

1 problem with that, but some of the parcels will change significantly. The County
2 spends a lot of money on those fans.
3

4 Brenner asked about the fee on improved lots in the floodplain. Cooper
5 stated the minimum fees went up. Commercial and residential acreages are
6 smaller and tend to pay the minimum fees. The per acre charge is for larger
7 acreages. There is more support for option five from the representatives.
8

9 Roll stated option three is included in the packet because it generates the
10 most money. Because there must be a public hearing, all other lower-cost options
11 can be discussed. As a result of the hearing, the Council can select any of the five
12 options.
13

14 Roy asked if another option is to just have the hearing on the option that the
15 majority of the Council approves. Roll stated the Council could, however, because
16 of the hearing, the Council couldn't approve any amount above what is stated in the
17 hearing.
18

19 Roy stated it makes sense to have a hearing on the option the Council is
20 likely to support because it would be clearer to the public.
21

22 Crawford asked if a property owner with acreage and a home would pay a
23 reduced amount, and if a property owner with acreage and no home would pay an
24 increased amount. Cooper stated she didn't know if that would hold, in general.
25 The amount paid by each parcel not straightforward. She's not sure that she could
26 verify that trend.
27

28 Tom Westergreen, Sumas/Everson/Nooksack Flood Control Subzone Advisory
29 Committee, stated he represents forestland owners on the subzone committee.
30 Large acres in a forestry use are affected the most by this change of going to the
31 total acres for collecting the tax. When this first started in 1997, the forestland
32 owners were concerned because it was based on acreage. They are coming back to
33 the same issue. The subzones are different from the countywide zone. They are
34 formed to take care of specific community problems. At the time they were
35 formed, he felt comfortable including all the watershed landowners. Now, they're
36 shifting the tax from the low lands to the larger property owners. He asked why
37 they couldn't leave it the way it is. They fought hard for the original formula.
38

39 Brenner stated she understands they can't go back to the way it was because
40 it was a tax that didn't work. She asked why they don't do the subzone the way
41 they do the percentage of the assessed value. Monsen stated there are issues with
42 the subzones generating a property tax. To deal with Mr. Westergreen's issue, they
43 could consider a different assessment rate for special properties.
44

45 Brenner suggested creating another category for open space agriculture and
46 open space timber that has a reduced rate based on those tax designations.
47 They've created the open space tax designations because resources like agriculture

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1 and timber are of great importance. Monsen stated they can do that. The notion of
2 reduced taxes because of the open space tax designation is a tax as opposed to fee
3 for benefit. This is meant to be a shift toward a fee for benefit. Focus on particular
4 classes of property for which this formula creates an unfair burden, rather than
5 relying on a tax designation of open space.
6

7 McShane stated each option lists types of parcels. There is potential for
8 creating another type of parcel and a minimum fee that would go with that parcel.
9 The designation could be whatever they decide. Monsen stated they have to define
10 properties outside or inside the flood plain.
11

12 McShane stated they aren't addressing that yet.
13

14 Nelson stated the purpose is for flood protection of assets and property, yet
15 they can't base it on asset values. Cooper stated they can't base it directly on
16 asset values. The fee is based on asset values in terms of improved and
17 unimproved land.
18

19 Nelson stated a million dollar house won't pay more than a shack. Cooper
20 stated it would.
21

22 Monsen stated a million dollar home wouldn't get protected first. There is an
23 incremental change based on value, but not completely on value.
24

25 Nelson stated the fee for forestry or agriculture land could change because
26 there's less of an impact to the community as a whole. He asked if there is a total
27 dollar amount that they are going for, so if they change one they have to change
28 the others. Cooper stated there is. The challenge is when they deviate significantly
29 from the options proposed.
30

31 Nelson stated he preferred that properties with open space would pay a low
32 or minimal amount of money. They have less impact. If the districts are going to
33 help anyone, they have to reward those parcels. A parcel should pay more if there
34 are improvements on the parcel within the flood zone. Monsen stated that's what
35 this does.
36

