

**Skagit County Planning Commission
Work Session: 2021 Docket (Public Comments Review)
January 25, 2022**

Planning

Commissioners: Kathy Mitchell
Mark Knutzen
Vince Henley
Amy Hughes
Tim Raschko, Chair
Joe Woodmansee
Tammy Candler, Vice Chair
Martha Rose

Staff: Hal Hart, Planning Director
Peter Gill, Long Range Planning Manager
Jenn Rogers, Assistant Long-Range Planner

Chair Tim Raschko: Good evening and welcome to the January 25th, 2022, meeting of the Skagit County Planning Commission. The Call to Order – I was able to see all of my fellow commissioners’ smiling faces on the video so we’ll just assume that we have – well, we will know that we have everybody present. Does anybody care to make a motion to approve the minutes of their last meeting?

Commissioner Vince Henley: I so move.

Commissioner Kathy Mitchell: I’ll second.

Chair Raschko: It’s been moved and seconded to approve the minutes. Any discussion of the minutes?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Hearing none, all those in favor, say “aye.”

Multiple Commissioners: Aye.

Chair Raschko: And those opposed?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Those abstaining?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Okay, so that carries unanimously. Thank you. So we turn to Public Remarks. This time on the agenda is an opportunity for anyone to speak to the Planning Commission about any topic except, first, items scheduled on the agenda for a public hearing that same day, or items

that have had a public hearing and are still under Planning Commission deliberation. Public Remarks, which is not part of the formal public participation process for any development regulation or Comprehensive Plan amendment project, is limited to three minutes per speaker and up to 15 minutes total. So have we anybody who has tuned in to the meeting from the public who wishes to speak to the Planning Commission?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Seeing or hearing of none, we will end Public Remarks. Thank you. Which takes us to our main topic for tonight – that is, the 2021 Planning Docket Work Session, a Public Comments Review. So, Mr. Gill, would you please take over?

Peter Gill: Thank you, Chair, and good evening, Planning Commission members. I am here tonight along with Jenn Rogers of Planning and Development Services to discuss the 2021 Docket of Comprehensive Plan amendments. Last meeting, as you all recall, I'm sure – January 11th – we did have a public hearing to take remarks on the docketed petitions. We had a total of nine folks, nine people – citizens – that spoke on the docket items at that meeting and for folks that are watching at home, you can get full access to the transcript of that meeting and video on our website under skagitcounty.net.

And backing up maybe a little bit to let you all know what was part of the meeting materials that was sent out to the Planning Commission, we did send a supplemental staff report that describes the public notice information that went out regarding the docket, as well as a summary of the comments that were received during the comment period. That included the verbal testimony that we heard at the hearing. And all of those public comments were supplied as well as part of the meeting materials for tonight's meeting.

And we're not going to go through each and every one of those comments tonight, but this is a good time to ask questions on those petitions, whether that's in regards to the comments that we have received or in some part of a petition that you would like to learn more on either tonight or in future meetings.

Getting back to the public comments, we did receive a total of 53 comments during the comment period that was open December 23rd through January 13th. And a summary of all of those can be found in your memo for tonight's meeting.

So with that, if there's no questions, I'm going to turn it over to Jenn Rogers to kind of go through some of the comments and the summary.

Jenn Rogers: I'm just going to share my screen here. Just a moment. Okay, so of the 12 docketed applications the County received, we received public comment or testimony on six of those petitions. So first we have the Nielsen Brothers' Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map Amendment. We received –

Mr. Gill: Jenn?

Ms. Rogers: Yes?

Mr. Gill: We're not seeing the slides progress. I think we're seeing the original slide show.

Ms. Rogers: Okay.

Mr. Gill: Can you switch view? You might have to stop sharing and start again.

Ms. Rogers: Okay. I'll try one more time here.

Mr. Gill: There we go. That's great. Thank you.

Ms. Rogers: That's working?

Mr. Gill: I think so.

Ms. Rogers: Okay. Okay, so first we have the Nielsen Brothers' Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map Amendment. Three citizens and the petitioner provided comment in support of the application. Comments from citizens were at three businesses that depend on the logging business to stay afloat and successful in Skagit County for their own work. One commenter also notes Nielsen Brothers' commitment to healthy forestry practices. The Skagit County Agricultural Advisory Board was neutral on the petition as they're supportive of a natural resource-based company growing in the community but they did advise against allowing out-of-compliance operations to use rezone applications to bring their business back into compliance.

