

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
**WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

1

October 8, 2009

Regular Meeting

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1 **Call To Order:** The meeting was called to order, by Whatcom County Planning  
2 Commission Chair, Jean Melious, in Room 513 of the Whatcom County Courthouse at 6:40  
3 p.m.

4  
5 **Roll Call**  
6 Present: Jean Melious, David Hunter, Ken Mann, Sean Wilson, John Lesow, Rabel Burdge,  
7 Geoff Menzies  
8 Absent: John Steensma, John Belisle

9  
10 **Staff Present:** David Stalheim, Wain Harrison, Sarah Watts, Matt Aamot, Gary Davis,  
11 Royce Buckingham – Prosecutor’s Office, Rebecca Craven – Council Office, Becky Boxx

12  
13 **Director’s Dialog**

14  
15 Director Stalheim gave an overview of the Planning Commission schedule for the  
16 remainder of 2009.

17  
18 **Open Session for Public Comment**

19  
20 There was no public comment.

21  
22 **Commissioner Comments**

23  
24 Commissioner Lesow thanked Commissioner Wilson for his involvement on the  
25 Commission on behalf of the Foothills area and apologized for interrupting him at the  
26 previous meeting.

27  
28 **Work Session**

29  
30 Whatcom County Urban Growth Area Review – Bellingham, Ferndale

31  
32 Royce Buckingham, of the Whatcom County Prosecutor’s Office, read from the Planning  
33 Commission Business Rules, the procedures regarding the public submitting items for the  
34 record after the Planning Commission hearing is closed.

35  
36 Ferndale

37  
38 Staff presented a map showing UGA boundaries proposed by the County Executive and by  
39 the City of Ferndale.

40  
41 The Commission discussed the areas proposed to be added and deleted from the UGA.  
42 The areas Ferndale would like added would be for commercial or industrial uses.

43  
44 The Bellingham Airport area, which is in the Bellingham UGA, was discussed. Ferndale has  
45 been interested in having a conversation with Bellingham regarding a transfer of UGA  
46 area, east of I-5 because it may be better served by capital facilities from Ferndale and  
47 the owners of the area have expressed interest.

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1  
2 Wilson moved to delete the areas proposed by the County Executive to be removed on the  
3 map. Lesow seconded. The motion carried.

4  
5 An area in the southwest portion of the UGA was discussed. Ferndale's most recent  
6 proposal recommended removal of 22 acres that the County Executive proposal had  
7 included in the UGA.

8  
9 Lesow moved to adopt the County Executive recommendation, except to omit the  
10 proposed Urban Reserve areas and to not add the new commercial and industrial areas  
11 Ferndale proposed to be added and the 22 acre area Ferndale proposed be removed.

12  
13 The Commission discussed whether or not the Urban Reserve area, to the north near  
14 Brown Road should be in the UGA. The area is adjacent to current commercial and  
15 industrial uses and this reserve area would be used for commercial, industrial and  
16 residential uses.

17  
18 The vote on the motion carried.

19  
20 Bellingham

21  
22 The issue of the Bellingham UGA and the Ferndale UGA converging near I-5 was  
23 discussed. Some members of the Commission felt this should not happen and that it may  
24 create a commercial corridor along I-5. A suggestion was made to remove a portion of the  
25 Bellingham UGA that borders the Ferndale UGA but this would need more study by staff.

26  
27 The Commission reviewed the Hillsdale and Geneva areas and whether or not they should  
28 be in the UGA. The issues addressed were, are these areas appropriate for urban  
29 development, being in the watershed, and should the County or City have jurisdiction over  
30 them. Staff will come back with policies to limit the level of urban development that can  
31 take place.

32  
33 Wilson moved to adopt Option #2 (Retain Geneva and Hillsdale in the UGA) with polices  
34 and zoning that would not allow urban development. Menzies seconded. The motion  
35 carried.

36  
37 Burdge moved to retain the Yew Street UGA Urban Reserve area in the UGA. Wilson  
38 seconded.

39  
40 The Commission addressed the numerous critical areas, steep slopes in the area, lack of  
41 infrastructure as well as stormwater and its impact on Lake Padden. They also addressed  
42 the elementary school recently constructed there.

43  
44 The vote on the motion failed.

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1 Lesow moved to adopt the Option #3 (Retain the Yew Street Road area within the  
2 Bellingham UGA Boundary) with the exception of removal of the proposed Urban Reserve.  
3 Hunter seconded.

4  
5 The area in the proposed Urban Reserve would need to be zoned at Rural densities. The  
6 Commission discussed the densities they would like it to be. Some felt it should be 5 acres  
7 and other felt it should be 10 acres.

8  
9 Lesow amended his motion to make the zoning Rural 5 acres instead of Rural 10 acres.  
10 Hunter did not accept the amendment.

11  
12 The vote on the motion carried.

13  
14 The Commission further discussed the zoning of the Bellingham and Ferndale UGAs near  
15 Slater Road. They explored different options to create a separation between the two. They  
16 would like to see a reduction of the Bellingham UGA but the area is commercial and  
17 industrial land which they don't want to see removed.

18  
19 Lesow moved to have staff study changing some of the General Commercial zoning in the  
20 area to Light Impact Industrial in the 2011 Comprehensive Plan update. Burdge seconded.  
21 The motion carried.

22  
23 **Work Session**

24  
25 Changes to the Rural Element – Findings and Recommendation to Council

26  
27 Hunter moved to adopt the proposed Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations to the  
28 Rural Element update. Lesow seconded. Roll Call Vote: Ayes – Burdge, Hunter, Lesow,  
29 Melious, Menzies; Nays – Mann, Wilson; Abstain – 0; Absent – Belisle, Steensma. The  
30 motion carried.

31  
32 The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

33  
34 Minutes prepared by B. Boxx.

35  
36  
37 WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION ATTEST:

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Jean Melious, Chair

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David Stalheim, Secretary

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