37 Nelson stated it does, except for forestry.
38

39 McShane stated he wanted to send option five to a Council committee for
40 further discussion.
41

42 Nelson asked if they can get that kind of a change done this year. Monsen
43 stated any significant change will make it difficult for staff to recreate the
44 assessment role for the Treasurer because of the manual activity required to go
45 through each parcel. The Council will have this discussion and action every year.
46 This discussion is for an assessment for 2004. The Council can change the dollar
47 amount and formula every year.

1
2 **Nelson moved** to schedule this in the Finance Committee to discuss the fee
3 structure, and also begin the process of considering parcels with open space both in
4 and out of the flood plain at a different, reduced fee, while compensating with other
5 parcels that have improvements.
6

7 Caskey-Schreiber stated open space agriculture parcels in the flood zone are
8 used for flood overflow areas. That's what they want there. She has a problem
9 that involves commercial forestry. Studies indicate that clear cutting can
10 exacerbate a flooding situation. Look at a two-tier fee for forested land and land
11 that has been cleared. Cooper stated there is some time after a cut when there is
12 increased runoff, but tracking when a parcel is cut would be impossible for staff to
13 implement.
14

15 Brenner stated they could say the same thing for agricultural land. There is
16 a lot of clearing of agricultural land. The County Council has determined that those
17 resources are important. That's why the open space designation exists. Whatever
18 they do, direct efforts toward lands with those designations. A lot of clear cutting
19 done now leaves undergrowth rather than just stripping the land. Practices are
20 improving.
21

22 Caskey-Schreiber stated she flew over Crown Pacific holdings, and they have
23 cleared miles and miles of hilltops.
24

25 Brenner stated that when flying over cut forestland, one can't see the
26 vegetation that's left on the ground.
27

28 Roy asked if the Council can set a policy before this tax period, or if staff
29 doesn't think they can implement it during this tax period. She asked if it's a
30 problem for the County to set a policy that can't be implemented the first year.
31

32 Brenner asked if they would miss funding for a year if that happens.
33

34 McShane stated it wouldn't bother him.
35

36 Nelson stated that's the discussion point. They can establish the minimum
37 amount for the subzones to collect. That's why they should have a hearing on all
38 the options. The funding mechanism is important to the subzones.
39

40 Ron Bronsema, Lynden/Everson Flood Control Subzone Advisory Committee,
41 stated the subzone representatives had a preliminary meeting in August to discuss
42 the funding options. They didn't have a chance for another meeting until last week.
43 There was a lot of confusion. The subzone input process has been poor.
44

45 Regarding the fee options, no one cared much for any option. Parcels with
46 open space agriculture are getting hit hard. As a farmer, he provides flood storage
47 and pervious surfaces for water to percolate through. They're not getting credit for

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1 it. The County's repair and maintenance program does not protect agricultural
2 land. They protect infrastructure. Open space agricultural areas are being hit
3 harder than they should.
4

5 Brenner asked if Mr. Bronsema would approve of a more discounted rate for
6 open space agriculture and timber areas. Bronsema stated he would. Right now,
7 option five is the best of all the unsatisfactory options.
8

9 **McShane proposed a friendly amendment** that funding options for this
10 year go to the Finance Committee, and then the funding options for the future
11 years be sent to the flood subzone advisory committees to provide
12 recommendations to the Council. They know these areas better than the Council.
13

14 **Nelson accepted the friendly amendment.**
15

16 Brenner asked what happens if they redo the countywide flood tax to make it
17 a genuine fee. Have several categories. Renegotiate the subzones. Don't take the
18 burden off open space just to dump it onto others in the subzones and make it
19 more than they can handle.
20

21 Monsen stated the countywide fee/tax structure shifts the primary burden
22 out of the flood plain. The subzones were created to also bring some of the
23 financial responsibility to those directly receiving benefits.
24

