

For Immediate Release – February 12, 2004

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COUNTY CONSIDERS CODE LANGUAGE SUPPORTING AGRICULTURAL AND ASSOCIATED ACTIVITIES

Port Townsend, WA -- The Jefferson County Planning Commission will be holding a public hearing on proposed changes to the Unified Development Code regarding agricultural activities on February 18, 2004 at 6:45 PM at the WSU Community Learning Center in Hadlock. The Planning Commission is interested to hear what farmers and other members of the community think about the proposed development regulations.

The proposed amendments are the result of a year-long study which included input from local farmers. The amendments clarify what agricultural activities do and do not require a County land use permit. Agricultural and associated activities that do not require land use approval would be subject to limitations and all other County, State and Federal regulations. Parking for retail and manufacturing activities associated with agriculture would need to be fully accommodated on-site. The proposed code amendments also address some new uses, such as agritourism and farmworker housing, and other associated uses which support the local agricultural community, such as veterinary clinics, agricultural schools, rural restaurants, campgrounds, guide services and others. Each of these uses would carry different permit requirements based on type, scale and intensity.

“The objective of this proposal is to support local commercial agriculture while at the same time protecting the environment and upholding the intent of the Growth Management Act,” said Karen Driscoll, agricultural policy coordinator with the County Department of Community Development. “The code needs to be updated to accommodate modern, small-scale, innovative farming practices and to clearly define what activities are a ‘matter of right,’ within set limitations on scale and intensity.”

Following the public hearing the Planning Commission will prepare a recommendation for the Board of County Commissioners. The Board is expected to consider the recommendation in March 2004.

For more information, or to submit written comments to the Planning Commission, contact Josh Peters or Karen Driscoll, Long-Range Planning, at (360) 379-4450 or via email to planning@co.jefferson.wa.us. Interested persons are invited to visit the County website at <http://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/commdevelopment>. Click “Issue Links” and “Agricultural Lands Planning.”

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