

Skagit County Planning Commission
Deliberations: Miscellaneous Code Amendments
Briefing: PDS Work Plan
Briefing: Alternative Futures Project
September 1, 2009

Commissioners: **Bill Stiles, Chairman**
 Jason Easton
 Carol Ehlers
 Mary McGoffin
 Jerry Jewett
 Matt Mahaffie
 Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn
 Dave Hughes (absent)
 Annie Lohman (absent)

Staff: **Gary Christensen, Planning Director**
 Carly Ruacho, Senior Planner
 Kirk Johnson, Senior Planner/Team Leader
 Arne Denny, Civil Deputy Prosecutor

Chairman Bill Stiles: (gavel) Welcome to the regular September meeting of the Skagit County Planning Commission. Tonight we have an agenda that begins with our deliberations on the Miscellaneous Code Amendments. We had a workshop on July 30th and reviewed most of these. The Planning staff has provided tonight some additional findings to add to the recorded motion – the draft recorded motion – that they prepared and everybody, I think, has already seen. So that’s something we need to go over before.

But before we get started, I guess, go ahead, Carly.

Carly Ruacho: All right. Thank you, Commissioners. Good evening. Welcome to the new building. We are very glad – about an hour ago we didn’t have chairs or lights, so we are very thankful to all the Facilities folks who were able to get us set up after hours with everything we needed for the first time. Gary had suggested some pen lamps we were going to all wear that would get us through. But Rich probably wouldn’t have liked that – probably not very good for TV.

So really on this Miscellaneous Code Amendment deliberations, we are just here to hear from you if there are any – obviously there are a lot; there’s a hundred. I’m envisioning that you don’t want to walk through them one by one. Let me know if I’m assuming wrong. But we could talk about any that anyone had any questions on. We do have Arne Denny, County Civil Attorney, here, mostly for discussion on the one issue that we have put in with these one hundred, where

ninety-nine of them didn't receive any comment whatsoever; one of them did. But we feel, based on a moratorium that's in existence and some other issues, that that one can move forward with this batch and should move forward, and you've had additional correspondence regarding that. And that correspondence is privileged and confidential correspondence between the Planning Commission, staff and legal counsel so you have the benefit of his opinion on that.

And then, as Bill said, we do have draft findings in order to make your deliberations a little bit easier. You had your draft recorded motion with the standard recitals outlining the procedural Whereases-type recitals for some time. And then tonight is where findings would be derived. You certainly can use these as a starting point. You could scratch them; you could add your own; edit them, et cetera. It's just something that we hope, you know, will help be an efficient way to draft your findings. But certainly use them as you so choose.

So really, with that, I would just hear from you how you'd like to proceed with your deliberations. I've brought the record on this matter. I have a code book. So I think we're covered on whatever materials we might need tonight. We should have them and with all this technology everybody should be able to see it, and I think we'll be able to move through it.

Chairman Stiles: Okay, my suggestion on this is that what I'd like to do is now that we have a draft recorded motion with findings, I'd like to go through those, adopt those first –

Jason Easton: The findings?

Chairman Stiles: The findings and the recorded motion, basically. And then based on what we've done with the findings, then we would make a motion on adoption of the recommendation above all the other amendments.

Mr. Easton: Yeah, I'm agreeable to that.

Chairman Stiles: So, if that's the case, if everybody thinks that makes sense then, is there any questions? Or does anybody have any changes they'd like to make to the findings that we've been given?

Mr. Easton: I just have one comment. I found Arne's – it's "Arne," right? Am I saying that right?

Arne Denny: Yes, sir.

Mr. Easton: I found your document to be really helpful and not quite like a really high-priced lawyer, so I appreciated its readability. But I think that I have a better understanding of what's going on in relationship to the utility issue, and I had some concerns – and I think I may have voiced them at the last meeting – about

us batching that with these other ninety-nine, but I feel – I feel really comfortable. And after reviewing the findings, I feel comfortable with seeing these findings move forward as part of the recorded motion.

Carol Ehlers: May I add a comment?

Chairman Stiles: Yes.

Ms. Ehlers: I particularly appreciated the context you gave in that memo to us with two previous situations and how it all related to come to the conclusion you did.

Mr. Denny: Thank you.

Chairman Stiles: Any other comments? I would like to then reference specifically those findings that relate to that particular item. It looks like number – numbers 6 through 9. And if those are –

Ms. Ruacho: You might want to add 5 to that, Bill.

Chairman Stiles: Well, yeah, I've written 5, so 5 through 9 are in relation to that. If those are adequate, then if people have no other comments then we can adopt these findings.

Mr. Easton: Would you like a motion for all nine or just for the ___?

Chairman Stiles: Let's do all nine.

Mr. Easton: Okay, I move that we accept attaching these findings – what is referred to as the “draft PC findings for the Miscellaneous Code Amendments Phase I” – that we attach them to the Planning Commission's recorded motion that will be considered later in this meeting.

Chairman Stiles: Do I have a second?

Mary McGoffin: I second.

Chairman Stiles: I have a second. Any discussion?

Mr. Easton: This doesn't preclude us from adding an additional finding as we go through the evening?

Chairman Stiles: Correct. Hearing no discussion, all those in favor, say aye.

Jerry Jewett, Chairman Stiles, Ms. Ehlers, Mr. Easton, Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn, Matt Mahaffie and Ms. McGoffin: Aye.

Chairman Stiles: Those opposed?

(silence)

Chairman Stiles: It passes unanimously. So based on this – what we’ve just adopted – is that I don’t think anybody has any heartburn with any of the hundred or so of the Phase I proposed changes. If anybody would like to bring something up, let’s do it now.

Ms. Ehlers: I have a quibble or two.

Chairman Stiles: Go ahead.

Ms. Ehlers: I carefully read the most precise commenter on the code changes and I’d like to start with “dwelling unit,” in which case I think you mean not – instead of “not *less* than 220 square feet,” “not *more* than 220 square feet.”

Ms. Ruacho: No, it’s correct as written: “not less than 220 square feet.”

Ms. Ehlers: So you *have* to have 220 square feet?

Ms. Ruacho: Correct. If, say, it was 100 square feet, we wouldn’t consider that an efficiency dwelling unit. That would not be a dwelling unit at that point. If it was 200 square feet, it would not be a dwelling unit. 220 is the threshold at which it becomes a dwelling unit – the minimum threshold.

Ms. Ehlers: Do you have a definition for another kind of building that is – because there was a reference in here several code discussions ago to your not requiring a permit for a building of 200 square feet or less. But I think that was if it were not a dwelling unit: Am I correct?

Ms. Ruacho: If it’s not living area at all. It can’t be used for sleeping. It’s strictly storage, so it can’t be used, you know, for anyone to inhabit it, even for sleeping, like a hunting cabin or anything like that. It cannot be inhabited by individuals. It can only be used for storage – the one you’re referring to.

Ms. Ehlers: Do you have a definition of that building in the Definitions?

Ms. Ruacho: I think what we have is an exemption for a storage shed and it specifically says that it can’t be used for habitation by humans.

Ms. Ehlers: I can think of a number of 200-square foot buildings in which you don’t store junk or stuff but you could use it and not for habitation, so perhaps this ought to go on a later list.

Ms. Ruacho: Okay. And by the “later list,” you’re referring to a definition of a storage shed?