25 *(Clerk's Note: End of tape one, side A.)*
26

27 Monsen continued to state that those taxpayers outside the flood plain are
28 paying the lion's share of expenses. Implementing Councilmember Brenner's
29 suggestion would shift the financial burden into the open space agriculture parcels
30 in the flood plain, not out of it.
31

32 Bronsema stated the Acme/VanZandt subzone needs the money. The other
33 two subzones could get by without it.
34

35 Westergreen asked why they can't keep the current structure for one more
36 year. Monsen stated legal counsel and staff advise against it.
37

38 Westergreen stated option five has a combination of fee and tax, the basis
39 being both the amount of acreage and also assessments. They're doing the same
40 thing, only modifying the structure. Monsen stated the shift in the countywide tax
41 maximizes flexibility to deal with the priorities of the moment. The subzone
42 formulas should be regularly reviewed and amended so there is a clear relationship
43 between the projects and those who will benefit from the projects. If they don't,
44 they will move away from a benefit for a fee, and they might as well do a tax.
45

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1 Brenner asked how much of the western part of the county is in a subzone.
2 Monsen stated about 80,000 parcels total are in the county. A substantial part of
3 the county is not in the subzones.
4

5 Brenner asked if they could form more subzones. Cooper stated the North
6 Fork area has considered it. Other areas have toyed with the idea, but haven't
7 moved forward.
8

9 ***Motion carried unanimously.***

10
11
12 **2. WRIA WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PROJECT**

13
14 Update on Watershed Action Plan and Review Process

15
16 Bruce Roll, Water Resources Division Manager, stated he first wanted to
17 discuss the watershed action plan. The plan is to be delivered by the end of the
18 year. As the first draft becomes available for review, he needs to know how to
19 work with the County Council on that first draft.
20

21 Brenner stated the way it's been done so far is to discuss the information the
22 County Council receives in its water resources work session packets. The Planning
23 Unit gets certain information and discusses it. The County Council is not getting
24 the same information the Planning Unit gets, and the Planning Unit isn't getting the
25 Council's water resources work session packets. She asked that the County
26 Council's packet be available to the Planning Unit members, and that one copy of
27 the Planning Unit's information be given to the County Council. Roll stated there
28 are binders for all the information that goes to the Planning Unit members.
29 Historically, he has briefed the Council on each of the topics that will come before
30 the Planning Unit, especially those issues where he has to represent the County's
31 interest.
32

33 Brenner asked that one of those Planning Unit member binders be provided
34 to the Council Office. She asked that the Planning Unit meetings be taped. The
35 minutes don't reflect all of the discussion. Roll stated the Planning Unit as a whole
36 does not want tapes, and has requested that the summaries reflect the discussion.
37 He can bring the request forward from the Council. The Planning Unit would have
38 to approve having the meetings taped, archived, and made available.
39

40 ***Brenner*** stated she's not trying to take their choices away. The Planning
41 Unit is so important. It has an obligation to tape the meetings. That's not
42 something they vote on. She ***moved*** to provide the Planning Unit members copies
43 of the water resources work session packets.
44

45 Caskey-Schreiber asked the Planning Unit process, and if the motion is
46 possible. Roll stated there are always copies available. He leaves it open for
47 people. It would be a larger task to increase his distribution.

