

Lewis County Planning Commission

Public Meeting

In-Person & Virtual Meeting via Zoom

May 9, 2023 - Meeting Notes

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

Planning Commissioner Excused: Gretchen Fritsch, District 3;

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

Others Present: Eric Hayes, City of Toledo; Steve Burch, City of Toledo; Tammy Baraconi, City of Chehalis

Materials Used:

- Agenda
- Draft Meeting Notes – April 25, 2023
- Staff Presentation: Population and Housing Allocations

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 Chastain made the motion to approve the agenda; second by Commissioner Alves. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of Meeting Notes

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the meeting notes from April 25, 2023. Commissioner Alves made a motion to approve the notes as presented, second by Commissioner Chastain. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Public Comment

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

6. Public Hearing – Comprehensive Plan Population & Housing Allocations

Chair Spogen began the hearing by asking the following questions.

Is there anyone in the audience who believes that the public was not notified in a timely manner? *There were no responses.*

Do any of the Commissioner a disclosure to make? *There were no responses.*

Staff Presentation & Questions

Mindy Brooks, Senior Long Range Planner for Community Development, gave a presentation on the population and housing allocations (*see presentation for details*). The following questions and discussion occurred throughout the presentation.

Population Allocation

Commissioner Chastain asked the City of Chehalis how large their UGA is in terms of acreage. Tammy Baraconi, representing the City of Chehalis, responded that she did not know the number off the top of her head. Eric Eisenberg shared in the chat that Chehalis' UGA is approximately 4,000 acres. Chastain also asked the representatives from Toledo if they knew the size of their UGA. Eric Hayes, City Council, reported that they do not have the numbers, but they are holding a hearing next week to annex the bulk of their UGA so by the end of the year they plan to have no UGA. Mindy displayed the Lewis County GIS map to show where the UGAs are located.

Commissioner Spogen asked the city representatives if they wanted a higher allocation. Tammy responded that she calculated the four large developments that we have and multiplied by 24 units per acre, which is our maximum density, and the total came to over 68,000 people to be added to the population. That number requires a lot of infrastructure upgrade that the city must find funding for. If Chehalis can't justify why we need the upgrades, it becomes difficult to obtain the funding. A higher population projection means a higher chance of getting money for infrastructure upgrades.

Commissioner Spogen asked who in the City of Chehalis decides how the city will grow. Tammy responded that it comes down to zoning. The current developers are looking to do a Master Planned Development, which allows them to develop a mixture of multi-family, single family,

and neighborhood commercial. Spogen asked if one of the developments is off of Kennicott and Jackson Hwy. Tammy responded that is one of them as well as one at Newaukum Golf Course and one at Raindrop Properties. Chehalis also has a proposed apartment complex of 280 units. Spogen reiterated that she was wondering who determines how the area is developed because it could dramatically change the culture of the area. Mindy responded that cities have to have a comprehensive plan that drives their zoning and they are starting periodic update just like us on July 1st. They will be revisiting these questions of how they want to grow to accommodate population growth.

Commissioner Spogen noted that increased development requires adequate facilities, schools, etc. Spogen asked when the cities are required to meet those requirements. Mindy responded, that when the cities permitting development, they are beholden to the same Growth Management rules about adequate public facilities. However, each jurisdiction defines their own adequate public facilities. Transportation is required under GMA as an adequate public facility, but the rest such as fire or schools are determined by the jurisdiction. Tammy responded that the city of Chehalis has identified their adequate public facilities as school, fire, police, parks, and transportation.

Commissioner Chastain commented that she has been thinking about the growth in all of Lewis County. One of the things that often seems to get missed is medical facilities and staff. Chastain voiced that she believes that should be as much as an important public facility as schools. Mindy responded that the reason hospitals are not considered a public facility is because hospitals are private, not public. As a private service/facility they are regulated under Growth Management Act. Chastain asked if the hospitals are aware of the growth that is anticipated. Mindy shared that many places have a commission that interact with varying levels of government. However, there is a disconnect at the state level. While Lewis County has identified fire as a required public facility, Fire Districts are not required under state law to plan for the population allocations. This is a significant disconnect.

Commissioner Spogen asked if any of the cities were disappointed that they did not get higher numbers. Mindy responded that the Planned Growth Committee had discussions, and everyone was present at the vote in which they voted unanimously to move the proposal to Planning Commission. Tammy stated that Chehalis was a little disappointed, but at least the proposed number can move Chehalis forward and it will be reevaluated in five years. Toledo felt similarly that they were satisfied they can move forward with the current numbers and like that it can be readdressed in five years after their UGA has changed.

