together included having HDR help us identify



other funding sources. What we have from the State is not big enough to expand that area a lot. 2013 was 10 years ago. Things have changed in 10 years.

Chastain: Are you looking at 200 connections for sewer?

Mindy: No, there are 200 new connections still available for water

Chastain: How are you planning to bring in new buildings and new apartments and be able to have enough room for septic and water to take care of the people that are already long-term residents whose systems have failed and need attention?

Mindy: The key to that is a sewer system. The key is to get those failing systems decommissioned, and to get those folks onto a sewer system. The other key is to make sure that system is large enough that it can accommodate growth over time. This is probably an iterative process. We have money for a certain amount. We need to plan for the future. We'll need more money. We'll probably need to expand the system. So there's going to be this kind of back and forth. However, sewer will constrain development even if we do all the land use stuff that we are talking about, the fact of sewer will constrain development. Then, at some point when we hit the capacity of the water system hookups, that will could start to constrain development until more water can be available.

Spogen: This map it shows the aquifer recharge areas. How does that restrict building?

Preston: The aquifer recharge areas include multiple types. Category one is that big red circle and it's relating to public water wellheads. Whenever you see that one, there's a public wellhead in the vicinity of that area. Category two are the blue and green layers which have to do with the types of soils and how well they drain. We restrict some of the uses that you're allowed to do on those on those recharge areas. There are only a handful of hard no's in any of the CARs in in the county. Most of them can be developed with most commercial and industrial uses that you would think of. It's just sometimes you have to do some extra reporting and have a really good stormwater system.

Spogen: You have quite a few of them on here and some of them are in the middle of the map. So you can still develop, there's just going to be some extra level of management of stormwater and things link that.

Preston: Yes. The easiest example is you can have gas stations on our critical aquifer recharge areas, but you can't have gas stations that serve a certain type of gas. I don't remember what type of gas that is at the moment, but it's a type of gas that gets into the ground faster and messes up water easier.

*Mindy asked the Commissioner what they want to learn more about and how they want to focus their conversation at the next workshop. The most frequent answers were that the Commissioners*

*would like to learn more about Land Use, Economic Development, and Housing. Commissioner Russel also asked for a summary of what they can expect to hear as negatives about the plan.*

## **9. Good of the Order:**

### **A. Staff**

Mindy gave an update on the Comp Plan appeal. The YMCA appealed the decision that the Board of County Commissioners made. Mindy informed the Planning Commission to refrain from talking about the subject with each other and the public until the appeal is completed.

Mindy added the topic of Rural Housing to the agenda for the January 24<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **B. Planning Commissioners**

Chastain: Packwood is extremely fortunate to have as many people come forth to be involved in this process.

## **10. Calendar**

The next meeting of the Planning Commission will occur on January 24, 2023 and the agenda items will be a Rural Housing Update and a refresher training.

## **11. Adjourn**

Commissioner Russell made a motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.