

Meeting Notes
Envision Skagit Citizen Committee
February 10, 2011
1:00 – 5:00 pm
Skagit County Administration Bldg

Attendees:

Kerri Cook
Cory Ertel
Peggy Flynn
Jim Meyer
Kim Mower
Grace Popoff

Gustavo Ramos, Jr.
Tim Rosenhan
Nate Youngquist
Doris Robbins
Ryan Sakuma
John Cheney

Staff:

Kirk Johnson, Skagit Co. PM
Lisa Dally Wilson, Facilitator
Mark Personius, planner
Josh Greenberg, Skagit GIS

Meeting Handouts:

1. Meeting Agenda
2. Summary Meeting Minutes from Jan 21 CC Meeting (emailed)
3. Citizen Committee revised 2010-2011 Meeting Schedule
4. "Rural Village Plan Debated" (Snohomish County), from Everett Herald, 2-09-11
5. Citizen email comments/website comments - Envision Skagit (3 pg printout – Nov 11, 2010 – Feb 9, 2011)
6. Skagit County Zoning Code Designations – Table of Land Use Districts
7. Excerpts from Skagit County Comprehensive Plan (2007):
 - a. Section 1: Introduction and Summary
 - b. Urban, Open Space and Land Use Profile
 - c. Section 3: Rural Summary
 - d. Section 4: Natural Resource Lands Profile
 - e. Section 5: Environment Profile

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting began shortly after 1:00 pm.

Presentation: Honey I Shrank the Lots (Bill Kreager)

Bill Kreager provided a power point presentation with examples of high-quality, small lot, residential development. He pointed out key design features of successful projects and showed examples of differing residential densities.

A brainstorming session followed and included members of the Citizen Committee and also members of the greater community including Brian Gentry (local builder), John Doyle (LaConner planner and Lincoln panelist), Rebecca Bradley (City of Mount Vernon), Jan Ellingson (local realtor and Lincoln moderator).

Discussion items included

- Where has it (quality small lot development) worked in Skagit, and why

- Where hasn't it worked in Skagit and why?
- Issues with zoning codes, community attitudes

A new ordinance from Pierce County was mentioned that addresses transitions between strip mall/Big box retail AND neighborhoods. They are now pursuing the same type of ordinance in the City of Renton. In Pierce County, a public process was used to develop the ordinance in order to retain the character of existing or former neighborhoods. The ordinance contains design guidelines.

Mt Vernon brought up periphery issues - that most developers want to build in the UGA, but at the periphery, far from services, so it is difficult to design to walkable standards.

Brian Gentry mentioned that development needs to be in context with the location. Eg., small walkable neighborhoods in Poulsbo works, where in Sedro Woolley, the same type of neighborhood that is not in a walkable area does not work. He stressed that these types of developments need to be in an appropriate location. There was discussion about being at a time of transition, where values for community, lifestyle, empty nester, active adult neighborhoods have changed and there is a broader view about what type of housing needs are appropriate. Old historic downtowns are popular (eg., old town Anacortes, Mt Vernon (western ridge of Mt Vernon Hill), Burlington (starting to develop the downtown)). Infill and redevelopment will occur over the next 10-20 years. ** Real estate is market driven. Need flexible footprint over 50 years.

A Citizen Committee member asked for an example of transition from a Walmart to a walkable, mixed neighborhood. It was suggested that a market analysis be performed to determine what types of neighborhoods are desired in the area. A market sector analysis was suggested to determine what types of housing options are in high demand (Susanne Bridge).

Kirk mentioned an article that discusses scenario based planning. Building up, and densifying will help the carbon problem, but will also be more financially advantageous (will result in greater tax revenue).

Break

CC Discussion and Wrap Up

Tim Rosenhan presented an example of regional planning, densities and mixed use in the Metro Vancouver area based on a field trip he and Peggy Flynn took in February.

The following points came from the CC discussion:

- Livability – a benchmark . People want a more enjoyable, more rewarding place to live
- Need flexibility in footprint.
- Consider apartments, condos, higher density.
- Ag in BC is different. High product line, high market, lots of federal govt support.
- Focus on infill development (if we have codes and market).
- If there is good access to open space, it is much more attractive.

Thoughts/Concepts for a Community Vision

- Population total – do we plan for low, medium or high? Does the CC want to create a population planning target as a Citizen Committee and does it need to adhere to GMA?
- Steering Committee picked L-M, does CC want to use same projection as “most likely”?
- Does the CC want to recommend lower growth
- Need to consider rural village concepts
- Need to run Envision and see where things fall apart and then make the decision.

Committee Business

- **January 21st meeting notes:** Approved subject to comments received by email no later than February 18. No comments received.
- **Citizen Committee Meeting calendar revisions:** A revised, new calendar was sent out in advance of the meeting. This version concentrates CC workshops in March and April with the May retreat, and finish the process in June, in hopes that the farmers on the CC will be able to attend. The calendar (handout 3) was approved.

5:00 Adjourn

Parking

1. Agriculture/Farmers – EconNW Report: How can we improve the economics of Skagit Ag for Skagit Ag.
2. Do we want to create a population planning target as a Citizen Committee and does it need to adhere to GMA?