Housing Allocations

Commissioner Russell asked what happens if a city extends the UGA south and then the city decides they want to move the UGA and development north. Mindy responded that it is actually the county's decision where the UGAs grows. The county may say no to city, but we typically allow the cities to tell us where they want to grow. The city should be doing a comprehensive

look and making determination about where they're going to grow based on where it is appropriate. For example, avoiding critical areas and determining where the city can provide water, sewer, etc. UGA boundary amendments should not be based on whether a property owner wants to be in the UGA. However, it does happen that way. Eric Hayes, Toledo, shared that it has worked out for Toledo because the owners of the land have come to the UGA. Toledo's Urban Reserve, which is their future UGA, has already been bought by people that want to build. Tammy added that Chehalis is similar in that it is property owner driven and then we take into consideration the capacity for utilities and transportation.

Commissioner Russell asked why Chehalis does not go up to Kennicott. Tammy responded that there's a developer who is currently looking at going up the hill part way, but it's going to take a water tower to be able to serve water up that hill and that is very expensive. At the same time, Chehalis needs to look at the population numbers to justify UGA expansion. Currently, Chehalis cannot justify expanding the UGA given the population allocations. Russell asked why the UGA expansion would be a problem. Tammy responded that Chehalis has to be able to say that we need the land in our UGA for an Urban Development. We have enough land for the population allocation. So until we can get that population number up to where it actually reflects the amount of land that we have for development, we are not able to bring more area into our UGA. Russell stated that it's a catch 22. When looking at the map, a lot of the UGA is between Jackson Hwy and I-5 which corresponds highly to wetlands and floodplains and other critical areas. Since the UGA started in this direction there is now restrictions on being able to expand in another area. Mindy clarified that if the city of Chehalis decided that they wanted to give back UGA in one area and grow in a different location, they are able to do so. The cities are responsible to make those decisions and bring them to the county for consideration. Tammy added that when making UGA considerations they have to ask whether they will ever be able to serve an area with water and sewer. Right now Chehalis can serve all of it's UGA and the majority of development will be developer driven. Russell stated that there are 500 flat acres on top of the hill.

Commissioner Alves asked if the law that was discussed at the last meeting that said that the state is going to require that cities be opened up to multi-family on all the parcels was passed. Mindy responded that a version of the law was passed that affects cities with populations of 75,000 or more, which does not impact any cities in Lewis County at this time. The law requires that residential zones allow for multifamily, not just single family development. Alves asked if the cities are interested in pursuing similar strategies to keep the rural areas rural and develop the cities more densely. Eric Hayes responded that Toledo did that in 2020. They lowered their lot size from 8,000 sq ft to 4,000 sq ft and allow duplexes. Tammy added that from Chehalis' perspective, they are looking at design guidelines to make sure that that the bulk of these duplexes and triplexes fit in with the neighborhood.

Alves asked if it be fair to say that, generally, because infrastructure takes a lot longer to get funding that developers are moving at a speed much greater than infrastructure anyway. The developers are always looking for spots within the infrastructure boundaries but are one step ahead. Tammy confirmed that is a very fair statement. Alves followed up by stating that he

thinks Chehalis is dealing with having to catch up to their current infrastructure. Alves agrees and encourages the idea of keeping the density and development in the cities and keeping the rural areas rural for as long as possible. Commissioner Corbin shared that he agrees with what Jason said, but that cities need to be mindful of the increased impact of infill on infrastructure like roads.

Public Testimony

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

Deliberation

Commissioner Alves move to send a letter of transmittal recommending that the Board of County Commissioners pass an ordinance to adopt the population and housing allocations as presented in the April 20, 2023 staff report and attachment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Corbin. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Good of the Order:

A. Staff

Mindy: We are planning for the next Packwood Subarea Plan hearing on September 12, 2023. That hearing will take place in Packwood and we hope that all of you can make the trip out. There will be a Zoom option, but it is important that we be in the community to hear their testimony. We will provide dinner. The other item is that we would like to hold a joint session between Planning Commission and the BOCC to brainstorm the scope for periodic update. That session is tentative scheduled for September 26, 2023 during your regular meeting.

B. Planning Commissioners

There were no items from the Planning Commissioners for the good of the order.

8. Calendar

The next meeting of the Planning Commission will occur on May 23, 2023 and the agenda item on the Packwood Subarea Plan.

9. Adjourn

Commissioner Chastain made a motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.