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WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
Special Committee Of The Whole

June 22, 2010

CALL TO ORDER

Council Chair Sam Crawford called the meeting to order at 2:18 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham, Washington.

ROLL CALL

Present: Barbara Brenner, Sam Crawford, Kathy Kershner, Bill Knutzen and Ken Mann

Absent: Carl Weimer and L. Ward Nelson

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

1. RURAL ELEMENT UPDATE - DISCUSSION OF GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT REQUIREMENTS AND THE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS (AB2010-072)

Gary Davis, Planning and Development Services Department, submitted a rural element update checklist of proposed changes (*on file*) and submitted and read from a presentation (*on file*).

Discussion (2:39:15 PM) included a criteria about actual building sizes and limitations at the 1990 date; allowing successful businesses to expand; whether residential limited areas of more intense rural development (LAMIRDs) with businesses in the area are considered residential LAMIRDs; the origin of the density overlay concept in Clallam County; the difference between the density overlay and rural conservation zone; (2:53:02 PM) the reason for using the density overlay at Cain Lake; preserving existing zoning to avoid downzones whenever possible; the mechanisms by which they can justify their decisions; whether the Hearings Board found rural residential, one house per two acres (RR2) is out of compliance throughout the county; whether or not allowing development at a density of the current zoning in the area east of Cain Lake Road would be considered sprawl; (3:25:15 PM) whether changing the description of rural is an alternative to changing the zoning; (3:30:50 PM) the hazards of Chuckanut Drive; the status of a vested plat at Governor's Point; in the Comprehensive Plan, defining the rural character of each area and creating a broader definition of rural character, rather than relying only on a narrow definition of rural character; how to define a LAMIRD that defines a rural character at Emerald Lake; adjacent forestry that creates a logical boundary for Emerald Lake; (3:56:45 PM) using the 1990 water lines as justification for the Fort Bellingham LAMIRD, and; whether the density overlay would allow the City the option to bring the Fort Bellingham into the urban growth area (UGA).

Brenner asked to know the average lot size for each area.

Bob Wiesen, 3314 Douglas Road, Ferndale, stated Fort Bellingham is a potential area for a transfer of development rights (TRD) receiving area. Many of these areas will no

1 longer be farmed. If Bellingham doesn't take its growth, the County can infill these areas.
2 Make the most efficient use of everything they can.
3

4 Clayton Petree, citizen, read from the rural element regarding rural character and
5 density (4:07:34 PM). There are many historical communities at a density of one unit per
6 acre or less for which they must maintain the character. That density is just fine. Talk
7 about and justify why they want the densities they want for historic, rural communities.
8 Whatcom County is not the same as another county. The rural element is however they
9 define it. Clallam County has residential LAMIRDS adjacent to urban growth areas (UGAs).

10
11 Dannon Traxlor, 709 Dupont Street, stated the Council is headed in a great direction.
12 Define rural character generally and for specific areas. Start with top-down policy
13 considerations, including the Planning Commission recommendations and policy
14 determinations. Apply those policies to the individual maps. An overlay is still a downzone.
15 Create a LAMIRD or retain the rural zoning. She represents the Governor's Point
16 Development Company. The waterlines depicted on the County's map are inaccurate. She
17 will submit the correct information.
18

19 Doug Campbell, 1401 Astor Street, read the definition of a built environment from
20 the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 43.21C.110. Looking at the utility is the right
21 direction to go. Someone had asked if a water line in an area may serve a dedicated use to
22 fill a tank. Many water systems have services from those mains and also provide fill to a
23 tank. Few are dedicated lines. They are going down the right path with Fort Bellingham.
24 That neighborhood is well-defined. It was a land-grab area. Look at some subareas within
25 some of the rural areas. There may be historic neighborhoods to consider separately.
26

27
28 **OTHER BUSINESS**

29
30 There was no other business.
31

32
33 **ADJOURN**

34
35 The meeting adjourned at 4:14 p.m.
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39 Please contact the Council Office to obtain an
40 official, signed copy:
41
42 360-676-6690 or council@co.whatcom.wa.us
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Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Sam Crawford, Council Chair