

**RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS
SKAGIT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2011**

The Skagit County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, March 1, 2011, with Commissioners Ron Wesen, Kenneth A. Dahlstedt, and Sharon D. Dillon present.

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Wesen called the proceedings to order at 8:30 a.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Chairman Wesen led the gallery in the salute to the flag.

III. AGENDA:

a) 8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Planning and Development Services - Gary Christensen - Director:

1. Discussion: 2011 Fee Schedule Update

Bill Dowe, Deputy Director, informed the Commissioners that Gary Christensen, Director, was unavailable to meet with the Commissioners since he was currently in meetings with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Mr. Dowe discussed the revised fee schedule with the Commissioners and showed them a document which listed the current and new proposed fees. Mr. Dowe discussed the reasons for each fee increase. He stated that permits which took extra time (over the allotted averaged hourly cost) would pay an additional hourly fee. He stated that a similar type of fee schedule worked well in Whatcom County. Mr. Dowe said that in the past, Planning and Development Services has tried to implement fixed fees for permits, but stated that this method was unfair to those with small projects; and for permits which took more time did not pay for the extra time. He stated that the fairest method for Skagit County to implement would be to update the average cost of permits and add an hourly fee to the permits and projects that go over the average number of hours allotted.

Commissioner Dahlstedt stated that he would like Planning and Development Services to give customers a price range of what their project may cost and let them know what else may apply to their project, for example, possible impact fees. Commissioner Dahlstedt said that showing a prospective applicant all potential costs would alleviate a lot of problems and angst down the road.

Mr. Dowe discussed different ways the new fees could be implemented. He stated that there could be annual updates or 5% increases. Mr. Dowe said that Whatcom County implements 5% increases.

Commissioner Dahlstedt said that he would like to remain fair and consistent and that he would prefer that the new fees remain as whole numbers. Chairman Wesen asked that Planning and Development Services share the new fee schedule with the Commissioners before implementing it.

Commissioner Dahlstedt stated that he appreciated the public meeting regarding this change. He wanted to point out that hiring a private planner to complete the permitting process would probably cost approximately \$80 to \$150 an hour. Commissioner Dahlstedt asked that a copy of the proposed changes to the fees be sent to Skagit/Island Counties Builders Association.

Chairman Wesen stated that he believed that the taxpayers of Skagit County should not be paying for permit work requested by individuals. This means that the burden of covering the work for issuing permits should fall to the applicant.

A motion was made by Commissioner Dillon to approve that a public hearing be set on Tuesday, March 22, 2011 at 10:30 a.m. to consider testimony regarding the proposed permit fee changes. Commissioner Dahlstedt seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously.

Chairman Wesen recessed the proceedings at 8:46 a.m.

2. Miscellaneous

Planning and Development Services did not have any miscellaneous items to discuss.

- b) 9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. Decision: Hearing Examiner's Recommendation of Approval for the Preliminary Plat of the "David Welts Subdivision" PL96-0058. (Located at the End of Sinnes Road, Northeast of Conway in Mount Vernon)

Chairman Wesen reconvened the proceedings at 9:00 a.m.

Bill Dowe, Deputy Director; and Brandon Black, Senior Planner; were present to answer any further questions. Mr. Black gave a brief synopsis of the process which the subdivision went through to now be before the Commissioners for a decision on its approval.

Commissioner Dahlstedt explained that the public has many opportunities to comment on proposed projects when they are processed by the Hearing Examiner. He further explained that after the Hearing Examiner makes a decision, there are opportunities to appeal the decision. He ended by saying that by the time a proposed project comes before the Commissioners, it is time to make a decision to approve or deny the findings of the Hearing Examiner. Commissioner Dahlstedt stated that he understood that Planning and Development Services has done a thorough review of the proposed subdivision and that they came to the same conclusion as the Hearing Examiner, which is a recommendation of approval of the development.

Commissioner Dillon stated that she understands that this project has had to work through several different issues regarding roads and water, and she believes that the applicant has done everything which has been required of them. Commissioner Dillon stated that she understood the neighbors' concerns. She admitted that when a new development was approved to be built near her home, she was opposed to it, but she stated that it ended up being a good thing for the community. She stated that she also hopes that this subdivision will be good for the community.

Chairman Wesen stated that this has been through a long process and all of the rules have been reviewed before the Hearing Examiner and Planning and Development Services has made a recommendation for approval. Chairman Wesen stated that he understands that many people do not want more neighbors in their area, that it is one of the reasons why people live in Skagit County. He went on to say that there are rules in place which need to be followed and he stated that he could not see any other outcome other than to approve the project.

