

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE
WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

February 19, 2009

Regular Meeting

1 **Call To Order:** The meeting was called to order, by Whatcom County Planning
2 Commission Chair, Jean Melious, in the Northwest Annex Conference Room at 6:37 p.m.
3

4 **Roll Call**

5 Present: Jean Melious, Sean Wilson, John Lesow, Ken Mann, Rabel Burdge, Geoff Menzies,
6 John Steensma

7 David Hunter in attendance at 7:10 p.m.

8 Absent: John Belisle
9

10 **Staff Present:** David Stalheim, Matt Aamot, Royce Buckingham-Prosecutor's Office,
11 Becky Boxx
12

13 **Director's Dialog**
14

15 Stalheim: We sent out about 17,000 postcards yesterday to all of the property owners
16 who may be affected by the Limited Areas of More Intense Rural Development (LAMIRD)
17 decisions. We will have public meetings beginning in two weeks to start gathering some of
18 the public input and to let people know what is going on. The dates are March 4th and 5th.
19 In April we will have you begin the review of the rural element and the LAMIRD issues. We
20 will probably work on policy issues at your meeting on April 15th. On April 29th you will
21 come to a recommendation.
22

23 At your first meeting in March you will be reviewing the Bellingham Urban Fringe Subarea
24 Plan, which is a remand from the Growth Management Hearings Board (GMHB). There
25 were a few areas of inconsistency between the development regulations and the plan that
26 we have to address. At that meeting you will also be reviewing some zoning amendments
27 regarding setback tables.
28

29 At your last meeting in March we have two fairly significant issues coming to you. One is
30 working on the land clearing code for fill and grade issues. We have land clearing
31 standards scattered throughout the zoning code and Critical Areas Ordinance so we are
32 trying to consolidate those. We will also be addressing the Birch Bay fire protection
33 standards. This regards some issues that have been going on for quite some time and we
34 finally got a capital facilities plan from them so we can proceed.
35

36 The County Council has agreed to ask the GMHB for a six month extension for the Urban
37 Growth Area (UGA) decision. We anticipate filing a request for that shortly. Until then we
38 are still under the deadline.
39

40 One thing I have been seeing a lot of is direct email correspondence between the Planning
41 Commission and the public. It seems like we are somewhat encouraging it by having your
42 contact information on our website. We would like to set up an email for the Planning
43 Commission that will come to us and then be forwarded on to each of you. We will then
44 take your contact information off of the website. We have to be careful because any
45 correspondence you have becomes public record.
46

47 **Open Session for Public Comment**
48

February 19, 2009

Regular Meeting

1 There was no public comment.

2

3 **Commissioner Comments**

4

5 Lesow: At the last public hearing, on the Foothills EIS, a comment was made to me,
6 during the break, about the inappropriateness of comparing the situation in my
7 community, of Pt. Roberts, in lieu of the grocery store that operates there. I don't think it
8 is but I won't argue the point. I think it's a good idea to get acquainted with parts of the
9 County that we aren't acquainted with. One way to do that is through the local
10 newspaper. With that in mind I am going to pass around the latest edition of the All Points
11 Bulletin to give you an idea of what is going on in Pt. Roberts.

12

13 **Work Session**

14

15 File #CMP2007-00007 - To consider and adopt findings relating to the Commission's
16 Columbia Valley recommendations.

17

18 Aamot: After our last meeting staff drafted proposed findings. I would like to highlight
19 some of the issues. I would like to draw your attention to findings 13 through 17 that
20 relate to the adequacy or lack of adequacy of public facilities and services. Finding 30
21 relates to the quantitative groundwater model that the EIS called out as needed for
22 mitigation for Alternatives 1 and 2, which were the UGA Alternatives. The consultants did
23 not call that out for Alternative 3, the LAMIRD Alternative. Finding 31 addresses the
24 employment centers. Finding 32 discusses putting the Columbia Valley area into the
25 process for evaluating LAMIRDs. Some of the findings are the same as you had in the
26 original staff report.

27

28 Lesow: Regarding finding 20, why is that included? There is nothing to bolster or refute
29 that statement.

30

31 Aamot: We are trying to indicate that there is transit, bikeways and so forth in the plan.

32

33 Lesow: Regarding finding 21, I'm not sure that fits in particularly in terms of the bikeways
34 and pedestrian walkways. I don't see those as existing or desired in the Foothills area.