Ms. Ehlers: I’m – of a building? You see, the implica- – okay, it means that somebody couldn’t build a screened in porch separately because that’s not a storage shed. That’s a place where you live so that you don’t get bitten with mosquitoes if you happen to have a lot of them around. There are uses which I have seen in other places which are about 200 square feet, or 150 sometimes, which you don’t store per se but you don’t live in.

Ms. Ruacho: Okay. So a better definition of what structure is exempt.

Ms. Ehlers: Yes.

Ms. Ruacho: Okay. And I may be able to just provide you the definition. It may very well come from the building code, so there may be some more detail there that I’m just not aware of because I deal with the zoning code. So I can look into that and see if that meets with your approval.

Ms. Ehlers: Yes, because if Marianne doesn’t know then – she knows the code better than I do.

Ms. Ruacho: Okay.

Ms. Ehlers: The – on page 7 – if no one else has anything before we get to page 7 –

Chairman Stiles: No, go ahead.

Ms. Ehlers: Page 7, 14.10.020: She raised a question in number 3 of “all other requests for variances of allowed provisions,” and I would suggest that you look at that later also.

Ms. Ruacho: Okay, just –

Ms. Ehlers: Within the context that she raised.

Ms. Ruacho: Marianne?

Ms. Ehlers: Mm-hmm – what’s allowed, what isn’t allowed, where you find these things out.

Ms. Ruacho: Okay, what –

Gary Christensen: Under the “purpose” section of 14.10?

Ms. Ehlers: This is 14.10.020(3), Hearing Examiner Variances, the first line: “Any other request for variances to any of the allowed...”

Ms. Ruacho: Well, they’re listed above in 1. They’re directly above that, A through E, and then F we’re adding, so you see F. But in the code as it will be printed, A through E are listed out, which shows what provisions you can ask for a variance for.

Ms. Ehlers: That’s why it would be useful to have an example – the Internet here – so that one could look at this while one – before the meeting and say, “Oh, that’s what that is.”

Ms. Ruacho: And then we also clarified under the “purpose,” which is why we’re adding the word “allowed,” that variances are for dimensional standards. Specifically we go into it a little bit later in some other code changes that you cannot ask for a variance for a use; that is a different process. And so that’s why we’re adding the word “allowed” to indicate to folks that you can’t ask for a variance from every provision in the code.

Ms. Ehlers: That’s fine.

The next question in 14.16.10 on page 10: Why can – in 14.16.10, number (2)(a) – why have you struck art galleries and studios? That has been – that kind of commercial retail has been the savings of more than one Rural Village in places. And I can’t think – some of the things you have changed – like the laundromat – you really have to have a sewer attached, but I don’t know what this is in relationship to.

Ms. Ruacho: Let’s see.

Ms. Ehlers: You could make a good deal of money if you had an art gallery or something like that in Edison.

Mr. Christensen: And there are some.

Ms. Ehlers: Well, then permit them.

Ms. Ruacho: Let’s – I can’t remember off the top of my head on that, Carol. It’s been so long since I drafted these. Give me – if we could move on to some other things, give my brain a little bit of time to think about that.

Ms. Ehlers: Of course.

Ms. Ruacho: What’s jumping to mind is the process that we went through to achieve Hearings Board compliance with commercial uses in the rural areas, but this is a commercial zone. I just – I want to take a look at the entire code and

make sure it's not listed somewhere else or that this just isn't a housekeeping thing.

Ms. Ehlers: Yes, please do.

Ms. Ruacho: Yes, thank you. I will look at that.

Ms. Ehlers: I'm not going to object, but I want to raise a question for you all just because it's happened in the past. In this section (v), the Rural Village Commercial zone in Alger, if you look close to the top of page 11 – and this is a reminder to Gary, as much as anything – “Indoor shooting clubs.” Alger raised hell a number of years ago about shooting and noise. And I'm not going to object to it here, but you spent a lot – the County spent a lot – of money dealing with that and had one of the most practical hearings I've ever been at. And it wasn't Alger. So, a word of warning.

Then –

Jerry Jewett: Well, I wondered about that myself. Who would want an indoor shooting club in their neighborhood, you know?

Ms. Ehlers: Well, we finally got it out of Rural Intermediate after eleven years of fighting, but the assumption seems to be that anyone who shoots always hits the target and the target always absorbs the bullet and they don't use hair trigger pistols in which somebody who normally – I was taught to shoot with a pistol where you hold one arm out and you shoot like this because that's what you did in Korea. But in shooting galleries, apparently you hold your arm straight out and raise the pistol up toward the ceiling and then you bring it down. And there's story after story and article after article that people in the process of raising the arm up hit the hair trigger and the bullet goes either through the walls or the ceiling and, of course, comes down where it comes down. And you don't really want that kind of thing in a dense area like a village.

Mr. Easton: I just want to note that during the last round with Alger and an extensive hearing, followed by an extensive time of deliberation where we actually almost interviewed their **AC** – for lack of a better word – this didn't come up. So I recognize your concern but I don't recall it coming up when they – you know, after all that work those guys did on it they didn't – seems like that would have been the better place to address it.

Ms. Ehlers: Well, it would have but I'm just warning you it did come up in the past and it might in the future and so don't be surprised.

Mr. Easton: Okay.

Mr. Jewett: I think if I would have seen it during that part of it I'd have said something then, too.

Mr. Easton: Okay.

Mr. Jewett: I didn't see it.

Mr. Christensen: Okay. And maybe to alleviate some of your concerns is that that particular type of use is only allowed via a Hearing Examiner's special use, which is going to require a public hearing, and there's not a presumption that apply you will be granted that. If, in fact, there is some concerns or opposition or safety-related issues or noise-related issues, those can all be addressed as part of the specific application for –

Mr. Easton: And the neighbors would have a chance to obviously be heard.

Mr. Christensen: Yeah. There's no – it's not permitted outright, it's **not an administrative**, there would be public notice and opportunity for neighborhood or community comment.

Chairman Stiles: Okay, Carol, continue if you have more.

Ms. Ehlers: Well, there was a comment made by someone about the laundromat. There is a laundromat approved, you see, in Alger. There is not one approved in Rural Center. And I thought I would raise the attention of the new members of the Commission that Alger has a sewer and so it's easy to have – and safe – to have a laundromat on a sewer. But I couldn't find any other Rural Centers where there was an honest-to-God sewer. Edison has sort of a sewer that's had nothing but trouble with an excessive use of water. And so I think the Planning staff's recommendation is entirely appropriate.

Mr. Christensen: Well, and also for your information, Rural Centers are different than Rural Villages.

Ms. Ehlers: Yes.

Mr. Christensen: So Edison, Big Lake, Lake Cavanaugh, Conway and the like are all pre-existing communities that have been designated as Rural Villages which themselves have different regulations and uses than that of a Rural Center.

Ms. Ruacho: And that triggered my memory; thank you for the opportunity to let my brain work and catch up. That is related to your question previously about art studios. What we're trying to do – in baby steps, because it would take quite an overhaul of the code to really fix it wholesale because we've been kind of moving in a certain direction for a long time, since we had a zoning code in the '60s – of

when a use kind of comes into being – say a wine-tasting room – that didn't exist then and all of a sudden they come into existence, we – you know, someone wants to do it; we might look at it; we think it's something that fits into the zone, something we didn't think of because we admit in the code that we can't think of every conceivable use; and then we might add it to a zone that we think it would be appropriate.

But sometimes for time constraints or what have you, we don't do a wholesale review of the code and add it everywhere maybe that it should go. And with this code change update we are trying to make our purpose and intent of the code clearer, because we do have difficulties with folks understanding just how the code is structured and what it means and what if something's not listed – what is the process I go through?