1
2 **Brenner amended her motion** to have Dr. Roll inform all the caucuses that
3 they can make a request to be provided one water resources work session packet
4 per caucus on an ongoing basis.
5

6 Roll stated he can make the packet and the yearly work session schedule
7 available and let it be known that they are available.
8

9 **Brenner amended her motion** to have Dr. Roll inform the Planning Unit
10 members at the Planning Unit meetings that the water resources work session
11 packet exist and are available upon request and also have Dr. Roll take five or six
12 copies to the Planning Unit meeting for anyone who asks for one.
13

14 **Motion carried 5-2 with Crawford and McShane opposed.**
15

16 **Brenner moved** that a Planning Unit binder and all supplemental
17 information be provided to the Council when they becomes available.
18

19 Nelson asked if there is any reason why councilmembers can't just ask for
20 that material. Roll stated he can put the councilmembers on the distribution list.
21 He'll still need to communicate with the councilmembers.
22

23 Fleetwood asked if that's feasible. Roll stated it is if they do it from this point
24 forward, and not include past materials.
25

26 **Motion carried 5-2 with Crawford and McShane opposed.**
27

28 **Brenner moved** to tape the Planning Unit meetings. At the last Planning
29 Unit meeting, a comment was made by a person who later denied making the
30 comment. A Department of Ecology representative claimed that the State would
31 turn up the heat on the County if they don't get this done now. That was an
32 inflammatory statement.
33

34 Fleetwood asked if audio taping the meeting will have a chilling effect on
35 discussion amongst caucus members. Roll stated it will. If that's what the Council
36 majority wants, he can take that motion to the Planning Unit. The Planning Unit
37 will debate the issue and concur or not concur.
38

39 Nelson stated the Planning Unit is pulling together materials from various
40 caucuses to put together a countywide objective based on consensus. Therefore,
41 there should be an open dialogue at the Planning Unit level during the initial phases
42 of planning. Leave the process as open as possible to get people working together.
43 These people need as much latitude as possible without worrying about what to
44 say. He wants them to be able to say whatever they feel, however they feel, to get
45 the plan done.
46

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1 Roy asked if this is a departure from the usual advisory process. Roll stated
2 that very early in the process, they went through a decision on how to operate.
3 These groups approve of that approach. The process differs because of the nature
4 of the legislation and the decisions being made.
5

6 Roy stated these people are representing other people in their caucus. She
7 understands about encouraging people to speak openly and freely. On the other
8 hand, they are also representing other people. She asked if they are obligated to
9 have a record for the people who are being represented. Roll stated the there is
10 little ability for someone to come in and promote their own agenda, and that person
11 doesn't last long. The person coming to the table is there to represent the caucus.
12 If that person is not, the caucus will deal with it accordingly.
13

14 Crawford stated he recalled that certain caucus members will not participate
15 if the meetings are taped. Roll stated that is correct.
16

17 Fleetwood stated he is inclined to defer to the Planning Unit's decision on its
18 process unless there is compelling reason not to. He would support a motion that
19 respectfully asks the Planning Unit to reconsider, but he won't support the current
20 motion.
21

22 Brenner stated this is a controversial, public process. They are spending a
23 lot of money. They have a major obligation to make sure every "T" is crossed and
24 every "I" is dotted. They tape a lot of important stuff from advisory committees.
25 This is a very unique committee. She assumes that most caucus members were
26 intimidated that the State will come in and hold their feet to the fire if they don't
27 move along, rather than asking that their concerns be addressed. This is an
28 important public process.
29

30 ***Motion failed 1-6 with Brenner in favor.***
31

32 ***Brenner moved*** to ask the Planning Unit to respectfully reconsider the issue
33 of audiotaping its meetings.
34

35 ***Motion failed 2-5 with Brenner and Fleetwood in favor.***
36

37 Roll stated the plan is coming to the technical teams, Planning Unit, and
38 others. This is the first internal draft. He's looking for information from the Council
39 on how to work with the Council on the draft.
40

41 Roy stated they have to make sure that the plan fits with the Comprehensive
42 Plan. Roll stated the Planning Department is intimately involved already.
43

44 Roy stated she preferred to have as much interaction as possible.
45

46 Brenner asked for the Council's options.
47

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1 Roll stated he could provide options. The timing on issues will be such that
2 he would like someone on the Council to be a point person on the issues.
3