35

36 Aamot: There is concern about connectivity, for example between subdivisions. There are
37 also some regional trails, such as the Bay to Baker Trail and policies in the plan to
38 encourage that.

39

40 Lesow: Finding 23 addresses business. I want to make sure I'm clear that the Small Town
41 Commercial would still be allowed in Kendall.

42

43 Aamot: Yes, in Alternative 3 it's reduced in size from 41 acres to 14 acres based on our
44 initial review of the area that was developed in 1990. That could change when we develop
45 the uniform criteria for the LAMIRDs.

46

47 Burdge: If we have the area as a LAMIRD how do we allocate that population of the 4,000
48 people that live there?

February 19, 2009

Regular Meeting

1 Stalheim: What we are looking at at this time is we have taken the 2031 population
2 allocations, which are proposed to be allocated to the UGAs and the rural areas. What we
3 have done is put in zeros for the LAMIRD areas. We did that to allow you to have that
4 discussion when we get to the allocation issues in May. The 4,000 that are already there
5 wouldn't change we would just need to look at the allocation of the additional 3,000
6 people.

7
8 Burdge: On a statewide basis are there any other counties that have LAMIRDs?

9
10 Stalheim: Yes.

11
12 Burdge: Do any of them have these large recreational areas that have been designated as
13 a LAMIRD?

14
15 Stalheim: I would imagine that most of the rural counties have that kind of area.

16
17 Melious: I'm concerned about the wording of the recommendation because it says that we
18 voted to accept Alternative 3 which I had not understood that's what we were doing. I had
19 thought that we were making a recommendation about how the area should be considered
20 during the evaluation of LAMIRDs and UGAs. If we say we are accepting Alternative 3, I
21 think we are adopting or approving a Comprehensive Plan amendment.

22
23 Aamot: I don't think we are asking for a Comprehensive Plan amendment. We had before
24 you four alternatives. Three had a UGA and one had a LAMIRD. If we are saying no UGA,
25 that leaves with one alternative, so I think we have answered that question.

26
27 Stalheim: It is very clear that we didn't have an ordinance before you. Your
28 recommendation for a LAMIRD requires us to amend the plan and we don't have those
29 drafted. The whole reason we wanted to do this was to understand which process the
30 Columbia Valley UGA should be put in as we are doing the LAMIRD and UGA issues in the
31 next six months. I have worked with our legal staff to draft some language to make it
32 clearer what we are asking you to do. *For the Columbia Valley the Whatcom County*
33 *Planning Commission recommends rescinding the UGA designation and investigating the*
34 *rural LAMIRD Alternative as suggested by Alternative 3 of the Foothills Subarea Plan final*
35 *SEIS.*

36
37 **Lesow moved to accept the recommendations of the Findings of Facts before**
38 **them without alteration. Menzies seconded.**

39
40 Mann: Does your recommendation include the revised language just presented by Director
41 Stalheim?

42
43 Lesow: No. I don't like the term *investigating*.

44
45 Melious: I think it needs to be changed because it's not what we were asked to do. Did we
46 look at the EIS to see if we want all of those mitigation measures? Did we say "yes" we
47 are rejecting the Foothills Plan? I think there are a lot of implications to saying that we
48 accept the alternative.

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE
WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

4

February 19, 2009

Regular Meeting

1 Budge: We don't have criteria for LAMIRDs.

2

3 Aamot: What if we alter the wording to say *evaluate* instead of *investigate*?

4

5 Mann: We were, proactively, choosing to designate the LAMIRD.

6

7 Stalheim: We can swap the word *investigate* for *designate*.

8

9 **Mann made a friendly amendment to read: The Whatcom County Planning**
10 **Commission recommends rescinding the UGA designation and designating the**
11 **Columbia Valley as a LAMIRD. Lesow and Menzies accepted the friendly**
12 **amendment.**

13

14 **Roll Call Vote: Ayes – Hunter, Lesow, Mann, Menzies, Steensma; Nays – Melious,**
15 **Wilson; Abstain – Burdge; Absent – Belisle. The motion carried.**

16

17 **Work Session**

18

19 10-Year UGA Review - Whatcom County has determined that an environmental impact
20 statement (EIS) will be prepared to evaluate environmental impacts associated with the
21 10-year review of urban growth areas throughout the County. The Whatcom County
22 Planning Commission will hold a work session and make recommendations on the scope of
23 the EIS, including the Alternatives to be studied, mitigation measures, and probable
24 significant adverse impacts.