So we really did get pretty specific this time. And because of that specificity, it makes it all the more important to not list a use in one zone and nowhere else. Because the way the code does work is that if a use is listed in any zone – one or ten – then that use is precluded from any other zone, even through what we call a substantially similar review. So it's very important that it's very purposeful where these uses are selected to go and where they're not selected to go, rather than kind of rush to put it in one zone and then well, someone comes in in a neighboring zone and says, I'd like to do that, too. And folks say, Oh, well, that seems reasonable. However, locating it in the one zone automatically precluded that it could go anywhere else.

So for laundromats, the one that Carol's just bringing up, and for art studios and possibly some others if we look through the zoning, what we're doing is we're trying to go back to broader uses. And what we have is small retail and service businesses, and we'd like to get away from pulling out of that category and, you know, putting a wine tasting room and putting a laundromat or an art studio when it could be a, you know, some sort of other studio that isn't art – say it's, you know, maybe books or, you know, something that someone else would do that is very, very similar, maybe just a different medium. And so now, you know, you can't do that.

So we want to go broader, rather than narrower, and leave these things to, as Gary was saying, to a special use process where someone can bring up the specific, you know, use and the specifics of their use. What would it be for you? What would an art gallery look like for you? What do you envision? How big is it? How many people are coming everyday? Who are your neighbors? Is it going to work out or not? And leave it to the case-by-case rather than have the code preclude it, possibly just without purpose. You know, maybe we weren't very purposeful in where those things went and we really want to be.

So as you look through here, some of these uses that you see stricken – it's not that we don't want to see an art gallery in a Rural Village Commercial area. It's

that we already have listed later on small retail and service businesses and we would like whatever those might be, whatever somebody's idea is, to just come in on a case by case basis and let us look at it, rather than precluding it maybe inadvertently.

So that is the case for the laundromat, that is the case for the art galleries, and, as Gary just leaned over – you know, it might be worth a finding so that folks in the future when you – when they see that art galleries were stricken from a Rural Village Commercial area, that it wasn't your intent to discourage them. It wasn't that the Planning Commission didn't want to see them. It's that they're merely located in another category which actually gives folks kind of a broader opportunity to come up with their business and what that might look like. And laundromats the same goes for that but in a different way, like Carol had pointed out. Obviously that has different restrictions – water and sewer and those types of things. So, again, if someone wants to propose one, we're not saying we're discouraging it by removing it as a specific use. We're saying you come forward with your proposal on your specific property; we'll take a look at it and see if it's appropriate.

So I think a finding would be appropriate, if you would like to do that at this point.

Ms. Ehlers: I would really like a finding because it would also explain something where someone objected to the text but you've really improved it, and that's in 14.16.150. That's the bottom of page 12 and the top of page 13 – the Rural Business – where the language that you have changed it to is a major improvement. That finding, you see, would also apply to this section.

Mr. Easton: May I suggest that maybe a general finding that just points out the changes in specific allowable uses were not intended to discriminate against those uses but were intended to bring clarity and opportunity for a more broad audience to apply for a special use throughout the code amendments.

Ms. Ehlers: That makes sense.

Mr. Easton: Well, I'll make that in the form of a motion.

Ms. Ehlers: And I'll second it, and we'll use the language you just gave. Well, it's on a transcript.

Mr. Christensen: Or "in effect thereof."

Mr. Easton: Yeah, that's fine. I mean, I'm not hung up on the exact phraseology.

Mr. Christensen: Okay.

Chairman Stiles: I have a motion and a second. Any discussion?

(silence)

Chairman Stiles: Hearing none, those in favor, say aye.

Mr. Jewett, Chairman Stiles, Mr. Mahaffie, Mr. Easton, Ms. Ehlers, Ms. Ohlson-Kiehn and Ms. McGoffin: Aye.

Chairman Stiles: Those opposed?

(silence)

Chairman Stiles: We'll add a finding number 10.

Ms. Ruacho: Thank you.

Chairman Stiles: Carol, you got anything else?

Ms. Ehlers: I have something else not for tonight but for the future.

Chairman Stiles: Okay, then we'll wait.

(laughter)

Ms. Ehlers: No, I was told I was supposed to bring things up for the future.

Chairman Stiles: Okay, go ahead. Go ahead.

Ms. Ehlers: And this is in 14.16.850, a section that we sweated blood over a number of years ago. It's the reasonable use process. We did whatever we could to protect water systems where the water system is platted or in the process of being platted, based on documents that were drafted before the Growth Management Act. They could also apply to CaRDs, if the Commission wants to do it later. But I'm talking about pre-existing water systems where the lots are less than an acre and where people have had to buy the right to water at the same time they bought the lot. According to – and the lots in these are all residential – according to the version of this which you don't have because it's not being discussed, it's perfectly all right in Rural Intermediate to have cemeteries, community clubs, all sorts of large scale uses in less than an acre, but – God help you – you can't have a house. And that's as good a way to destroy value as I can think of, and since you desperately need general property tax funds.

Mr. Easton: So, is that all –

Ms. Ehlers: That's for the future.

Mr. Easton: Is that the only thing you have for the future?

Ms. Ehlers: Oh, no; I have a whole bunch of things for the future.

Mr. Easton: That you're going to discuss tonight?

Ms. Ehlers: No.

Mr. Easton: Okay.

Ms. Ehlers: But we were told that we were supposed to bring things up from this list in the future. I'll add it to a longer – another list to give later, but I want to play according to the rules that we have been told to play on.

Mr. Christensen: And it certainly doesn't preclude any of you at some later date, should you think of some codes that need to be amended: By all means, bring those to our attention and we can incorporate that into a future code amendment cycle and process such as that which we've just gone through.

Ms. Ruacho: Which I'd just like to point out that these suggestions all kind of go into a vat and then they get vetted with a committee, so not all suggestions survive committee. Although, you know, what Carol suggested, it might have merit, there might also be legal issues with changing that particular section. You know, we just, like, as you say, we went through a major Growth Management Hearings compliance order with that, so there may be resistance to changing or what have you. So I just don't want anyone's feelings to get hurt if it doesn't survive, because they don't all survive.

Ms. Ehlers: Yes, but don't forget: A half-acre lot – legal lot of record – at the time it was platted that is permitted to be built in my area is 300 to 600,000 assessed value. A half-acre lot that is not permitted is 10,000 to 30,000. It is – and some of these people – a neighbor only finally came in under the wire. He bought this legally platted lot in 1962. It's a little more than half an acre. He finally built his house just last year. This would preclude a man who has owned what was then entirely affordable – because he paid 4,000 for the thing – from being able to do anything with property he'd held onto for – what? – fifty-some odd years. That is as much a taking as anything I can think of.

Chairman Stiles: Okay, anything else?

Ms. Ehlers: Nope.

Chairman Stiles: Anyone else have specifics on a specific item? Hearing none, how about a motion on the whole list?

Mr. Easton: You want a motion on the recorded – the recorded motion?

Chairman Stiles: The recorded motion with the amended findings, or the additional findings, and then based on that.

Mr. Easton: I move that we accept – the Skagit County Planning Commission accept the recorded motion recommending approval of the select proposed miscellaneous Skagit County Code amendments, including our ten findings numbered 1 through 10, as appropriately inserted to the draft that we have in front of us.

Chairman Stiles: Do I have a second?

Mr. Jewett: I'll second it.