A motion was made by Commissioner Dillon to approve that the Board adopt the attached findings and recommendations of the Hearing Examiner and approve the preliminary plat of David Welts Subdivision PL96-0058 application by Jim Tosti subject to all of the conditions recommended by the Hearing Examiner. **(Resolution No. R20110075)** Commissioner Dahlstedt seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously.

c) 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Skagit County Board of Health:

1. Practice of Ten Essential Public Health Services

Mr. Browning introduced students from the University of Washington who were present to discuss a recently completed project: how the public perceives the health department and their ability to provide the ten essential public health services:

1. Monitor health status to identify community health problems;
2. Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community;
3. Inform, educate and empower people about health issues;
4. Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems;
5. Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts;
6. Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety;
7. Linking community to programs;
8. Assure a competent public health and personal healthcare work force;
9. Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of health services; and
10. Research new insights and innovate solutions to health problems.

Valerie Pacino and Sophia Teshorne, students from the University of Washington, informed the Commissioners that they interviewed employees within the Health Department, as well as individuals from other organizations and entities. Information from these interviews was analyzed along with the functions within the department and they found that the Health Department had many areas of strength and also some areas which

could improve. Ms. Pacino and Ms. Teshorne discussed their findings and recommendations with the Commissioners.

The Commissioners thanked the students for their work and stated that they appreciated the enthusiastic, independent review of the department. They stated that Skagit County benefits from the committed employees within the Health Department.

Mr. Browning ended by thanking Peter House, Director of this student program from the University of Washington for providing this opportunity for the Health Department and the students from the University of Washington.

2. Skagit County Alliance for Healthcare Access

Cynthia Eichner, the Executive Director for the Skagit County Alliance for Healthcare Access (SCAHA), was present to discuss Skagit County's community assessment report regarding healthcare access. Ms. Eichner informed the Commissioners of SCAHA's formation and work to date. She stated that SCAHA partnered with Skagit Community Foundation in order to bring people together to solve healthcare problems in our community and that a task force is being created for this purpose with individuals from hospitals, the Washington Nurses Association, Untied Way, etc. and she requested that one of the Commissioners also serve on this board. She shared that Skagit County has safety nets in place for community members including three non-profit hospitals, Community Action Agency, and the Physical Activity Coalition.

Ms. Eichner shared statistics with the Commissioners: Skagit County is ranked #1 on homelessness in the State of Washington. It is estimated that there are 2,300 homeless in Skagit County, of which 50% are under the age of 18. Many of our homeless are also veterans. She said that 10 - 12% of Skagit County is uninsured and that 34% of the population receives their care from the emergency rooms instead of from regular doctors or clinics. Some hospitals reported that 50 - 70% of care provided in emergency rooms stem from the need for dental care or mental health needs. It was found that Skagit County has significant deficiencies in internal medicine, OBGYN, Psychiatry, and pediatrics. Ms. Eichner continued to discuss the findings of their community healthcare assessment.

Commissioner Dillon said that she appreciated the community assessment and that it was invaluable. She stated that health care access needs to be taken seriously. She told Ms. Eichner that she would participate in their task force.

Commissioner Dahlstedt stated that he was supportive of this effort from the beginning and it came as a challenge from Whatcom County for Skagit County to take part in the Healthcare Alliance. He stated that there is approximately \$8 million dollars of uncompensated health care which is supported by taxpayers. Commissioner Dahlstedt indicated this may be a good way to look at solving problems locally.

Chairman Wesen thanked Ms. Eichner for the presentation. He stated that people need to know where they can go for help.

3. Miscellaneous

Peter Browning, Director of Public Health, introduced Corinne Story, Environmental Health Manager, who presented a retirement plaque of appreciation to George Ridgeway.

Mr. Ridgeway thanked all of the agencies which he has partnered with over the last 39 1/2 years with Skagit County. Mr. Ridgeway also thanked the citizens of Skagit County and his previous co-workers. He is passionate about public health and may continue working with the department in his retirement through the Medical Reserve Corps.

Mr. Browning and the Commissioners all thanked Mr. Ridgeway for his excellent work at Skagit County.

d) 10:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Proclamation - March as Human Rights Month in Skagit County

Chairman Wesen reconvened the proceedings at 10:35 a.m. Multiple individuals informed the Commissioners about the events taking place at the Lincoln Theatre and the Phillip Tarro Theatre in Mount Vernon during the 8th Annual Skagit Human Rights Festival. Activities include films, presentations, discussion panels, and art viewing each Thursday in March. For more information, visit the Skagit Human Rights Festival website at: www.skagithrf.wordpress.com. The Skagit Valley College radio station KSVR will be transmitting from each event so that people in the community may listen to each session if they are not able to attend in person. KSVU will also be broadcasting from the Concrete area.

The Commissioners thanked everyone for the informative presentation on the events taking place.

Commissioner Dillon read the Proclamation declaring March as Human Rights month in Skagit County.