4 McShane suggested the chair of the Natural Resource Committee. They
5 could have weekly meetings if necessary.
6

7 Caskey-Schreiber asked what kind of input staff would need. She thought
8 the Council has already given a lot of direction. Roll stated they're moving away
9 from a planning stage and toward an implementation stage. There will be changes
10 in desires for land use policy and other issues. It's critical that he work with Council
11 on those issues. Some of those issues will incur a cost to the County. He's most
12 interested in the sections of the draft where the County has a stake. He needs to
13 have an active dialog with the Council and its willingness to pursue what is being
14 proposed.
15

16 Sue Blake, Resources Planner, stated the Council has seen certain pieces of
17 the plan before. It's important to understand that the Council hasn't seen the
18 details in each section, only the outline. These are programs that are being written
19 by many participants. Understand that this is a draft in process. It's not what
20 people have agreed to do. It's what people have agreed to begin the process of
21 discussing.
22

23 Caskey-Schreiber asked where funding for implementation and analysis will
24 come from. She asked if the Council is being asked to make commitments. Roll
25 stated he hoped to offer Council the pieces of implementation and how they could
26 be funded.
27

28 McShane stated the Council needs to also try and achieve consensus.
29

30 Fleetwood stated they should just pick a time for updates, and leave it at
31 that.
32

33 Nelson stated this is broader and deeper than developing the Comprehensive
34 Plan, which required a lot of meetings. Put the items for discussion in the
35 appropriate Council committee. The Council Chair can call special meetings.
36

37 *(Clerk's Note: End of tape one, side B.)*
38

39 McShane stated the Council Chair should have authority to assign it to a
40 committee without the committee chair's approval. Other items may have to slow
41 down a bit.
42

43 The Council concurred.
44

45 Roy asked that Planning and Water Resources staff be present at these
46 meetings if the issues overlap the two departments.
47

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1 Centennial Grant - Long-term Monitoring Program Update
2

3 Roll stated the County received a grant from the Department of Ecology to
4 develop a long-term water quality monitoring strategy for WRIA.
5

6 Sue Blake, Resources Planner, stated that when they began, the ideal was to
7 develop the long-term monitoring program in coordination with the WRIA long-term
8 monitoring program. They used input from WRIA participants, Utah State
9 University (USU), and others. It is a work in process. Through the plan process,
10 this can be modified.
11

12 The overall goal is to make sure they have information on water quality
13 status, trends, sources of problems, and effectiveness. It is critical to build on
14 existing efforts. They know there are significant gaps in meeting that goal. The
15 information is not to replace existing information. They would like to enhance
16 community partnerships.
17

18 This is more than just a monitoring plan. It is a start at looking at
19 monitoring as a component of the decision-making process. Integrate the data into
20 how they make decisions. They must have a similar method to collect, analyze,
21 and report information.
22

23 The program applies to the entire county. There are six goals. The first goal
24 is to do water quality monitoring. There are a number of tasks within that goal. It
25 will be ambient monitoring that will enhance the baseline monitoring program.
26

27 Fleetwood asked whether or not monitoring is a formal part of the watershed
28 management plan. Blake stated the Watershed Management Plan will have a long-
29 term monitoring component. Much of this monitoring will be included in the
30 Watershed Management Plan. It has to be expanded to address components other
31 than water quantity.
32

33 Roy asked if they will have a chance to comment on shellfish monitoring in
34 depth. Blake stated there is coordination with the shellfish program.
35

36 Blake continued to state that the second goal is the coordination effort that
37 would make sure they have a regular updated list of who's doing what throughout
38 the county. There will be an annual workshop to get everyone together who is
39 doing monitoring.
40

41 The third goal is to promote public involvement and stewardship. They will
42 talk to people who are interested in doing monitoring in the basin and look at the
43 resources that are already available so they can connect needs with resources.
44 They will use some of the money allocated to fill any gaps. They will put in a pilot
45 telemetry station with Cooperative Extension. The station will enable them to get
46 online, real-time data.
47