Chairman Stiles: I have a motion and a second. Any discussion? Hearing none, we're voting to adopt the recorded motion with the findings. All those in favor, say aye.

Mr. Jewett, Ms. Ohlson-Kiehn, Ms. McGoffin, Mr. Mahaffie, Mr. Easton, Chairman Stiles and Ms. Ehlers: Aye.

Chairman Stiles: Those opposed?

(silence)

Chairman Stiles: Hearing none. Now I would entertain a motion that based on these findings, we recommend adoption of the Phase I list.

Mr. Easton: I move that we adopt the Phase I list concerning the code amendments as proposed.

Chairman Stiles: Do I hear a second?

Mr. Jewett: I'll second it.

Chairman Stiles: I have a motion and a second. Any discussion? Hearing none, those in favor, signify by saying aye.

Mr. Easton, Chairman Stiles, Ms. McGoffin, Ms. Ohlson-Kiehn, Mr. Jewett and Mr. Mahaffie: Aye.

Chairman Stiles: Those opposed?

(silence)

Chairman Stiles: And that is unanimous.

Ms. Ehlers: I have an abstention, I think.

Mr. Easton: You think.

Chairman Stiles: You think.

Ms. Ehlers: Yes. I shall abstain.

Chairman Stiles: One abstention: Carol.

Mr. Easton: A question for staff.

Chairman Stiles: Go ahead.

Mr. Easton: Realistically, the remainder of those that inspired so much testimony – and I know scheduling is a wild card right now. That's not fall work; is that –

Mr. Christensen: It is.

Mr. Easton: That does look like work for the fall?

Mr. Christensen: And I can – I think the next item on the agenda is – I think it's listed as "Planning and Department Work Program," but it's really "Planning Commission Fall Schedule." And I could take your question and kind of segue into that discussion.

Mr. Easton: If it's all right with the Chair, it's fine with me.

Mr. Christensen: And I think I can after I describe it maybe relieve some of the fears and anxiety that you might have on the nineteen remaining. Let me hand out to you the schedule, and I'll put one on the overhead. I'm curious: Can you read that well on your monitors?

Mr. Jewett: Real good.

Other voices: Good.

Mr. Christensen: And Rich, is that looking good? Okay.

Ms. Ehlers: Now that it's nice and steady.

Mr. Christensen: Okay, this is what is in store for you the rest of the year. As you can see, there are three meeting dates, the next of which will be on October 6th, which is your regular scheduled meeting. And those will be – that meeting on

October 6th will be deliberations on the proposed Skagit County Code amendments Title 14, or what we call “Phase II.” Now – and then we’ll reserve some time to talk about your bylaws, which we’ve been working on this year.

But let me go back to the first agenda item, which is deliberations on the remaining proposed code amendments. As you know, there was 119 proposed, 100 of which you just dealt with this evening. There are nineteen remaining in which the County received comments on. Over the last month, the Department has met with – held a number of meetings – with members of the Agricultural Advisory Board, the Forestry Advisory Board and members of the Skagit County Conservation District who – along with staff and legal counsel – addressing many of the comments and questions on those nineteen code amendments. I would characterize those discussions as really an opportunity to further explain and articulate and provide information about what those code amendments intended to do. I think a lot of the comments that we received that in some cases were simply just identifying the code, the commenter really didn’t know how to address it because they just didn’t know enough about the code amendment. And so as we worked through that many of those issues have been resolved.

We held two meetings, the first of which we addressed roughly half of those remaining nineteen, and there was no remaining issues with those nine. So we were able to, in a satisfactory way, address those issues with those who had attended and met with us. And we are going to be summarizing this in a memorandum to you, explaining what their issues were and what the results of our conversation were.

The second meeting we had then was to deal with the second set or the remaining nine or ten issues. And those were probably the ones that were a bit more maybe contentious or had maybe greater controversy associated with it. However, of those remaining nine, I can report that we addressed all but just two or three, possibly four. There has been some tweaking to it to satisfy parties and commenters, and we’ll disclose that and report that to you in the form of a memorandum. There is one or two, possibly three, where there’s still some differing opinion, and so we will bring that before you and call that out and represent those as such. So we have – I guess I can say – resolved many of those nineteen, but not all of them. There are but a couple that we’re going to seek your guidance and advice on and hopefully you can help us resolve and recommend then how to move forward, whether it’s now or really just sometime later.

So that’s the nature of, really, Phase II. We believe, based on our consultation and dialogue with those parties who were most concerned or had provided comments that we have to a large part satisfactorily addressed those issues. And, again, we’ll say so in a memorandum to you so you have as part of your deliberations then something to refer to.

Ms. McGoffin: A couple comments.

Chairman Stiles: Mary.

Ms. McGoffin: Two things: As a matter of policy, do you think it would work better in the future to contact stakeholders like that in advance of a public hearing? I'm thinking we could go from hearing and deliberations to – you know, just have two meetings on our part instead of the four to six that we need now. So I suggest that as an idea for streamlining this process –

Mr. Christensen: Yeah.

Ms. McGoffin: – that you meet with the stakeholders first. Secondly, perhaps we could go from the nineteen items down to the three remaining and pass sixteen of those and, again, try to keep this moving forward for you.

Mr. Christensen: Right. I think those are great recommendations, suggestions. Certainly we're always looking at ways in which public process can be furthered, can be improved. And so it's not that this process didn't engage and involve some of the stakeholders early on; it's just that it was a process that took not just months but was in the making for a year or two, and so it over that period of time certainly had its complications. But I think it's a point well made, Mary, that, you know, engaging early and often and continuously with these various organizations and associations, that that certainly is beneficial to the public process. I think it's a point well made.

We do intend to come back before you on the 6th with – we hope we can dispose of a good many of those nineteen relatively easy. And I think, though, just for your information, just not say we're not going to talk about the three or four more troubling ones, but have some dialogue and some discussion about what that is. Because you may have some opinions about do we act now or not.

Chairman Stiles: We can still recommend however many of them that we want.

Mr. Christensen: Yes, yes, very much so.

Chairman Stiles: Set the ones that we can't decide on aside.

Mr. Christensen: That's right. And so, you know, we will prepare you in advance of your deliberations so you have that information to consider. Then when we get together on the 6th, we can talk about it.

Chairman Stiles: Okay.

Mr. Easton: Mr. Chair?

Chairman Stiles: Are you done, Mary?

Ms. McGoffin: Yes.

Chairman Stiles: Okay, Jason.

Mr. Easton: Gary, the concern – I have a little bit of a concern about a memo being communicated from you – I mean, I appreciate the concept that you've been meeting with folks who clearly – some of our boards, in particular the FAB and the Ag Board especially had serious heartburn over issues that related to their expertise.

But certain members of that board have been vocal in lots of different ways about feeling like sometimes when the Department says what – tries to restate what – recast what they think or what they agreed to that they don't feel like it's accurate.

Mr. Christensen: Right.

Mr. Easton: So I want to make two suggestions. One, if those boards meet prior to October 6th and they would like to sign off on your memo, that would be helpful for me as a Commissioner. Or at the minimum, if that's not possible, which it may not be – or in addition to it – I would like to see that every person who commented on these nineteen is notified about our August (sic) 6th meeting. As is our tradition and our – and our history, we could then, if they're present, ask them for their – you know, we can ask them questions as we try to get through the process of deliberating without violating what we've been told in the past – is, you know, the public meetings side of this.

So I just – I'm really concerned that we make sure that we're accomplishing what you intend without it being that you're speaking on behalf of who you just negotiated with.

