

SKAGIT COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Planning Commission 2023 Regular Meeting October 10, 2023

Please refer to transcript and video recording of 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>

6:00 PM – 7:18PM

Summary of Meeting

Roll Call

Chair Tim Raschko noted that everyone was in attendance

Tammy Chandler: Present

Amy Huges: Present

Vince Henley: Present

Kathy Mitchell: Present

Martha Rose: Present

Jennifer Hutchison: Present

Joe Woodmansee: Present

Approval of Minutes

Chair Tim Raschko introduced the minutes from the last meeting (9/12/2023) for approval. A motion to approve the September 12th meeting minutes was so moved by Commissioner Rose and was seconded by Commissioner Henley. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Remarks

Anthony Ramano expressed frustration with ongoing circumstances relating to the planning and police departments.

Public Comments on Proposed Agritourism Code Change

The public comment period was opened on July 6, 2023, and closed the end of business day of August 17, 2023. There were 1,367 comments made on the proposed agritourism code which were then organized into various categories. The comments were compiled into attachments and then were bundled into a report. There were multiple organizations that voiced their

opinions along with many individuals. Senior Planner Sarah Ruether gave a presentation to explain the comments within the various categories.

There were questions from the Commissioners regarding the efficacy of the surveys that were done with BERK consulting. Senior Planner Sarah Ruether answered their questions by explaining that the surveys were not statistically significant and were rather a tool for public involvement to let citizens know that the County was considering changes in Agritourism.

There were conversations about the process of approving or changing the Agritourism code. The Department recommended that anyone who has suggested changes to code submit them as part of the annual docket process. The deadline for submittal is the last day of July. This process is open to any citizen or group for changes they would like to see to code. It was noted that code and the Comprehensive plan change every year and that the process of getting code and planning done is an iterative processes that is ongoing.

Next steps include a tentative deliberation scheduled for December 12th, 2023.

Agritourism comment documents are available on our website:

<https://www.skagitcounty.net/departments/planningandpermit/agtourismmain.htm>

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

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Director's Update

Planning Director Jack Moore provided an update to the Commissioners. He discussed the lifting of the burn ban and an appeal to the Lake Erie gravel mine special use permit which was remanded back to the hearing examiner for further consideration. The County has received an application for a Special Use permit for a battery energy storage system near the county transfer station. The County received comments from the department of ecology regarding the draft of the shorelines update. The County has submitted a grant application for the Comprehensive Plan Update. The County is also looking at a supplemental grant regarding climate resiliency.

Planning Commission Comments/Announcements

The Commissioners asked about the permit process for the battery storage system and Mr. Moore responded clarifying that the County has only received an application for the special use permit. If approved, then the company would move forward with the other necessary permits required. The Commissioners asked about the chemical makeup of the batteries to which Mr. Moore responded that they were lithium based. Mr. Moore explained that the Fire Marshall

has been monitoring the makeup of the batteries. If a fire were to occur, the current guidelines are to evacuate and let the fire burn. Hazmat would then need to come in and clean up the remains. The Commissioners asked about the report regarding the wells on Guemes Island. Mr. Moore shared that he hasn't seen the report yet, but he would check with Natural Resources to see if they have any information on it.

Adjourned at 7:18pm.

Tim Raschko, Planning Commission Chair

Date

Jack Moore, Secretary

Date