

SKAGIT COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Planning Commission Regular Meeting

October 8, 2024

6:00 PM – 8:58 PM

Please refer to transcript and video recording of the Planning Commission meeting for in-depth information about these meeting minutes. Meeting materials, the full transcript, meeting agenda, and referenced video recording of this meeting can be viewed at the Planning Commission Schedule and Agenda page:

<https://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/PlanningCommission/PCminutes.htm>

Summary of Meeting

Roll Call

Tim Raschko, (Chair): present

Tammy Candler, (Vice Chair): present

Amy Hughes: present

Vincent Henley: present

Kathy Mitchell: present

Jen Hutchison: present

Joe Woodmansee: present

Angela Day: present

Kiera Wright: present

The Planning Commission Chair Tim Raschko called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Raschko asked if there was approval for the September 24, 2024, minutes.

Commissioner Kathy Mitchel moved to approve the minutes.

Commissioner Amy Hughes seconded.

Vote: Support- 9, Oppose- 0, Abstain- 0. The motion carried.

Public Remarks

Chair Raschko opened the public remarks section of the meeting and asked if there was anyone from the public who would like to address the Commission.

- Larry Jensen spoke in support of Agritourism and asked for the Planning Commission to make one set of rules for all farmers.

- Rylee Fleury spoke in support of farmers and in opposition to regulations on agricultural land. Mr. Fleury also spoke in support of creating incentives for farmers to farm in Skagit County.
- Tina Champeaux spoke in support of what Mr. Jensen and Fleury said in their public remarks and in support of allowing agritourism on agricultural land.
- Darrel Fussel spoke in opposition to regulations on agricultural land.

King County v Friends of Sammamish Valley Washington Supreme Court Opinion Update

Will Honea, Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, summarized the King County v Friends of Sammamish Valley Washington State Supreme Court opinion and summarized the King County ordinance that allowed tasting rooms in the Agricultural lands, which the Supreme Court ruled violated the Growth Management Act and the State Environmental Policy Act. Mr. Honea then took questions from the Planning Commission.

2025 – 2030 Capital Facilities Plan Work Session

Tara Satushek, Senior Planner, provided summary of the 2025-2030 Capital Facilities Plan Update. Next steps include a public comment, which will be open October 10, 2024 – October 31, 2024, a public hearing will be held on October 29, 2024, and deliberations on November 19, 2024. Board of County Commissioners consideration will be on December 9, 2024, as part of the budget adoption.

SCC 14.16.400(4)(h) Amendment Public Hearing and Deliberations

Chair Raschko opened the public hearing for public comment on the proposed amendments which would prohibit electricity generation and storage in the Agricultural-NRL zone as a Major Utility Development use. Ms. Satushek gave a presentation before public testimony began.

Commissioner Day requested to know all of the zones that allow major utility uses. The Department will provide the Planning Commission a list at a later meeting. The Planning Commission received testimony from 6 members of the public:

- Rylee Fleury provided testimony and asked that safety measures are being considered Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) in industrial lands.
- Jessica Nguyen provided testimony on how alternative energy can benefit farms that have expensive energy costs and that there can be ways to use alternative energy to benefit agricultural lands.
- Larry Jensen provided testimony supporting gas power plants and hydroelectric dams and against battery energy storage systems.
- Tina Champeaux provided testimony supporting the Board of County Commissioner's moratorium on energy storage and generation in the AG-NRL zone. She expressed

concerns about the Goldeneye BESS systems being proposed in the flood zone, the potential impacts to the stream, and the potential need for evacuation due to an event at a BESS facility.

- Makala Staples Hughes provided testimony in support of the amendment. Ms. Hughes expressed concern about the potential of agricultural land being converted for BESS facilities and stated that BESS facilities are incompatible with agricultural land.
- Todd Ferguson spoke in opposition to BESS systems and expressed concerns with lithium pollution.

Chair Raschko opened the floor for deliberations.

Commissioner Hutchison moved to recommend approval of the amendments as written.

Vice Chair Candler seconded.

Chair Raschko opened discussion.

Commissioner Day made a motion to amend the current motion to include the Secondary Forest - NRL – and the Rural Resource – NRL zones.

Commissioner Wright seconded.

There was discussion of the second motion. Commissioner Day withdrew her motion.

Vote: Support- 9, Oppose- 0, Abstain- 0. The motion carried.

The Planning Commission reviewed the recorded motion. The Planning Commission added an extra finding of fact suggesting that the Board of County Commissioners consider similar protections for other resource zones.

The Planning Commission voted unanimously to approve the recorded motion.

Countywide Planning Policy Deliberations

Robby Eckroth, Senior Planner, provided a presentation to the Planning Commission with an update to the growth allocations that are part of the Countywide Planning Policy updates.

Commissioner Day made a motion for the Skagit County Planning Commission to respectfully recommend to the Board of County Commissioners that they adopt the proposed changes to the Countywide Planning Policies related to housing and climate, and regional growth allocations.

A second Planning Commissioner (unclear in the record) seconded the motion.

The chair opened the floor for discussion.

Vote: Ayes- 1, Nays- 7, Abstain- 1. The motion failed.

Vice Chair Candler moved to recommend that the Board of County Commissioners does not adopt the Countywide Planning Policy amendments.

Commissioner Mitchell seconded the motion.

Vote: Support- 6, Oppose- 1, Abstain- 2. The motion carried.

The Planning Commission voted unanimously to approve the Findings of Fact and Reasons for Action.

Planning Commission Comments/Announcements

Commissioner Mitchell commended the other Commissioners for speaking their minds.

Commissioner Day thanked those who provided written comments and public testimony, staff, and the other Commissioners. Chair Raschko thanked staff for their work.

Adjourned at 8:58 PM

[A full transcript of the discussion is available on our website:](https://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/PlanningCommission/PCminutes.htm)

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Tim Raschko, Planning Commission Chair

Date

Jack Moore, Secretary

Date