Mr. Christensen: Right.

Mr. Easton: I don't want to create a situation where we have continued contention.

Mr. Christensen: Yep.

Mr. Easton: Because those three boards in particular have got to have, in my opinion, any – it was clear what was exposed here is their relationship to the Department vis-à-vis us and you, as we represent both parts of the Department, has to improve. And I want – I mean, I really want to make sure we come out of this with not just a solution for this, but a better relationship down the road.

Mr. Christensen: I appreciate your comments. I think they're right on. We will be transmitting to them the very memorandum that we provide to you. And we have in essence requested their kind of concurrence or support. And to be honest, you know, there's these two or three, four – however many there is – where we might just still have some disagreements.

Mr. Easton: Sure.

Mr. Christensen: Some differing opinions and just, you know –

Mr. Easton: That's understandable.

Mr. Christensen: – that's fair. We just simply couldn't resolve them in the period of time or the differences were too great or there was litigation involved and the County just didn't want to expose itself to pursuing something that it was apparent there would be an appeal or litigation.

So I think we can do just as you've suggested. We can notify those parties – they all know already that October 6th – those that we've been engaged with – that you'll be taking these matters up and they're welcome to attend. It's a public meeting. We'll extend that to you to indicate that you've, in so many words, have invited them and those that want to attend can.

Mr. Easton: Maybe just a simple letter that reminds that we're going to deliberate on the 6th. It's been a while and, you know, your attendance is welcome.

Mr. Christensen: Yeah. The other thing we can do is we can have the County's Natural Resource Policy Coordinator or liaison to both the Ag Advisory Board and the Forest Advisory Board be in attendance, who can certainly represent their views, as well. I want to be very careful that the Department isn't, you know, misleading or mischaracterizing, you know, what might be their issues and concerns. We want you to know that and we want that to be part of the record so that you can truly understand what their issues were. And if you have a chance to either hear from their representative or one or more of them, or know how the Department has represented it in a memo is fair enough.

Mr. Easton: Yeah, I just want to make sure that we're in a position where you're not speaking – I'd like to hear from both sides that they agreed to the solutions because that'll go a long way for us relationally.

Chairman Stiles: Carol.

Ms. Ehlers: And I want to make sure that we hear from them and not the staff person who is supposed to represent them, because she in the past has managed to confuse language magnificently.

Mr. Christensen: Okay.

Mr. Easton: Okay.

Mr. Christensen: So that is October 6th, okay? That is what is on your plate for our first meeting in October. On October 20th, you will hold a public hearing. There will be two agenda items, the first of which will be to hear Board of County Commissioner-Prioritized 2008 Comprehensive Plan Amendment Docket Cycle Map Amendments. There are three individual property owners: They're Stiles, Stockinger and Pomeroy. So those have been prioritized as part of our discussion with the Board of County Commissioners to get those matters before you this fall so that the County hopefully can take action before the end of the year.

The other agenda item will be a public hearing on a Board of County Commissioner-remanded Sanfi Acres, which is pursuant to a settlement agreement. And that will be a matter that is simply brought back before you again. You did address that through the 2005 GMA Update process and as a result of an appeal before the Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board and a settlement between the proponents and the County, you will hear a hearing on that matter on that night as well.

Those two issues we are hopeful that you two weeks later on November 3rd, once having had the hearing, reviewed the record, can deliberate; forward recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners; and then the Board will be able to take action on those before the end of the year.

So that is your fall schedule, should everything play out as intended, and that would mean then nothing later in November and nothing in the month of December.

Chairman Stiles: _____. Any other questions?

Mr. Easton: I feel like I had a year off on this Board this year compared to the beginning!

Ms. Ehlers: You're minding it?

Mr. Easton: I'm not minding it; I'm just saying it feels like a year off!

Chairman Stiles: Okay, let's move on then. The next item on the agenda is a briefing on the Alternative Futures project. That must be Kirk.

Kirk Johnson: Good evening, Planning Commission. I haven't seen you for a while. I have some things I'd like to hand out and I can make these available electronically to anyone who is interested.

So I know I've talked to you at least one time before on this project – maybe more than that. I think the time or two before it's been pretty superficial and just kind of an overview, and I'd like to get a little more in-depth this time and then maybe ask you to take a look at some of these materials, and although it's not on the agenda for October 6th, if it looks like we're not going to fill up the full time then maybe come back and talk about some of the issues in more depth at that meeting.

So the first thing that is up on the overhead is a description of the Alternative Futures project. It's a big project and a little bit hard to contain in a nutshell, but this is my best effort so far.

So it's a long-term, watershed-wide – at least that portion of the Skagit and lower Samish watersheds in Skagit County – visioning, modeling and planning process that seeks to develop a long-term, implementable plan with broad community support that will maintain the health of the Skagit ecosystem, its natural resource industries, and its communities and economy in the face of population growth, climate change and other large-scale changes.

So in a lot of ways it sounds a lot like Growth Management planning, although the time horizon is longer. It's a fifty-year time horizon versus the twenty-year horizon that we plan under for GMA. And there's perhaps a little bit more of a kind of watershed ecosystem basis to the project than under our standard Growth Management planning. And if we – we've had some funding delays with EPA. We may incorporate some climate change analysis into this, primarily looking at how climate change might affect flooding in the Skagit River. So that would be kind of a new wrinkle to our long range planning here in Skagit County.

So are there any questions on just the kind of project overview? Carol?

Ms. Ehlers: Where do the islands fit?

Mr. Johnson: The islands are a part of the process, part of the project. They're a part of Skagit County and this is not only a watershed-wide but also a countywide process, so – and, certainly, like Samish Island is, you know, right adjacent to Samish Bay which is a portion of the Samish watershed. So the islands are a part of the process.

Ms. Ehlers: And is the representation on the committees also? Does it include people from the Samish basin? Does it include people from the islands?

Mr. Johnson: Right now on the steering committee the City of Anacortes is represented by their Planning Director and Margaret Studer is – I believe, a resident of Anacortes, or maybe Fidalgo Island – is also on the steering committee. And we're talking with the steering committee right now and starting

to talk with the County Commissioners about the makeup of the stakeholder committee, which will come on and wrestle with trying to develop the long term plan, the preferred future, and one of the goals there is broad geographic representation as well as broad interest representation. Jason?

Mr. Easton: Funding.

Mr. Johnson: Funding.

Mr. Easton: Entirely funded by grants, or how is this handled from a funding point of view?

Mr. Johnson: There is a – about a \$600,000 grant from EPA, Environmental Protection Agency, and, frankly, the County is funding a lot of the County staff time under the project in terms of in-kind match to the EPA funds. And then also a lot of – well, basically all – of the participants in the steering committee and the technical committees are doing so on an unpaid basis, so in-kind match.

Mr. Easton: To do a plan like this, though, it seems that you're going to need to spend some consulting dollars at some point. I mean – and I don't mean that disrespectfully to staff – given some of the skill for this is pretty significant.

Mr. Johnson: Yeah, so some of the funds from EPA are going to the University of Washington researchers, some to a facilitator, some to Oregon State University which has developed this envision model that will help us do the modeling under this process.

Mr. Easton: Okay.

Mr. Johnson: Any other questions at this point? Okay, the next thing I wanted to put up – and I'm pretty sure I shared this with you in the past – is a project organization chart. I'll say to pre-empt what might be Mary's comment, this is a very static process organization chart, and it just kind of says what the committees are.