25

26 Stalheim: There are a lot of comments on the scoping document and we have most of the
27 subject areas covered within the EIS. However, there are two issues that have come up.
28 One is light and noise and the other is fiscal issues. I have, in my memo to you, that we
29 don't cover light and noise because I think the amount of time and effort we put to it
30 would be so minimal that it really won't affect our analysis.

31

32 Lesow: I think it is relevant. Wasn't that addressed in the public comment section? I
33 understand you can invest a lot of time into it but shouldn't it at least be addressed from
34 the public testimony level?

35

36 Stalheim: It is one of the topics that is not in our scope that we have identified as an issue
37 but I don't think we need to include it in the EIS.

38

39 Lesow: If it's not in the EIS document then basically it's not considered, so I don't
40 understand.

41

42 Stalheim: I am bringing these issues up so you can consider them.

43

44 Stalheim: Fiscal issues are something we did have scoped in the consulting work but we
45 had it as a separate product and we think it would be useful to put it in the EIS.

46

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE
WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

February 19, 2009

Regular Meeting

1 Stalheim: We also had some comments about the suitability criteria. It's already in the
2 scope but there are two issues that came up. One is alluvial fan hazard areas and the
3 other is all sensitive watersheds.

4 Burdge: Would it be possible to ask other departments to help us out regarding the fiscal
5 issues? Particularly what it would cost to house additional people in the County. Could
6 they give us information that might be useful?

7

8 Stalheim: Yes, we can do that.

9

10 Melious: Regarding the light and noise, would you be saying in the EIS that you
11 considered light and noise and at that scale you aren't anticipating adverse impacts? If
12 someone did raise the issue later we might be worse off.

13

14 Stalheim: Some of the issues are covered in a general fashion. Noise analysis, for project
15 related issues, are very expensive to do. To do noise modeling is quite a challenge.

16

17 Lesow: I'm not trying to get into decibel levels and a complex modeling of noise I just
18 want to know what the effects would be.

19

20 Mann: Is affordable housing covered?

21

22 Stalheim: Yes.

23

24 Mann: What about greenhouse gases.

25

26 Stalheim: Generally, it's covered under air quality.

27

28 Lesow: I don't want to be dismissive about greenhouse gases, but do I understand that
29 using the measure of vehicle miles traveled you could justify development out in the
30 county that was more self sustaining even though it was an urbanization of a rural area
31 because the DMTs would be less than they would be if you were traveling back and forth
32 to Bellingham?

33

34 Stalheim: This is looking at county wide air quality, we aren't getting into specifics.

35

36 Menzies: I have a question about water resources. Is it limited to fresh water resources?
37 There are multiple interpretations in terms of water resources. A lot of people think only
38 of fresh water, particularly when it comes to land use planning. There may be a lot of
39 impact on marine water as well so I would want to see that specified.

40

41 Burdge: I have a lot of issues I would like the consultant to look at as part of the scoping.

42

43 There are a number of trends that have come up in the public testimony with regard to
44 growth. We now know that the number of persons moving into the State and that
45 migration has declined by half. I would like to have that trend looked at.

46

47 I would like to see a little more done on private and public school enrollment figures. They
48 are beginning to decline. The echo effect of the boomers has produced an even lower birth

February 19, 2009

Regular Meeting

1 rate than what was anticipated. Nationwide fertility rates appear normal due to the high
2 birth rate among Hispanic females.

3
4 Hispanics represent an increasing share of the school age population, particularly in the
5 elementary grades. Most of these students receive a reduced price or free lunch indicating
6 they come from relatively low income families. These families are likely to need low cost
7 or affordable housing.

8
9 Building permits issued has fallen dramatically in the last year. Occupancy permits for
10 multi-family are down considerably.

11
12 Vacant and seasonal housing is about 22 percent of all units, which I think is troublesome.

13
14 Melious: I think the EIS has to consider all comments so I think the issue is will the
15 consultant be studying light and noise for inclusion as possible impacts in the EIS?