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1 The fourth goal is reporting. The plan is to conduct focus interviews with
2 decision-makers to find out what kind of information is needed and how it should be
3 presented. They will also identify what's out there that they can build upon
4 already. If there are gaps, they may make program recommendations. Tie this
5 into the concept of a State of the Watershed report.
6

7 Goal five is program review and update. With this timeframe, there wasn't
8 an opportunity to hear from all WRIA participants about what they want in this
9 plan. There will be opportunities to hear suggestions for changes during the WRIA
10 plan process. They also didn't get USU or other outside expertise input.
11

12 Goal six is funding. They will seek at least three additional grants to keep
13 this going. Because this is part of the overall WRIA project, there will likely be a
14 need for an ongoing funding base for some portions of the program.
15

16 Brenner asked about potential dedicated funding sources. Roll stated he
17 handed out a report by Parametrix addressing that issue a number of months ago.
18 He'll get a copy to the councilmembers.
19

20 Nelson stated they need information that the monitoring will provide.
21 Getting help from the community is a good idea. He asked how they evaluate the
22 monitoring. He asked how they do the peer review or technical review of the
23 quality of information they will receive. Blake stated a number of things can be
24 evaluated.
25

26 Nelson asked that peer and technical review be included in the plan. Blake
27 stated that's part of the program update goal. People have to collect the
28 information in the same way. There has to be consistency. The data must be put
29 together in the same way as the State's ambient water monitoring program.
30

31 Roy stated the shellfish protection areas meet every single criterion. All
32 these pieces are in place, but the monitoring program doesn't include the specific
33 shellfish areas. Blake stated they didn't focus on other beneficial uses, either.
34 However, she will make sure there are a couple of places for ambient monitoring.
35 The shellfish groups can continue their efforts with a little more help.
36

37 Roll stated they are signing a contract to finish the monitoring that will open
38 up Drayton Harbor in April. Data collection in the marina is a part of that contract.
39

40 Roy stated all the information collected up-basin is on pollution that will
41 eventually end up in one of these bodies of water. There's no better indicator of
42 water quality successes in the watershed than healthy salmon and shellfish.
43

44 Caskey-Schreiber asked about standardized analysis. Blake stated the
45 County and the Public Utility District (PUD) will identify partners who are willing to
46 do analysis in a consistent way. The analysis will have to be done to the State's
47 standards. How it's analyzed must be consistent.

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1
2 Caskey-Schreiber asked if they would incorporate work done by Robin
3 Matthews. Blake stated it's beyond the scope of what's possible under this
4 program.

5
6 Brenner stated technical review with a consultant is important for adequacy
7 and objectivity. Blake stated there is a person from a university who they have
8 contacted.

9
10 Roll stated they are using national experts to set up these monitors. They'll
11 continue to do that through the consultants or professors who are the best the can
12 get.

13
14 Brenner stated they should use local experts. Roll stated that over time,
15 they should have people available locally that understand the basic concepts of
16 monitoring. He agreed that there needs to be a local body of knowledge.

17
18 Brenner asked what will happen to the Planning Unit once the plan is done.
19 Roll stated the draft plan includes a description of the role of the Planning Unit
20 beyond adoption.

21
22 Brenner asked about seeking expertise to develop groundwater monitoring
23 programs. She asked why they don't definitely do it. Blake stated it depends on
24 available resources.

25
26 Brenner stated she understood that it's very difficult to do those kinds of
27 things. She would like to go as slow as they need to go to get as much of the
28 information as they need to make it the best it can be. Have something that is
29 complete. They've spent all their attention on surface water. She doesn't want to
30 see that groundwater is given less emphasis.

31
32 McShane stated the scale of what they would do for groundwater monitoring
33 would be enormous. They might want to be very focused. On the reporting and
34 decision-making process, try to include outreach to experts who might have an
35 interest in using, evaluating, and building on the data. He prefers university
36 collaboration over consultants.