(some laughter)

Mr. Easton: We all end up with reputations on this commission.

Ms. McGoffin: That's okay!

Mr. Johnson: As I said, we're working right now with the steering committee, which is – I don't know – in some ways kind of like a board for an organization. It's giving guidance on getting the project up and running on the vision statement; helping to define the initial four futures that will be modeled through the Envision software; helping to identify indicators to evaluate if we were to go down any one

of those four paths what impacts there would be on agriculture, forestry, ecosystem, communities, the economy.

We're also working with three technical committees – an agriculture committee, an ecosystem committee, and a growth management committee – that are addressing many of those same issues in greater detail, so digging down deeper and working on the indicators. And we'll start working on the initial futures for modeling purposes. We are planning to also create a forestry technical committee, but there's been some staffing challenges just in terms of finding County staff who can help to get that up and running. But Kendra Smith, the Forest Advisory Board staff person, will be a key participant in that effort.

But the stakeholder committee, which will be appointed by the County Commissioners probably early next year – and that's a little bit later than we initially had thought – will be the one that after the initial futures are developed and some initial modeling is done in looking at how the different futures, the different pathways, that the County could take would affect these various indicators, the stakeholder committee will then try to blend those together to get the best possible long-term plan or strategy for development that – again – tries to maintain the commercially viable agriculture industry, forestry, healthy environment, viable – economically viable – communities and economies. So that's – not to put down the work of the steering committee or the technical committees, but it's really the stakeholder committee that will have the most challenging and kind of interesting process of tweaking the models and seeing how they affect the indicators and how to piece that all together.

Mr. Easton: How big a committee are you looking at for that?

Mr. Johnson: Probably fifteen to twenty. Any suggestions on that from your work with the Flood Advisory Board?

Mr. Easton: Less than – yeah, I'll be blunt as a Flood Advisory Committee member with fifteen.

Mr. Johnson: Yeah?

Mr. Easton: I'd be leaning towards nine.

Mr. Johnson: Really?

Mr. Easton: Leaning *hard* towards nine.

Ms. Ehlers: Having watched that committee, amen.

Mr. Easton: I know it doesn't make the Commissioners' job easier, but...

Ms. McGoffin: There's only nine Supreme Court justices.

Mr. Easton: They seem to get things done, don't they?!

Ms. McGoffin: Yeah.

Ms. Ehlers: Kirk?

Mr. Johnson: Yeah?

Ms. Ehlers: How do you define a stakeholder in this category? Other than ag and forestry and the environmental concept, what – who else do you intend to admit has a stake?

Mr. Johnson: I'm glad you asked. I wasn't sure whether I was going to pass this out, but this – what we're doing right now with the steering committee is talking about interests.

Mr. Easton: (inaudible)

Mr. Johnson: We're not talking about people – what's that?

Mr. Easton: You're going to get in trouble with Rich for talking while you're walking.

Mr. Johnson: Oh. So we've asked the steering committee to identify all of the interests that might/should be on the stakeholders committee. I haven't added it up, but it's probably pretty close to fifteen, if not more. So that's part of the challenge. You know, you have Jason recommending nine and yet if you think about all of the interests that you might want to have on a stakeholder committee, it tends to push the number up. So that'll be the challenging process. I mean, one thought we have had is to try to find people who wear multiple hats, so somebody who's a business person who's on the board of the community college and owns a – you know – a forestry company on the side, or something like that.

Ms. McGoffin: Well, also your – all your municipalities could be represented by somebody from SCOG. You could have one person.

Mr. Johnson: Yeah.

Ms. Ehlers: Oh, that'll be an interesting ___.

Ms. McGoffin: Well, they could let them vote. I mean, but what I'm concerned about is you end up with too many government representatives and not enough private sector.

Mr. Johnson: Actually the County Commissioners and County staff involved in this – ___ County staff – have recently kind of clarified that the stakeholder committee will be a citizens committee. So there will not be elected officials from the County or the Cities, there will not be City or County staff people, that there will be citizens and there may well be citizens from the various cities. But the Commissioners – and we'll talk more about implementation and where some of – where the elected officials fit in – but the Commissioners and the County feel that they really want this to be a citizens' vision, then the various – you know, the County, the Cities, the Council of Governments, the Growth Management Act Steering Committee – are the implementing bodies so then they get to take that and then work with it.

Ms. McGoffin: Great.

Ms. Ehlers: Kirk? Four of this Commission hasn't heard this much from me but you have. There are no policies in the Housing Element representing those who live in the residential zones. There is a phrase about affordable housing, which is on here appropriately, but there is a lot of high density housing in the – not the – mainly on the islands – the old housing zones, the pre-1990. They are consistently – I mean, I'm it and that's wrong.

Mr. Johnson: I'm sorry, you're what?

Ms. Ehlers: And I want to get out of it. I don't want to be the only person who represents those who live in the high density residential areas trying to protect their interests and their needs when in a naturally multiple kind of society. And so I'm going to push to have some real policies in the 2012 Comp Plan. I've found the RCW to justify it, in case nobody wants to know. But it is a stakeholder group which can contribute a good deal if it is allowed to.

Mr. Johnson: I'm sorry. *What* is a stakeholder group – that group that you're talking about of people who live in –

Ms. Ehlers: The residential – the people who live in the residential zones. We are careful, as we should be, to protect forestry and the natural resource areas; we are careful to protect the environment; we're careful to protect all kinds of groups, all of which I have supported and agreed to. But that category of geography and economics that I represent sometimes needs to be considered.

Mr. Johnson: And would you say that's Rural Residential?

Ms. Ehlers: Rural Residential – high density Rural Residential.

Mr. Johnson: Okay.

Ms. Ehlers: Because the low density is in Rural Reserve – that’s a group – but they often are farmers, they often are involved in ecology or they’re involved with the environment. I think you should pay attention – make sure you have somebody representing that. I’m not saying no, okay?

Mr. Johnson: Okay, I’ll note that. And either now, if you have any suggestions – I know this is just kind of quickly looking at the list – or if you want to e-mail me thoughts to further expand the list of interests that we’ll then need to narrow down to nine – no, I’m just teasing there! – feel free to share your thoughts.

Ms. Ehlers: Yes, down in the next-to-the-last item you have marine environment, clean water, shellfish grower?

Mr. Johnson: Yes.

Ms. Ehlers: The drinking water aquifers is a category that the critical areas ordinance decided to ignore in the uplands of the Samish basin of Fidalgo and entirely up in Lake Cavanaugh. And, again, this could be a multiple hat person, but somewhere in this process, on some committee, the drinking water interests – the protection of the aquifer for that – needs to be paid close attention to. Because if you haven’t drinking water, you have nothing.

Mr. Johnson: Okay, I’ve noted that. Jason?

Mr. Easton: Am I reading this correctly that the Mayor of Mount Vernon is on record as saying that if he’s not the representative of the City that they will no longer be a part of the Alternative Futures project?

Mr. Johnson: Yeah, that’s basically a summary of the letter he submitted.

Mr. Easton: Thank you for the clarification.

Ms. Ehlers: I’m glad you included that.

Mr. Johnson: Okay, schedule. So we’re in the fall of – well, we’re in – yeah, I guess we are about in the fall of 2009. So we’re working with the steering committee and the technical committees developing the alternative futures, which I haven’t mentioned, or the plan trend, which is an effort to try to project out if current plans and policies remained in place, what would the future look like fifty years from now with 120- or -30,000 more residents. It’s kind of a fiction because plans and policies aren’t going to stay fixed, but that’ll be kind of a base line. And then there will be an agriculture-forestry future that looks – that places more emphasis on maintaining the health and viability of those two sectors; an ecosystem future that places greater emphasis on the environment and functioning ecosystem; and then the development future that looks – is more kind

of free market – if you had more free market influence over development in the economy, what that might look like.