16
17 **Lesow so moved. Hunter seconded. The motion carried.**

18
19 Melious: Regarding fiscal impacts, should that discussion, that is already programmed, be
20 incorporated within the EIS?

21
22 **Burdge so moved. Lesow seconded. The motion carried.**

23
24 Melious: We have Geoff's recommendation that the scoping specifically state that water
25 quantity and fresh and marine water quality should be considered.

26
27 **Menzies so moved. Lesow seconded. The motion carried.**

28
29 Melious: Next we have Rabel's 10 recommendations to be added to the scope.

30
31 **Rabel so moved. Lesow seconded. The motion carried.**

32
33 Mann: We had testimony the other night, from Lincoln Rutter, about the underlying
34 economic realities that we are facing right now. How does that get addressed in the
35 scoping and should that be something we should specifically put in there?

36
37 Stalheim: I think it's probably in there under population and employment. We can make
38 sure it's included.

39
40 **Mann moved that EIS accounts for the currently unfolding economic realities**
41 **that the housing and credit markets are facing and how that will impact growth**
42 **and development in Whatcom County. Lesow seconded.**

43
44 Stalheim: Finding any empirical data regarding this is going to be challenging.

45
46 Melious: I am wondering if we do this are we telling the consultant to go find out what is
47 happening with the global fiscal crisis or are we just saying to the consultant make your
48 fiscal analysis and growth analysis up to date?

February 19, 2009

Regular Meeting

1 Mann: I was thinking of more up to date information because a lot of times we are using
2 numbers that are a few years old. Things are happening very rapidly and I think it will
3 have a huge impact on growth.

4
5 **Mann withdrew the motion.**

6
7 Stalheim: We are proposing three Alternatives. I heard in the testimony two themes
8 regarding population and having something lower and something higher. Another theme
9 was not including the Columbia Valley as a LAMIRD within this UGA EIS discussion.

10
11 With respect to the population scenarios we provided you with three options. Option one
12 is to add a fourth alternative, in addition to the no action Alternatives X and Y, which
13 would allow us to test the policy choices of adding an OFM low to the scenario. The cost of
14 adding another alternative is \$20,000.

15
16 The second option is not to do this. We feel that going to the OFM low is not a reasonable
17 alternative. Reasonable alternatives are set out in State law under SEPA. We are doing
18 UGAs for the next 20 years, 2022 to 2031. Our existing policy is 234,917 to the year
19 2022. I don't see how the objective is met by undoing a previous decision for a different
20 year. I have given you some spreadsheets that under this alternative would be halving of
21 the population growth projections that the GMCC passed. The GMCC recommended
22 60,490. If we went towards this alternative there would be a growth population forecast of
23 29,000 for the entire County for the 20 year period.

24
25 I want to make very clear that the land capacity analysis shows that within the existing
26 city limits we can accommodate more than the 29,000. We can accommodate 57,360. By
27 taking the low population what you would be studying is taking all of the UGAs away and
28 the city limits would become the UGAs. I don't find that as being a reasonable alternative.

29
30 Getting back to the fourth alternative, the reason the city and county planners felt it was
31 important was because Alternatives X and Y were really testing regional land use
32 strategies. We are really trying to avoid having alternatives that exist around population.
33 We are trying to test the whole idea of critical areas, infill strategies, etc. It's important to
34 us to have the same numbers so you can compare apples to apples.

35
36 Another reason I don't think the 220,000 is a good alternative is that the cities have not
37 asked for this, what so ever. Not one city has asked us to consider their existing city limits
38 as being the limits of growth in the future. The cities state they support the range of
39 alternatives of 234,000 to 258,000 because they feel those are the allocations that they
40 think are appropriate for the community.

41
42 The analysis that we have of existing vacant lots in rural and resource lands, show there
43 are over 18,000 vacant existing lots. I would anticipate that if we looked through all of our
44 files we would probably have another 1,000 lots that are existing vested applications. The
45 population forecasts could be accommodated on the rural and resource lands alone, let
46 alone the city limits. If we are wrong in the population forecasts really what we are doing,
47 to me, is putting more pressure on the rural and resource land, so I don't think that's a
48 viable option.

February 19, 2009

Regular Meeting

1
2 The third option is to change one of the action alternatives to a low growth scenario. We
3 recommend not doing that.