37
38 Brenner stated she has negative feelings about how universities do what they
39 do. They got burned by USU. It's taxpayer money being spent on graduate work.
40 With consultants, there are guarantees whether or not they fulfill their obligations.
41 Universities don't produce any guarantees or warranties.

42
43
44 **OTHER BUSINESS**

45
46 Roll discussed the **Groundwater Model Action Plan**. He submitted a
47 memo to the Planning Unit from the Staff Team and Tech Team (*on file*). This is

1 the first draft of the groundwater model action strategy. It begins to describe how
2 they might move forward with the groundwater piece. It recognizes the enormous
3 amount of work that's been done to date. It proposes future steps to pursue the
4 work.

5
6 *(Clerk's Note: The Council took a five-minute break at 12:24 p.m.)*
7

8 Crawford asked if line 49 on page two of this memo addresses his concern
9 about the multi-layer modeling, which he brought up at the beginning of the
10 meeting. Roll stated it does.

11
12 Originally, there was a plan for a single layer model. There were a number
13 of discussions about the model about which groundwater modeling approach was
14 best. There was mutual agreement by everyone that a five-layer model would be
15 better.

16
17 Brenner asked if they are going to get the five-layer model from Utah State
18 University (USU). She asked how far USU has gone. Roll stated USU has some
19 understanding of the data they need and the attributes of a five-layer model. They
20 will prepare a package of attributes that someone can use to construct the model.
21 It won't be a fully functioning model.

22
23 McShane suggested amending line 49, "multi-dimensional model **approach.**"
24

25 Crawford stated caucus members are concerned about not getting the multi-
26 layer model for groundwater, and they could get that model for about \$100,000.
27 There is \$300,000 of discretionary funds in the budget. He asked if it is appropriate
28 direction for the Council to give staff if the Council decides the groundwater model
29 is a priority. Roll stated the Council voted on a plan that doesn't include the multi-
30 layer model. In order to move forward with the groundwater model, they have to
31 do a re-prioritization.

32
33 *(Clerk's Note: End of tape two, side A.)*
34

35 Roll continued to state that USU identified steps on how it can be done
36 locally. The group is looking for funding sources and will do that as this draft
37 becomes a more refined action strategy.

38
39 Caskey-Schreiber asked if USU has provided an estimate of the cost of a five-
40 layer model. Roll stated the estimate is between \$100,000 and \$150,000. Some
41 models developed will be WRIA-wide. Other more specific models will be for certain
42 areas like Lake Whatcom. Groundwater modeling is very complex. There is a need
43 to have tools available so people can judge the management options that are
44 available. He recommends that they move cautiously with how it's constructed.
45 Make sure it's constructed to meet needs for information related to groundwater.
46

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1 Caskey-Schreiber asked if this is something they can go out for bid on. Roll
2 stated the memo includes a scope of what they can move forward on. The memo
3 suggests engaging USGS and Washington State University to develop a scope.
4 Ultimately, it's up to whatever group decides to implement this groundwater
5 modeling.

6
7 Brenner asked about the available \$300,000. Roll stated it is the estimated
8 Water Resources ending fund balance.

9
10 Crawford stated that if they don't spend any more money and don't spend
11 that reserve, they won't have to bump another project.

12
13 Brenner asked when they found out about Environment Canada doing the
14 groundwater model in the Sumas/Abbotsford aquifer. Blake stated they've known
15 about it for some time. However, it is being done under a different timeframe. At
16 the time, it was good to know of the study, but it wasn't a substitute for what they
17 were trying to do.

18
19 Brenner stated they have to work in partnership with different entities. She's
20 not comfortable that they rushed into projects without finding out who was doing
21 what. She hoped they're finding out about other projects in all areas.

22
23 Roy stated she did not want to tie the potentially available \$300,000 to the
24 draft plan outlined in the memo before the plan is done.