Chair Raschko: Excuse me. Do you wish to have questions after each individual – I'm at a loss for words – or do you want to hold them till the end?

Ms. Rogers: Please interrupt if you have any questions. Feel free to interrupt.

Chair Raschko: All right. Thank you.

Ms. Rogers: And next we have the Small Scale Business Zone Use Amendment. Written comments were largely in support of the amendment petition and highlighted the importance of a small business like Terramar to the Edison community; how Terramar has supported other businesses by using local ingredients in their products; and how the business has supported local events in Edison, like the Farmers Market, in allowing folks to park in their lot for those events.

Commissioner Henley: Your screen is not advancing again.

Ms. Rogers: Are you seeing the Nielsen Brothers?

Mr. Gill: Yes.

Commissioner Henley: You're still on the Nielsen Brothers.

Ms. Rogers: Oh? Okay. Does that look right?

Mr. Gill: Yes.

Commissioner Henley: Yes.

Ms. Rogers: Okay. So the majority of the comments in opposition of the amendment petition were neighbors of the Edison community, and their comments were focused majorly about three points. There was concern over the potential for large and noisy events in Edison; the potential for lack of available emergency services and infrastructure for the new use; and they would like to see

more environmental review of the property, given its vicinity to the Edison Slough and surrounding wetlands.

Chair Raschko: Yeah, are there questions on LR-02?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Okay.

Ms. Rogers: Okay. The next petition is the Public Notice Amendment for Mineral Resource Extraction Areas. The petitioner provided written comment and testimony at the public hearing. The petitioner testified that mineral resource extraction areas are disruptive and have a large impact to the community. And given that MROs are generally in rural areas, the petitioner believes that a larger notice requirement should be implemented so more people are aware of the activities in the community.

Chair Raschko: Any questions on LR20-05?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: No. Please go ahead, Jenn.

Ms. Rogers: Okay. LR20-07 is the Accessory Dwelling Unit Code Amendment. The petitioner provided written comment and testimony at the public hearing and testified that increasing the allowed space for ADUs and removing the familial requirement would increase the amount of affordable housing stock in the county potentially. The Agricultural Advisory Board also wrote in a comment and is not supportive of this amendment because they are concerned that it would encourage denser development in the Agricultural-NRL zone.

Chair Raschko: Any questions on LR20-07?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Okay.

Ms. Rogers: Okay. LR21-04 is the Agricultural Processing Facilities in BR-Light Industrial Zones. The petitioner provided testimony at the public hearing and asked for the new use to be added to the zones. They would be able to grow their business and process more animals each year at Island Grown Cooperative. The Agricultural Advisory Board also wrote in to support this amendment as it would allow for more value-added opportunities for cattle and livestock growers in the community.

Chair Raschko: Okay, any questions here?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: It's going very well, Jenn. Please continue.

Ms. Rogers: And our last petition with comment is the C21-1, Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan. The chair of the Skagit County Parks and Recreation Board testified in support of including parks as an allowed use for certain zones so that currently established park facilities

could be improved or expanded upon. The County parks are very well managed but the zoning inconsistencies are not going to be viable going forward so that we can continue to manage these parks.

Chair Raschko: Any questions on C-21 2020? Kathy, did you raise your hand?

Commissioner Mitchell: No, I did not. Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Just waving it around. Okay, thank you.

Ms. Rogers: And those are all the comments we received on those petitions.

Chair Raschko: Okay, are there any general comments or questions from the Planning Commission?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: It seems like a pretty straightforward docket this year. And thank you for a good report. Did you have anything else, Mr. Gill?

Mr. Gill: I don't. I do not have anything else tonight. I guess the question, I guess, before you all is then at the next meeting would you like us to bring a draft recorded motion for your consideration?

Chair Raschko: Are there any opinions from the Planning Commission?

Commissioner Mitchell: I have a question. This is Mitchell.

Chair Raschko: Go ahead, please.

Commissioner Mitchell: Is there anything that would preclude us from starting the deliberations tonight?

Chair Raschko: We certainly have plenty of time.

Mr. Gill: No – yeah, we do have the time. There's nothing else on the schedule other than the Director's Update and the Planning Commissioner Announcements. So we do have time. The public comment period is certainly closed and so there isn't anything that would prevent us.

Chair Raschko: Is there any concern about not being an agenda item?

Mr. Gill: I think whether we – at this point, if we work session it versus have deliberation – you know, I think what we have on the agenda is, you know, a work session, so whether we call it a work session or deliberation, I know there can be some intricacies to the process there, but I guess I would leave that up to you.