And they're all meant to be bounded by plausibility, but so, you know, we wouldn't say that – none of those futures for modeling purposes is going to be an extreme, but they will all emphasize different things. So we're developing those now. And I'm going to share in just a minute some of the initial assumptions that we're just starting to think about those futures. Also we're talking with the County Commissioners about the stakeholder committee composition, and then also defining some project limits and outcomes, which is something we'll talk about here shortly, because there are a lot of hopes and expectations about this project and we need to be realistic and say upfront what it can do and what it probably won't do. So we'll be working with the Commissioners to develop probably a resolution that, you know, says that this is what we as the County Commissioners see this project as doing.

So in the winter those futures will be put into the Envision software; we'll be doing that this fall, too, and then some of the initial modeling done. So basically this model runs on a yearly basis and it just keeps putting more population into the landscape based on the decision rules that you've placed there, and people will go where they will go, and then they have the impacts that they will have. And then you look at the results on the indicators, you know, what your future will look like fifty years from now, or a modeled effort to get a better idea of that.

So that's winter and spring of 2010. The stakeholders committee will be appointed in the winter and then we'll probably do some initial orientation – getting to know each other envisioning – and then we'll be really working through the summer and the fall on putting together this preferred alternative and implementation steps.

Ms. Ehlers: Where are you going to get your information from that you will be using as the basis of this discussion?

Mr. Johnson: Which discussion?

Ms. Ehlers: Well, I'll take drinking water.

Mr. Johnson: Yeah.

Ms. Ehlers: You have a Coordinated Water System Plan which supposedly needs to be updated. It is a good document except for its maps and the maps, I think, are crucial for your understanding of where the water systems are – all the little ones that nobody pays too much attention to, some of which are really rather big. One of them that's a dot on one of the maps has 800 connections to it, which is a complete – you know, you have to look at it entirely differently when you see 800 than when you think maybe it's a store with two.

If those maps were updated, then you'd have a better documentary source to use when you're understanding the amount of water that is available in this area of the county or that area of the county when you combine that with whatever the low flow stream requirement is, which is also something that the rest of the Planning Department has to worry about.

That's just one example of where the charts are accurate and the text is accurate, as far as I know, but there's a tendency on the part of people to look at maps instead of text. So that's one example of resource materials that are there with a minor flaw. Mapping, I should think, would be crucial for what you're going to do.

Mr. Johnson: Yeah, Josh Greenberg with GIS is a major participant in this – in the project. And so certainly we'll be drawing on existing adopted plans and policies and information sources for the plan trend and the other futures. There is a certain level of detail that this project, because it's countywide and it's looking at these four or five different areas and fifty years – I mean, it's not going to – it's not going to take the place of subarea planning on Fidalgo Island.

Ms. Ehlers: I hope not.

Mr. Johnson: Yeah. And the model – I've kind of learned this over the time that I've been working on the project – the model – you put in the model, number one, what the model can support. And then also, number two, you only put in what you really want to track. It's not like you need to put everything into the model. So we may find that a certain level of kind of water planning analysis just doesn't – the model, given it's countywide, doesn't support that, but maybe at a broader level it does. So we just – we need to discover that as we go through the process.

And that's part of what I'm saying about what *will* the project do, what *will* the outcomes be, and being realistic about that. And it may be, you know, kind of a broad vision – general policies and getting into some specifics – charting a course for fifty years. But if there's an issue about maps and the CWSP that we haven't resolved or that needs to be resolved through the next update, that's probably where it's going to get resolved, rather than through this process.

Ms. McGoffin: So, Kirk?

Mr. Johnson: Yeah?

Ms. McGoffin: It seems like it's really not something that needs our approval. It's just a grant and it's just a vision and we're just giving input.

Mr. Johnson: Right.

Ms. McGoffin: But it doesn't need – it's not like these other things we do with the Planning Department, right?

Mr. Johnson: Right. Yeah, until there come to be recommendations from the stakeholders committee that come to the County Commissioners, that then they look at and will want to turn some of that into policy – Comprehensive Plan policy or development regulations – and then you would receive it in a more formal form.

Ms. McGoffin: Okay.

Mr. Johnson: So I think we've just decided in part from talking to you and the experience, you know, with the Open Space Plan and the like, that it's good to involve you early on and continuously throughout a process that eventually is coming toward you, even though you don't have a formal role in it right now.

Ms. McGoffin: So when it gets to the policy decisions, that's not part of the grant. That would be like the fruit of this whole effort.

Mr. Johnson: Yeah, that's the implementation part. Yeah, it's either not a part of the grant or it's the very tail end where the EPA funding is winding down and the County is picking up. I mean, really, because it's intended to feed into our 2012 Comprehensive Plan Update and other required updates like that that we would be doing anyway, and so we'll be gaining insight from this process.

Mr. Easton: Is 2012 the most likely place where this would be the first time we'd interact with it on a detailed basis? I mean in the Comp Plan Update for '12?

Mr. Johnson: Yeah, probably.

Ms. Ehlers: When does that start?

Mr. Johnson: Gary?

Mr. Christensen: Probably the sooner the better. Certainly we're going to be talking a lot more about that in the coming year, 2010. We will be approaching it, though, much differently *this* – during *this* Update than we have previously. And the state is going to require that it be looked at somewhat differently, too, through some of their procedural criteria which is currently under review, and it's going to provide more prescription as to how local governments will conduct their updates. So we are – we will begin discussions in the coming year on that and certainly want to hit the 2012 date and not be tardy. So that's our objective, and so we'll be talking to you more about that process after the first of the year.

Ms. Ehlers: Does this Futures have to bump into the Shoreline Management Act stuff?

Mr. Johnson: It doesn't necessarily *have* to bump into it. One of the things I was reading earlier in your session was a proposal from Kitsap County that was funded by EPA to use Envision in an alternative futures framework to do their shoreline management update. And I've shared that with Betsy because since we're doing this effort – we're doing this modeling effort – if there are things that we can put into the model or into some of the futures that can inform some of their work, that – I mean, that's what we want to be doing. We want to be gaining current benefit from it. But as she's pointed out in talking about this, the Shoreline update, just like the critical areas update, you know, they have very extensive best available science requirements, procedural requirements and inventory requirements that go way beyond what this process will come up with. So it's just thinking about what we can include into the futures and into the modeling that can help inform that. But this isn't going to replace that or substitute for that effort.

Ms. Ehlers: That's good. May I suggest – Anacortes is having a meeting of their Planning Commission next week on the 9th on their Shoreline Management update. I would suggest that you get from the Planning Director what they have proposed on the Shoreline Management update and then at the end what they finally decide, because they went to court to obtain the right to do things which have been taken away from the County.

Mr. Johnson: I know we've been in contact through the Skagit Council of Governments – the planners' group – with the various city planners and I know Betsy was there in the meeting when I was talking to the Anacortes planners.

Ms. Ehlers: Because one of the issues that the Swinomish blackmailed the County into changing on the critical areas ordinance, Anacortes does not have to do. The court said it was not necessary to do. So that's – since he's on your committee, it would be useful to be able to take advantage from his experience to see what elements of it he thinks should apply to this Futures.