25
26 Roll stated there will be a call for a vote to move forward at the Planning Unit
27 meeting tomorrow night. The vote at the Planning Unit meeting will be to move
28 forward with the vote the Council approved last month, which is minus the
29 groundwater piece. He can't predict whether it will be approved. There are
30 caucuses that want to move forward with the groundwater piece.

31
32 Crawford stated he's looking for affirmation from the Planning Unit that
33 groundwater is a high priority. If it is, it would be a good use of that available
34 money, as opposed to dropping anything off the plan.

35
36 Fleetwood agreed with Councilmember Roy about spending the money
37 without finalizing the plan. There still seems to be some question about what
38 exactly they will use the information for. He's always assumed it was to give
39 policymakers guidance on water management. The level of complexity of the
40 groundwater model depends on what they want to do with the information. It
41 seems the process is deficient in answering that. The discussion of what results
42 they want should take place before they decide on the complexity of the
43 groundwater modeling. They need to take a step back.

44
45 Brenner stated groundwater modeling was in the plan. It was removed
46 because it went over budget. That doesn't mean its less important. They need to
47 move on it. Show commitment to groundwater modeling.

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1
2 **Nelson moved** to support the development of a complete groundwater
3 assessment and a multi-layer model, and the Council will reevaluate the cost as it
4 comes back to the Council.
5

6 Caskey-Schreiber agreed with the motion. Move slowly. It's dangerous to
7 proceed without knowing what's there and how they are impacting groundwater by
8 its decisions. The Department of Ecology will do an assessment for \$15,000. That
9 won't be enough. Work with Environment Canada to see what the cost of its study
10 was.
11

12 Fleetwood stated he supports high quality groundwater monitoring.
13 Understand precisely what they're going to do with that data.
14

15 McShane stated they've agreed with the concept of the first four items on
16 page two of the memo. The problem comes with item five. Item five seems to
17 commit them to moving forward. He's not sure he's comfortable committing to
18 moving forward until he knows the result of item four. Perhaps this reflects the fact
19 that some caucuses want a strong commitment from the County. He doesn't want
20 to provide a false commitment when they're not sure what they're getting into.
21

22 Brenner stated that if they can't commit to funding a model, send forward a
23 commitment to determining groundwater estimates and have Dr. Roll carry forward
24 the Council's concerns about funding sources. Make a commitment to getting to
25 that place.
26

27 Roy stated she's not willing to support item six. Look at and evaluate the
28 model first, then talk about the money and staff next.
29

30 McShane stated that if they do items one through four, there is commitment.
31 They will get a report from USU and then evaluate that report, which will take a
32 level of commitment. Roll stated USU said there is a need for additional data. Data
33 is something that needs to be there to populate the model. That goes back to the
34 issue of which questions they want answers to. Some people think the model
35 should be very refined.
36

37 McShane suggested the Council support items one through four only.
38

39 Roy agreed. Evaluate the other items later.
40

41 **Nelson amended his motion** to approve items one through four in the
42 memo, and then have the remaining items come forward later.
43

44 **Motion carried unanimously.**
45

46 Jeff Monsen, Public Works Director, stated they did not budget additional
47 expenditure from the Water Resource fund for 2004. A \$300,000 balance was not

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1 budgeted except for the possibility of using a portion of it for Cooperative Extension
2 education activity. The money is unspent fund balance.
3
4

5 **3. STORMWATER PHASE II UPDATE**

6
7 Overview of Phase II Permit Development
8

9 This item was not discussed.

10
11 Jeff Monsen, Public Works Director, stated staff would send the Council a
12 letter on this item.
13
14

15 **ADJOURN**

16
17 The meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.
18
19
20

21 _____
22 Jill Nixon, Minutes Transcription

23 These minutes were approved by Council on December 9, 2003.
24

25 ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

26
27
28
29
30 _____
31 Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Dan McShane, Council Chair