Chairman Wesen recessed the proceedings at 11:05 a.m.

e) 11:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Parks, Recreation & Fairgrounds - Brian Adams - Director:

1. Public Hearing: To Consider Testimony For A Proposed Revision To The Parks And Recreation Current Fee Schedule For Premier Sites #7, #8, #8a, #8b, #9, #10, #12, And #13 At Howard Miller Steelhead Park In Rockport, Washington

Chairman Wesen reconvened the proceedings and introduced Brian Adams,

Director of Parks, Recreation, and Fair. Mr. Adams thanked the Commissioners for the public meeting regarding the changes to the fees. Mr. Adams informed the Commissioners that revenue from Howard Miller Steelhead Park has increased each year for the last seven years. Mr. Adams also informed the Commissioners that certain camping spots at the campground are reserved up to a year in advance, and that the department is slowly adjusting the power at each RV space to 50 amps. Mr. Adams showed the Commissioners a map of the campground and pointed to the premier sites. These are camping sites right by the river. They are suggesting that the rate be increased from \$26 to \$30 dollars.

No one was present to give public testimony. Mr. Adams stated that they heard from two individuals regarding this proposed change to the fees. One gentleman only wanted some clarification. And another person brought up the fact that Skagit County Parks do not offer prices which accommodate veterans like the State of Washington does.

Commissioner Dillon said that she often camps at Howard Miller Steelhead Park and that she agrees that those premier sites should have a slightly higher fee.

Commissioner Dahlstedt said that it can be a challenge to fund certain things which are not mandated and that we need to be sure to raise enough revenue for maintenance. Commissioner Dahlstedt was pleased that the fees at the remaining sites will remain the same.

Chairman Wesen asked how the fees charged at Howard Miller Steelhead Park compare to the fees charged at the state parks.

Mr. Adams answered that Skagit County and state park fees are very close. Some of Skagit County's fees are the same and some are a dollar below what the state park charges.

A motion was made by Commissioner Dahlstedt to approve the resolution to amend Resolution No. R20090418 and establish revised fees for eight (8) premier sites at Howard Miller Steelhead Park Campground (#7, #8, #8A, #8B, #9, #10, #12 and #13) (**Resolution No. R20110076**) Commissioner Dillon seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously.

Mr. Adams thanked the Commissioners and said that he would be back in April to discuss the upcoming 2011 Skagit County Fair.

Commissioner Dahlstedt understood that there were some environmentally friendly changes happening at the park as well?

Mr. Adams confirmed that Rusty Regan, East Parks Lead, was doing environmentally friendly projects. The most recent project has been to install tank less water heaters now that the current hot water heater needs to be replaced.

Chairman Wesen recessed the proceedings at 11:22 a.m.

f) 11:30 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. Public Comment Period

Chairman Wesen reconvened the proceedings at 11:31 a.m.

Commissioner Dahlstedt encouraged everyone to buy items locally in order to support the communities we live in.

Commissioner Dillon thanked the Parks and Recreation Department for their help over the last week with snow clearing.

Chairman Wesen stated that he attended the Envision Skagit 2060 meeting in La Conner. He also reported that sales tax was up .3%.

Commissioner Dahlstedt shared that former Assessor, Mark Leander, has had some additional health complications and asked to keep him, his wife and family in our thoughts and prayers.

Chairman Wesen also shared that the Commissioners would be attending the groundbreaking ceremony of the Skagit County Transfer and Recycling Station Project at 2:00 p.m.

g) 11:45 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Certification of 2010 Annual Inventory

Chairman Wesen reconvened the proceedings at 11:45 a.m.

Chris Stamey, Financial System Administrator, presented the completed annual inventory packet for the Commissioners to sign. Mr. Stamey reported that each department completed their inventories and that everything listed in the book was accounted for. Policy requires that any \$500 or more item purchased be listed as an asset, and that items deemed high risk (cameras, radio's, tools, etc.) which cost \$300 or higher also be listed as an asset. Items are tracked for insurance purposes, and Mr. Stamey stated that the state auditor's office also looks at this book year to year and chooses ten items for the County to make sure items are accounted for.

Chairman Wesen thanked Mr. Stamey for the time he has spent working on this.

Commissioner Dahlstedt stated that this was a high priority since public money is spent on these items and we all want to be sure that our purchases are accounted for.

Commissioner Dillon stated that this book shows that we care about what is where and that we keep track of what we buy.

A motion was made by Commissioner Dillon to approve the annual certification of inventory for 2010. Commissioner Dahlstedt seconded the motion.

The vote passed unanimously.

h) *2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Groundbreaking Ceremony - Skagit County Transfer Station

& Recycling Project

IV. ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Wesen adjourned the proceedings at 11:50 a.m.

The Commissioners attended an executive session from 3:36 p.m. to 4:19 p.m. the topic was Litigation - RCW 42.30.110(1)(i). (Matters relating to County enforcement actions, actual litigation, or potential litigation.) The following attorney was present at the executive session and gave legal advice to the Board of County Commissioners; Rich Weyrich, and Will Honea. The following staff were in attendance: Tim Holloran, County Administrator; Gary Christensen, Director of Skagit County Planning & Development Services.

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

Ron Wesen, Chairman

Kenneth A. Dahlstedt, Commissioner

Sharon D. Dillon, Commissioner

ATTEST:

Linda Hammons, Clerk of the Board