4
5 With the LAMIRD issue in the Columbia Valley I think the testimony is right. We're not, in
6 this, really looking at that as a specific issue but what we are trying to do is look at the
7 range of population allocations to that area. I think we can have that as part of our
8 approach in the alternatives.

9
10 We are not recommending a higher population range. I think we are as high as we should
11 recommend at this point. In the scope of the EIS we are already higher than the GMCC
12 has recommended. That was done specifically because it allows the cities to have to a
13 little more flexibility as they go through their discussions as to what kind of growth
14 allocations they might want.

15
16 If we go with the low population projection there is the potential that the urban growth
17 will go to the cities first and the UGAs, such as Birch Bay and the Columbia Valley. You
18 have made a recommendation on the Columbia Valley but the Birch Bay UGA would
19 potentially be affected because population would first go to the cities.

20
21 Melious: Would it be accurate to say that the low population figure is going to be studied
22 because the cities haven't requested it? Is it also true that the cities haven't requested a
23 number above what is being used in the EIS?

24
25 Stalheim: We have walked through this with the city planners, very specifically there is a
26 range between 234,000 and 258,000 and we have numbers for each one of those areas
27 that they are comfortable with.

28
29 Mann: One of your conclusions was that Alternative Y was more of a high growth
30 Alternative X. Can you elaborate on that?

31
32 Stalheim: What Alternative Y does is addresses the comments we heard that people want
33 to have the small cities and outlying areas as more of their own economic centers. What
34 that does is have the same total numbers but Bellingham stays somewhat frozen at lower
35 levels and more of that growth is shifted out. It's not a total amount of more growth, just
36 a shift.

37
38 Mann: I think both of those scenarios are worthy of study. Is it your opinion that
39 Alternative Y has less of an infill as a goal, as opposed to Alternative X?

40
41 Stalheim: When we are doing the alternatives the challenge is to try to do alternatives
42 within a range. The idea is that you get to choose between all of the alternatives and what
43 you like about them and then package them together. Alternative Y tests lots of infill
44 strategies in that it looks at achieved densities versus planned densities.

45
46 Mann: After we have done the EIS do you think it's possible to tease out the impacts of
47 those independent criteria and chose what we want from each alternative?
48

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE
WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

February 19, 2009

Regular Meeting

- 1 Stalheim: That is the hope and part of the public process as we go through this. Mitigation
2 measures will help frame achieved densities. The challenge will be the time frame we are
3 under.
4
- 5 Lesow: Can you, as a professional planner, make any guarantees, what so ever, that if we
6 choose X or Y that even one of those 18,000 vested lots is not going to be developed?
7 What I'm hearing is we shouldn't choose the low population projection because then all of
8 these vested lots are going to be developed. What if we choose the medium or the high?
9 What is going to prevent those lots from being developed anyway?
10
- 11 Stalheim: What we are saying is if you do the low number the UGAs will go to the city
12 limits. If you are wrong with the numbers then you are going to put more pressure on the
13 rural and resource lands, if there are more people that come, because they are going to
14 be looking for a place to build a home.
15
- 16 Lesow: We already know that one of those UGAs is oversized.
17
- 18 Stalheim: We are talking of shrinking them down to the city limits.
19
- 20 Lesow: So what is going to happen is the cities are going to fill in first. Is that an
21 unfeasible outcome? Should we dismiss that based on your recommendation? Projections
22 drive policy. I'm concerned about this dismissive attitude toward the projection that many
23 people have advocated.
24
- 25 Stalheim: To me there is no evidence that it's reality. We need to plan for what we think
26 is likely.
27
- 28 Lesow: How do you know? If you take the historical growth, over the past 90 years, based
29 on the census it's almost spot on to project 220,000. It's within the OFM projection. To
30 say that the OFM projection is too low and unfeasible is not properly considering the state
31 that we are having to bow to in terms of what our GMA is suppose to do for Whatcom
32 County.
33
- 34 Stalheim: The evidence that we have so far says that the low projection is not likely. The
35 planning directors of the cities and the County recommend even higher than the GMCC. I
36 think that migration is one of the biggest issues and the thing that is in flux.
37
- 38 Lesow: It's more than in flux, it's half of what is was before.
39
- 40 Stalheim: For only one year. There are two components of growth, migration and natural
41 growth. The natural growth is approximately 15,000 over 20 years. So out of the 29,000
42 there is only going to be a migration rate of 10,000 over the next 20 years. I don't think
43 that is reality.
44
- 45 Menzies: In coming up with these alternatives I understand how we arrived at them,
46 mostly through the workshops that were held and done fairly quickly, why was the GMCC
47 resistant to identifying specific UGA expansions or retractions? Why would they not look at
48 various options?

