



JEFFERSON COUNTY

PLANNING COMMISSION

621 Sheridan Street

Port Townsend, WA 98368

(360) 379-4450

Minutes of the Critical Areas Committee Meeting
September 7, 2006, 7pm
WSU Learning Center
Shold Business Park, Spruce Room
201 West Patison
Port Hadlock

Planning Commission: Jim Hagen, Peter Downey, Henry Werch and Dennis Schultz
Advisors: Norm MacLeod, Jim Tracy, Bill Wheeler, John Richmond, Kathy Dickson, Diane Johnson, Sandy Hershelman, Kenn Brooks, Amy Hiatt, Dianne Bonnivier-Holman, Jill Silver, George Yount, Roger Short and Robert Crittenden
Staff: Rachel McHugh

Summary:

The Planning Commission Critical areas subcommittee meeting was called to order in the Pacific Room at the Department of Environmental Health at 7pm by Chair Jim Hagen. Planning Commission members present were Peter Downey, Jim Hagen, Dennis Schultz and Henry Werch. Advisory members present were Norm MacLeod, Jim Tracy, Bill Wheeler, John Richmond, Kathy Dickson, Diane Johnson, Sandy Hershelman, Kenn Brooks, Amy Hiatt, Dianne Bonnivier-Holman, Jill Silver, George Yount, Roger Short and Robert Crittenden.

J. Hagen suggested the committee get caught up on what had been done to date. Discussion of existing and ongoing ag exemptions and Fish and Wildlife Habitat Corridors were briefed. J. Hagen overviewed the work done on ag exemptions; the committee agreed to expand definitions for existing and ongoing ag to allow for ag come after the date in 18.20.0303 (g); also to remove (h) and the 'new' ag distinction. There was further discussion of 'new' ag. J. Hagen stated it was a general recommendation for a different area of the code; the committee is putting forward policy recommendations for staff and the Board. D. Shultz pointed out changes can not be made that are incompatible with other parts of the code. Discussion of ag included agriculture management plans. A. Latham stated that currently management plans are not required. K. Brooks stated that he had contacted NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service); they assured him they would make assistance available to the County on a team basis for plans to provide technical assistance. G. Yount urged perspective regarding what Island County might mean for Jefferson County. Island County was discussed in terms of agriculture issues previously considered by the committee. J. Hagen reasserted the idea of general recommendations. Island County was discussed as a full package of actions. J. Silver reminded the committee that Island County has a huge tax base; she believes Island County did a wonderful job surveying wetlands; there needs to be a balance between ag and other rural functions. There was further discussion of the Island County ordinance. B. Wheeler questioned whether or not the County would end up with an ordinance that was more restrictive. GMA requirements and land use intensities were discussed. K. Brooks mentioned that very few custom farm plans would be required; the majority of farms could use a standard plan that is reasonable, but protective. A. Latham stated he thought many farms would need custom plans. Funding, accountability and cost implications of a package like Island Co. were discussed. Thurston Co was also mentioned. J. Hagen asked the committee if they were thinking to adopt an Island Co. model to our resources. A. Latham asked what the committee is trying to protect; he stated Jefferson County has stricter standards for water monitoring. The potential to adopt an Island Co. model in Jefferson County was discussed. The time for adoption was discussed. Placing a timetable for implementation in the

recommendation was considered. N. MacLeod pointed out the possibility of adopting over the next several years until the next Comprehensive Plan update to spread out the cost. D. Schultz suggested keeping in perspective that the committee was discussing less than 5% of land in the County. J. Silver highlighted Island Co. 17.02.02; she wanted the committee to come out with a support statement. A path toward implementation was discussed in terms of a timeline, steps to go through and issues for the BoCC. A. Latham suggested the committee needed to realize what was going on currently; he also pointed out that adequate money for best management practices would be necessary. G. Yount stated the County would need to have something for an interim with an understanding of where the County was going to be. A. Latham suggested the Chimicum plan was something the County had in the interim. How the County could show it was proceeding down a path and funding were considered. J. Silver mentioned the committee was doing good work and should keep the importance of water quality in mind; in particular the reaction of the waters on the Westside to the removal of canopy and lack of trees. What the Hearings Board decision on Island County means to best available science was discussed including NRCS and implication for buffers. D. Schultz reminded the committee there were different sections of the critical area ordinance. K. Brooks pointed out the distinction between a policy decision and a science decision. Island County's zoning distinctions were discussed. B. Wheeler clarified that all the committee's discussion was toward the ag of Island County. H. Werch suggested a recommendation that the BoCC endorse the spirit of the Island County ordinance. What that would entail was discussed. N. MacLeod pointed the committee to finding of fact # 10 speaking to agricultural heritage. H. Werch moved to have the paragraph adopted. J Hagen expressed concern over the committee talking in general rather than specifics; he wanted to know how staff could incorporate some of the recommendations; he stated he was getting confusing instructions from the group. A. Hiatt stated she assumed that the draft ordinance was now looking like scrap paper. N. MacLeod stated on August 30th (with the Island County decision) the hearings board provided the County a new way of approaching critical areas. P. Downey suggested the greatest use of the committee was to give policy direction rather than specific language. K. Brooks stated he believes it inexcusable that Al and Josh were not present; he didn't see how staff could embody changes if they were not present. What August 30th and the Island County decision might mean for the Jefferson County draft ordinance was discussed. N. Stelow suggested dropping "Jefferson County" into the Island County Ordinance and seeing how it would work for Jefferson County. There was more discussion of staff presence. A. Latham stated the conservation district was under contract from the County to develop plans for the rest of Jefferson County; he voiced the option that Island County could be the base instead of the Chimicum Plan. There was more discussion of NRCS and best management practices.

Public Comment was opened. K. Baril stated that specific buffers by feet were not worth the fight. T. MacLeod expressed concern that people were being fined for back taxes for commercial ag.

The committee discussed the next meeting. J. Silver mentioned using an Island County model could be an expensive proposition. There was discussion of the State's contribution and how affordable, or not, the model might be for Jefferson County.

Meeting closed 9:30pm.

Conclusions:

The committee requests the Director of Community Development and senior planner's attendance.

Motion 1: The committee recommends the adoption of the philosophy and approach of the Island County ordinance for agriculture as a package for applicability to Jefferson County. Passed

Motion 2: The committee requests the Board of County Commissioners adopt a statement such as Finding or Fact # 10, page 18 of 23, from the Island County decision from the Hearings Board (8/30/06) as part of the purpose for the Jefferson County ordinance to promote rural character and agriculture. Passed

Motion 3: The committee recommends re-writing entirely the 'ag section' with line-in/line-out using Island County as a general model as applicable to Jefferson County. Passed with one abstaining.