Chair Raschko: Oh. Okay. I will ask my fellow commissioners: Do you feel prepared to start deliberations?

Commissioner Amy Hughes: Chair? This is Amy Hughes. I could ask some questions of staff before we go into this. I did have a few questions I wanted to know, just to expand my knowledge.

Chair Raschko: Okay, please go ahead and do so.

Commissioner Hughes: Okay. First, regarding the restaurant expansion. I am concerned about the criticisms of process and if we could clarify that the process we used for this proposal was the correct process to use. The same – I wanted some more information on the Skagit County's noise ordinance and how that fits into this matter. The shoreline review and the – clarify the perimeters of scope of exactly what the process would be allowed – what would the project be allowed to do under what we're looking at now? How far would it be able to expand?

The same thing with the park expansion. I'd like to know what public process is available if a park does decide to expand. Can they just expand or is there a process that goes with that? And regarding the Ag-NRL – am I going too fast for you, Peter? Sorry. I can go back. I've gotten these all written down. Regarding the Ag Advisory letter and the ADUs, would it be possible to omit the Ag-NRL from the proposal and allow ADUs in other areas but not in the Ag-NRL, since the impact is being discussed? So that's the kind of information I'm looking for before I go into a deliberation, and maybe other Planning Commissioners have questions as well.

Mr. Gill: I can respond. It looks like a commissioner has a question. Commissioner Woodmansee may have a question.

Chair Raschko: Please go ahead, Joe.

Commissioner Joe Woodmansee: And I know that Commissioner Henley had a message up there before I did.

Chair Raschko: Oh. I'm sorry.

Commissioner Woodmansee: So I'm happy to let Commissioner Henley go and then follow him, if you'd like.

Commissioner Henley: Yeah, it's just a – for me, it's just a question about the so-called elephant in the room. Am I correctly assuming that the resolution passed by the County Commissioners on the FCC question, the LR20-04, has that effectively killed that docket item for the foreseeable future?

Mr. Gill: Yeah, so I can quickly respond to that to let you know that Director Hart plans on discussing that a little later this evening when he gets to his Director Update. But the Board of County Commissioners did take action last Thursday to pull that from the docket. That's the quick answer and –

Commissioner Henley: And the quick answer is yes, it's effectively dead. So that's what I wanted to know.

Chair Raschko: Okay. I'm sorry but I couldn't – did you want to go ahead, Mr. Hart?

Hal Hart: No, we'll just leave it at that. That's fine. Just leave it at that.

Chair Raschko: Okay, I missed Commissioner Mitchell. We'll have after that Commissioner Woodmansee. So go ahead, Kathy.

Commissioner Mitchell: You know, I'm willing to wait to see what staff says to Amy's questions. But I'm ready at this point.

Chair Raschko: Okay, Commissioner Woodmansee.

Commissioner Woodmansee: Yeah, I was just getting in line to comment on some of the stuff that Commissioner Hughes was bringing up. So I can – I'm happy to hear what staff has to say and then jump in after that also.

Chair Raschko: Okay. Anybody else? Commissioner Candler.

Vice Chair Tammy Candler: One of the people who testified – and I think it may have been Mr. Alonzo, who's present – mentioned that this – I'm talking about the Edison petition – is going to affect, I think, seven – I think – I'm sorry, eight or nine particular places. So I guess this question is mostly to Peter or anyone who can answer it. But have those been identified? And what – do you know what that was referring to? I would like to know a little bit more about that.

Mr. Gill: Okay. That's a pretty quick one, if I could jump straight to that – if no one minds. That one has to do with all the areas that are zoned Small Scale Business and not just the area within Edison. And I think, you know, we need to keep in mind all of the areas that are zoned Small Scale Business, not just the one that the petitioner happens to own.

Vice Chair Candler: Exactly. So my question is: Do you know what those businesses are? Is there a list of them?

Mr. Gill: We do. We have a write-up on what those are. There's a pretty diverse set of uses going on, from a fire station at one; a number of mechanic type businesses that are happening; construction type of businesses as well. In the December staff report there's a description of that as well as in some of the memos we have more information. But we can bring in more information at next meeting if you want more specifics. We do have some maps of each of those locations that was done many, many months ago to look at what those uses were at those other locations.

Vice Chair Candler: Okay, thank you for that.