February 19, 2009

Regular Meeting

1
2 Stalheim: There were some cities that were reluctant to do that. We started putting some
3 maps together prior to the public process and I think there was some concern about
4 having specific proposals. That's why the process of having the feasibility analysis allows
5 us to explore the UGA boundaries on a quantitative scale. It does put off some of the hard
6 decisions for a while.

7
8 Menzies: In Birch Bay, right now, DOE has a watershed based land characterization
9 development capability. It started when we worked with them trying to identify wetlands
10 that were suitable for restoration or protection to attenuate flows in the upper watershed
11 to help protect marine water quality. We have talked about alternative futures approaches
12 to development and this seems to make sense, particularly, in the light of talking about
13 UGAs. It speaks to an issue that the Planning Commission has had for years, which is this
14 bigger view of where we want to have growth and where do we not want to have it. The
15 population projections don't concern me as much as they do a lot of folks. I think the
16 bigger issue is let's figure out where we want to have people and where are they going to
17 create problems with resources that are valued. If you look at what Steven Stanley and
18 the DOE is doing right now in the Birch Bay watershed is there any way to look at their
19 watershed based process and look countywide and pull out areas that clearly aren't
20 suitable for urban development?

21
22 Stalheim: I'm not sure there is an overlay for the entire County. We have provided all that
23 characterization work to the consultants. I think the suitability analysis lends itself to
24 doing that approach. We have also provided the consultants a biodiversity map that was
25 prepared through Conservation Northwest.

26
27 Lesow: I think the answer to Commissioner Menzies question as to why what you want to
28 see happen isn't happening is because the GMCC is composed of non-elected people for
29 that particular post. You have city planners, council members and mayors and none of
30 them are going to come out for a lower population. The question is are we going to go
31 with what the consultants, planners and the people who make a living planning want or
32 what the people want? I went to two of the visioning meetings and one of the GMCC
33 meetings, where we aren't allowed to comment, and I haven't seen anything persuasive
34 that says we should reject Alternative A or the 220,000 population projection, other than
35 the fact that staff doesn't like it.

36
37 Mann: Director Stalheim stated that if we go with the 220,000 population projection we
38 have to shrink the UGAs to the city limits. Isn't that also true even if the population
39 number we pick is 248,360?

40
41 Stalheim: I think there's some anomalies here, for example, in the Blaine area. If you go
42 under that assumption that everyone won't be in Bellingham and move to Blaine and fill
43 up that area then that is perhaps true. I think when you start looking at the allocations for
44 each one of these areas and getting the actual projections for the areas of what that
45 community wants those numbers will probably be different.

46
47 **Wilson moved to accept the alternatives as proposed by staff. Burdge seconded.**

48

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE
WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

11

February 19, 2009

Regular Meeting

1 **Lesow made a friendly amendment to add Alternative A to the list of alternatives**
2 **to be studied.**

3
4 Wilson: I think that would be counter productive to the motion. It also has a \$20,000
5 price tag to it. The Director feels very strongly that it is not a legally defensible alternative
6 among other things.

7
8 **Wilson did not accept the friendly amendment.**

9
10 Hunter: I think a lot of Commissioner Menzies' remarks were very germane and pertinent.
11 I am motivated by those remarks. I have to state that as a person who refuses to talk
12 with people about issues that are before the Planning Commission, I got a call from a
13 friend who said he supports the 220,000 alternative. I want the Commission to know that.
14 I really don't want to focus on a population projection at all. I think that ought to be a
15 secondary issue. It appears to me, from our hearing a couple of nights ago, that there are
16 a substantial number of people who support the 220,000 population projection. Now it is
17 more of a position of public trust rather than a valid proposal. I think if we refuse to look
18 at it that we will be subject to constant observation that we never even considered this
19 option and I don't want to be caught in that. I think the Director is correct in his
20 assumptions and I think a study will verify that. I would feel a lot more comfortable
21 having laid the information out.

