

Lewis County Planning Commission

Public Meeting

In-Person & Virtual Meeting via Zoom

March 14, 2023 - Meeting Notes

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

Planning Commissioners Absent: Corbin Foster, AL

Staff Present: Preston Pinkston, Planner; Mindy Brooks, Senior Long Range Planner; Megan Sathre, Office Assistant Senior; Barbara Russell, Prosecuting Attorney;

Materials Used:

- Agenda
- Draft Meeting Notes – February 28, 2023
- Staff Report: Packwood Subarea Plan

1. Zoom Guidelines

The clerk dispensed with the Zoom Guidelines.

2. Call to Order

A. Determination of a Quorum

6 Commissioners were present; there was a quorum.

3. Approval of Agenda

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Corbin 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 February 28, 2023. Commissioner Corbin asked staff to check for accuracy when stating whether Frank Corbin or Corbin Foster are speaking. Staff confirmed they would check the meeting notes for clarity.

Commissioner Corbin made a motion to approve the notes with the suggested clarification; second by Commissioner Alves. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Public Comment

There were no members of the public who wished to provide comment.

6. Public Hearing – Packwood Subarea Plan

Chair Spogen opened the public hearing on the Packwood Subarea Plan. Spogen asked if there any members of the public believed the public was not notified in a timely manner of the hearing. No members of the public responded.

Spogen made a disclosure that her nephew is in attendance of the hearing and may provide testimony, but she has no interest in his business and can remain impartial.

Mindy Brooks, Senior Long Range Planner for Lewis County Community Development gave a brief overview of the Packwood Subarea Plan. She noted that all written testimony that was submitted was in front of the Commissioners. The staff report was sent to the Commissioners on March 3rd and included some take home messages. Mindy presented those messages again.

Testimony

The following individuals gave testimony in support of the Packwood Subarea Plan; Teresa Fenn, Maree Lerchen, White Pass Scenic Byway (represented by Maree Lerchen), Gina Owen, Jon Anderson, Tracy Crowshaw, Greg Arkle, David Fleckenstein, and Cathy Lilianthal.

The following individuals gave testimony proposing changes to the Packwood Subarea Plan; Schuyler Jorgensen and David Campos.

The following individual gave testimony expressing concern about the current state of Packwood; Dianne Porter

Discussion

Following the testimony, the Planning Commissioners had discussion regarding the following topics.

The Commissioners expressed concern regarding Short Term Rentals (STRs). There was agreement among them that STRs should have at least some mention in the Plan since STRs are one of the most talked about topics in the Packwood Community. The Commissioners discussed the lack of regulation that currently exists and the impacts that it has on the Packwood Community. Dennis and Kim, representatives of the Packwood Community Advisory Committee (CAC) shared what the CAC's perspectives and conversations were throughout the development of the Plan. Dennis shared that there was considerable discussion around STRs and the CAC

recognizes the issues with affordable housing which is impacted by STRs. He noted that the CAC felt STRs is a countywide issue and should be addressed at the county-level. Kim added that the Plan is meant to address long term problems and to look 20 years ahead so it is not meant to address the right now issues. The STR problem is a right now problem so it was not included in the long term plan. Staff suggested that the Commissioners request that staff draft a policy and goals that they can consider for inclusion in the plan. There was consensus from the Commissioners to take this approach.

Next, the Commissioners discussed the proposed changes that Schuyler Jorgensen and David Campos provided in their testimony.

Schulyer's request was to zone the Huntington Road Property as Residential Low Density (RL) rather than the Plan's current proposed zoning of Commercial Business District (CBZ). Schuyler requested that the property be changed to RL because it would be congruent to the current Small Town Mixed Use (STMU) zoning designation the property is currently zoned as.

In response to this request, the Commissioners asked clarifying questions about whether building houses next to the airport is going to have a negative impact. Dave Fleckenstien, former Director of Aviation for WSDOT and CAC member, provided testimony that residential uses are not compatible with airport operations. Staff stated that Schuyler's request was reviewed by the CAC and they noted that typically commercial zoning is more appropriate next to an airport, but did not have an in depth conversation about it. The Commissioners concluded that they would like staff to draft a map with the requested change for consideration at the next meeting.

David's request was to change the zoning of the Packwood Mill Site from 132.7 acres of Commercial Business District (CBZ) to; 27.7 acres CBZ, 10 acres Residential High Density (RH), 60 acres Residential Medium Density (RM), and 35 acres Residential Low Density (RL). David would like this zoning in order to implement a Master Plan and provide needed housing. Since this zoning change would increase residential densities, staff let the Commissioners know that they could amend the description to the CBZ (page 21 of the Plan).

In response to this request, the Commissioners asked what the CAC thought of this request. Staff shared that the CAC was for the most part in favor of supporting this change. The Commissioners concluded that they would like staff to draft a map with the requested change for consideration at the next meeting.

The Commissioners also asked staff to amend the CBZ description to strike "High density uses, 18-30 units per acre, should be allowed and buffered from commercial or manufacturing uses." Mindy noted that this particular language was added to the CBZ description when the whole Mill Site was zoned CBZ, but wanted some residential allowances. However, because the Mill Site is asking for new designations, they would no longer need that language in the description.

Russell asked Schuyler why having the description as is would not benefit him. He responded that it would require sewer and would delay development times.

Staff noted that all the zoning changes will only apply to new development. The developments that are already in place will not be required to change when a new zoning designation is applied.

Russell noted that he was pleasantly surprised by how many people who have lived here a long time are in favor of the plan. He also noted that when it comes to big decisions he wants to make sure critical areas are being protected, property rights are being protected, and the decision is good for Lewis County as a whole. Mindy responded that Critical Areas Ordinance will stay the same as the rules apply now. Preston added that many of the areas with critical areas were purposely left out of the subarea boundary.

Staff and the Commissioners had conversations about how sewer plays into the Plan. The sewer system is separate from the Plan, but will continue to drive growth. The Plan is meant to manage and direct that growth.

Some residents expressed concern with having high residential density in the downtown area. Mindy stated that multifamily housing is only allowed where there is sewer and sewer is going in Downtown. In order to have affordable housing, Packwood needs to have multi-family housing. Also, in terms of transportation, the closer people live to the businesses they work at, the less of a commute they have to make. When housing is located far from the commercial center it increases traffic and congestion.

Chair Spogen entertained a motion to recess and continue the hearing until March 28th at 6:00pm. The motion was moved by Corbin, seconded by Alves. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Good of the Order:

A. Staff

Mindy – March 28th will be a continuation of the hearing. We are also going to go back to population and housing allocations again.

B. Planning Commissioners

Corbin shared that he will be out of town on March 28th, but will try to join the meeting via Zoom.

8. Calendar

The next meeting of the Planning Commission will occur on March 28, 2023 and the agenda items are a continued hearing and an update on the Comprehensive Plan population and housing allocations.

9. Adjourn

Commissioner Chastain made a motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.