Mr. Johnson: Okay. I can do that. Let's see, so moving on – this next one isn't going to fit on the overhead, but this is kind of the model framework all on one page. Just getting it on the one page was quite the task. Carly was very helpful with that. And this is just some initial assumptions going into the initial Futures that the steering committee – we tried to play Alternative Futures Bingo at the last meeting and fill in some of these gaps, and it was kind of unclear what we were trying to do, so I said, Go ahead. Put some assumptions down. Give us an idea of the sorts of things that could go into these models and then we'll take it from there.

So this is something that I would definitely like to get feedback either from any of you individually that are interested or October 6th after you've had a chance to digest it. You know, what are some things that – that if we're able to, given the modeling constraints, that we can incorporate into these Futures and be looking at.

And so you have the four different Futures here and then we've got the Indicators down here, and each – like Growth Management Indicators – will be evaluated – will be used to evaluate all of the Futures. And anything that you want to have an indicator on – let's say – I mean a real simple one – agricultural land base – it needs to be in the model in order to get an output as an indicator. So it all needs to be tied together and integrated that way. So it's been a little hard to get our heads around this whole thing but I think we're making some process.

Ms. Ehlers: I see you have in the third item the issues I was bringing up, only – it's the section on water –

Mr. Johnson: Mm-hmm.

Ms. Ehlers: Your first one is “Public water availability based on the Coordinated Water System Plan.” That's where your maps need to be better because at this point you won't know.

The next category you have, “Increased water conservation”: Already you're practicing that kind of thing. I can't speak for agriculture, but private users are. You get to the ecosystem and you need to put in protection of the aquifer for drinking water because the Skagit River basin has it; the rest does not. The Department of Ecology, as far as I know, has no one who pays attention to it.

Mr. Johnson: So it sounds like we need to get together, Carol, and you can give me your suggestions to –

Ms. Ehlers: And when you get over to development, this is a question for all this cost. If you expand the public piped water, that's pricey. And that means you have to have either businesses which mandate it – which need it desperately in order to be permitted at all as a special use, in which they pay it; Skagit Valley Gardens is a prime example – or you have to have high density residential, which, at this point, violates the principles of GMA. And those are tradeoffs which your group has to think about because they will be sitting here deciding this is what they think should be done, but they won't be paying any money in it. And it's a bit frightening – as we see by the health care issue – it's a bit frightening to have all kinds of talk about things without a real cost being attached.

Ms. McGoffin: So in addition to that, Carol, maybe under Major Issue Areas there should be a fifth one that says “Financial.”

Ms. Ehlers: Oh, yes.

Mr. Johnson: Yeah.

Ms. McGoffin: Or “Cost” or “Cost-Benefit” or some kind of money sign.

Ms. Ehlers: I like “Cost-Benefit.”

Mr. Johnson: Yeah, we’ve definitely – in the Growth Management Indicators we’ve been working on about ten or fifteen and we’ll have to end up with fewer than those but definitely cost of services has been a major thing that we need to track. Because at least with the Steering Committee composition now, there’re a lot of interests that are looking for the cities to accommodate the bulk of the population growth and there’re certainly interests that don’t want the cities to expand, at least not into agricultural land and into the floodplain. And the cities are quick to come back and say, Well, you can’t give us all the population but give us no room to provide for a tax base for the urban services that those people need.

So far that’s where that cost issue has been interjected the most. I mean, our Commissioners and others have said the plan that comes out here needs to be a realistic, economically feasible, viable plan. So I like that suggestion and would be interested in following up on it.

I may be extending beyond my time here so the last thing I wanted to show – again, which won’t fit on the overhead – is the ___ “Implementation of Stakeholder Recommendations.” And this is part of that effort to talk with the County Commissioners and get them to specify what they see coming out of this process and what they’re willing to do with it. Because we’ve heard from the steering committee that, you know, people are going to be more willing to put time and effort into this if they’re more – there’s a stronger guarantee that it will result in policy changes or things on the ground happening.

So – and certainly you come into this. Anything that would be County policy or development regulation or plan would have to come to you through the formal process with SEPA review and public review and comment. So that’s really where you tie in most directly, is after recommendations come from the stakeholder committee to the Board of County Commissioners; they look through them and they say, We want to move these things forward; and then we would work on them and then bring them to you. And that’s probably 2012 at the earliest. Yes, Carol?

Ms. Ehlers: I think if I were you, I would insert some public input more than just at the end. The public – we’ve watched this with the health care fight where there wasn’t much public input before there was a thousand-page proposal and

the public is responding to that in much the same way I think they might to this, whereas if you give them bits and pieces that can be digested as the process goes along – particularly with vocabulary, so that it's precise what this word means and not something else – I think you'll find a much more satisfactory process at the end.

Mr. Johnson: That's a good comment. We're aware of that and trying to figure out how to do it, given the budget that we have, but it is a really important issue.

I don't have anything else.

Ms. McGoffin: Just one thing, Kirk. The way the Alternatives are identified, it sounds almost like lobbyists for those sectors –

Mr. Johnson: Yeah.

Ms. McGoffin: – when, in fact, they're just modeling terms.

Mr. Johnson: Right.

Ms. McGoffin: That would be really helpful to explain.

Mr. Johnson: Yeah.

Ms. Ehlers: Mm-hmm.

Mr. Johnson: When you say they sound like lobbyists, what sounds like?

Ms. McGoffin: Like the one that's for ag-forest or the one that's for developers. So it sounds like you're entertaining, you know, an agenda, sort of, from those kind of people when that's not the case at all.

Ms. Ehlers: Well, one of the first comments I heard about this was it was an ecological lobbyist's heyday.

Mr. Johnson: It is a weird tension in this project that you do these futures – these kind of splintering futures – in an effort to pull it all back together again, and I do think you're right: It's important to emphasize that these initial futures are for modeling purposes to kind of explore some choices and cause and effect. But none of these initially is meant to be – you know, it's not like they're competing for the County Commissioners to say, Okay, we want ag-forestry. But it's to come up with something that's more all-inclusive down the road. So I'll try to remember to point that out as often as possible.

Chairman Stiles: Okay. Thank you, Kirk.

Mr. Johnson: All right. Thank *you*.

Chairman Stiles: Let's see. The next item on our agenda is General Issues. I think the only thing I'd bring up is a scheduled review of our bylaws for our next meeting. I think we have kind of a draft of those that we got last time. So if you have any corrections or changes to those, be prepared for our next meeting.

Mr. Easton: In case legal counsel be present during that, so we can –

Mr. Christensen: Yes, Ryan will be in attendance.

Mr. Easton: (inaudible)

Mr. Christensen: So Ryan has, I think, provided you with his suggestions, recommendations, edits – whatever they might be. Yeah, we'll have him on board.

Ms. Ehlers: Is there any way of getting a version of that that you can read quickly without a magnifying glass?

Mr. Easton: To do that you're going to have to probably change the formatting.

Ms. Ruacho: You just need to remove the comments.

Mr. Easton: Or remove the comments and then somehow –

Ms. Ehlers: Well, we can look at the comments with a magnifying glass, but Marianne didn't have to go that small in order for us to read it. Hers is perfectly readable. The stuff that Jason's committee gets –

Ms. Ruacho: It's different.

Ms. Ehlers: – is perfectly readable.

Mr. Christensen: We'll try to address your need, Carol.

Ms. Ehlers: Please.

Chairman Stiles: Okay, anything else? Hearing none, this meeting is adjourned (gavel).