22
23 Burdge: Can we eliminate one of the other alternatives if we consider Alternative A?

24
25 Hunter: I don't see any benefit to that. I think we are going to find the best alternative is
26 a mix of them.

27
28 Mann: I don't think we can use Alternative A as it was presented by Mr. Pros.

29
30 Lesow: I would like to incorporate everything in it.

31
32 Mann: I think we should get rid of the last three bullet points.

33
34 Stalheim: I agree.

35
36 Lesow: I would agree with taking the last two out.

37
38 **Hunter proposed a friendly amendment that Alternative A be added with the**
39 **elimination of the last three bullet points. Wilson and Burdge accepted the**
40 **friendly amendment.**

41
42 Menzies: I'm not really clear of the attractive features of Alternative Y.

43
44 Stalheim: What the alternatives are designed to do is test the range of issues that we
45 know are coming to the discussion.

46

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE
WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

February 19, 2009

Regular Meeting

1 Menzies: What is the rational behind shifting growth away from Bellingham to other small
2 urban communities? The only rational I can see for that is because the percentage of
3 people who attended the workshop didn't want growth in Bellingham.

4
5 Mann: I think there are advantages to having some of the small cities develop.

6
7 Menzies: I don't think these other alternatives preclude those areas from infilling.

8
9 **Hunter amended his amendment to delete #2 from Alternative A and delete #5**
10 **and replace it with the bullet below. Wilson and Burdge accepted the friendly**
11 **amendment.**

12
13 Mann: Can staff even do an analysis on Alternative A? Or would it be better to say we
14 want an alternative that is identical to Alternative X except that the 220,000 population is
15 used?

16
17 Stalheim: It would probably be more helpful to tie that number to one of them.

18
19 **Mann made a friendly amendment to strike all of the prior friendly amendments,**
20 **go back to the original motion and add Alternative K, which would be identical to**
21 **Alternative X except the population number would be 220,000. Hunter withdrew**
22 **his friendly amendments. Wilson and Burdge accepted the friendly amendment.**

23
24 **Vote on the motion to accept the alternatives as proposed by staff with the**
25 **addition of Alternative K, which would be identical to Alternative X except the**
26 **population number would be 220,000. The motion carried.**

27
28 Melious: We now need to look at mitigation measures. I am haunted by the lost 40
29 meetings that the Planning Commission had last time this issue was looked at. I attended
30 the Bellingham City Council meeting, on population issues, and there was testimony, by a
31 former City Council member, who said that the City was stuck in this because of the
32 County's incompetence. He stated that it was very unfair that the County Planning
33 Commission had 40 meetings and couldn't manage to come up with a single finding. That
34 was not what I heard that you did. I went back and found all of your land use policies and
35 I would propose we provide this as information to the consultants so they have it available
36 when they are considering mitigation measures. I don't want to say these are our
37 recommendations but they are provided as information to consider. The policies are
38 specific to Bellingham, so not all of them would relevant.

39
40 Hunter: I feel terribly frustrated that the last process did not get a hearing. The whole
41 system was not right without these policies being enacted.

42
43 **Melious moved to approve the Bellingham Subarea Plan Land Use Goals and**
44 **Policies, adopted by the Whatcom County Planning Commission, in March 2007,**
45 **be submitted to the consultant for consideration as mitigation during the EIS**
46 **process. Lesow seconded. The motion carried.**

47

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE
WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
February 19, 2009

Regular Meeting

1 Mann: I would love to see Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) as a mitigation
2 measure.

3
4 Stalheim: That is within the range of alternatives.

5
6 Burdge: Will we see any of the findings along the way?

7
8 Stalheim: It depends on the timeline we are under.

9
10 **Other Business**

11
12 Stalheim: Regarding your Columbia Valley recommendation, I think we will allocate the
13 population numbers based on a LAMIRD alternative.

14
15 Your recommendation will be presented to the County Council next Tuesday. It will be
16 only a short discussion session then be discussed further at their meeting on March 17th.

17
18 The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

19
20 Minutes prepared by B. Boxx.

21

22

23 WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION ATTEST:

24

25

26

27

28 _____
Jean Melious, Chair

29 _____
David Stalheim, Secretary

30

31

32

33

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