Mr. Gill: And then if I can jump to some of Commissioner Hughes' questions. I'll try and get to them all, Amy, but I'm sure you'll remind me if I miss one. There was a question about the appropriateness of the change to the zoning code. I think – you know, I'm not sure what the specific comment to which you're responding is, but any member of the public – citizen of Skagit County – is allowed to propose amendments to the zoning code and/or the Comprehensive Plan. And that happens once per year. All those applications have to be in by end of July for processing the following year. Just because someone applies doesn't mean we automatically review the petition. So we take all of those applications to the Board of County Commissioners and we provide them a recommendation on which ones are worth considering and discussing. They have a public hearing and then they docket the items or the petitions that they deem worthy for review.

So that is kind of the process. It's open to everybody in Skagit County. And so this is not abnormal that it was – is being introduced that way. There are a number of accessory uses in all the zones, right? And so having an accessory use as a restaurant, that is not abnormal. What it does is it maintains that consistency with that zone throughout the – all those areas, because the primary use on that property has still got to be those existing permitted uses. In this case it is the wholesale manufacture or production of food products, and that is one of the permitted uses within Small

Scale Business. And so restaurants naturally fits in as an accessory to that, as long as that is the primary use. Right? And so that's where we get into primary and accessory. And so I don't think there's anything abnormal about the petition. There's another question about the events, and –

Commissioner Mitchell: Excuse me. Peter?

Mr. Gill: Yes?

Commissioner Mitchell: Kathy Mitchell, point of order. Could you please announce the purpose of the Chat Box and who's to use it?

Mr. Gill: Yes. Okay. Yep, the Chat Box is for the Planning Commission only, and that is only just to get the attention of the chair to let the chair know that someone has a question in this virtual world. So please do not use the Chat Box if you are a member of the public. Thank you.

And so the other – there's a number of comments regarding outdoor events and very significant, large outdoor events. That has nothing to do necessarily with this petition because you don't need a restaurant in order to have outdoor events. You do, however, need a special use permit and that special use permit would still come through Planning and Development Services and there would be public notice and public comment period associated with that special use permit, in which the neighbors would be notified of that intention for temporary events. And that's what would be needed in order to have large music events or wedding venues or any of a number of things that were brought up in those public comments. Along with that review would obviously be a look at, you know, making sure there's adequate parking on the site. Obviously, infrastructure is adequate. Water/septic would be addressed. Life safety issues like fire access, fire measures would all be reviewed. There's also requirements for a project plan that would require looking at noise and lights and glare; landscaping requirements that would have to come into play; all those kinds of things that would be associated with a new permit.

Additionally, a restaurant would require review by the Health Department certainly, and they have a whole set of review process and application materials that would be required by the landowner to go through in order to start food service prior to food service on the site. So that is also part of it.

Another thing that Commissioner Hughes brought up is the Shoreline Master Program. There was a variance granted in regards to this permit, and part of the requirement on that permit is to limit the outdoor activities. And so at this point the permitting through the Shoreline Program and any expansion within that already shorten setbacks to the slough there would require an amendment on the Shoreline Program as well. So there's a number of things that are discussed that would be very difficult by the applicant if that truly was their plan to move forward. And that is why we have not changed our recommendation on this project.

The other one that Commissioner Hughes brought up on that was noise, and there is a noise ordinance in Skagit County. It is under Title 9. And I do not have the specific citation of that – of the noise ordinance. And that is under the police department to enforce the noise ordinance. The other thing to say with respect to noise is that there are operating hours that are specified in the permit and do go along with any restaurant application as well. That gets reviewed every year so that is important to know in how this is done.

So if that helps on the Small Scale Business proposal, I can move to Parks. Parks does – if there is an expansion of park facilities on the park, that would require permitting through our department.

At this point in time, if a park is not allowed in that zone that in some cases could go through a hearing examiner review. In other cases it would likely be denied because it's not an allowed use in that zone. As far as expanding the park area, that is something the park could do within – you know, within those zones where they're allowed. If they are given land, if they are purchasing land, that is certainly something they could do – or if the zone change happens. There's no requirement on what the County can own where. That is not part of the land use review process. So I don't know if that helps.

And the last one was on the accessory dwelling units and whether those could be excluded from the Ag-NRL zone. That is not the current proposal and so that would be basically a pretty significant change to the proposal. Whether the amendment to how ADUs are allowed or where they're allowed, certainly that's something that could be written into the different zones if that's the way the Planning Commission would like to go.

Commissioner Hughes: May I follow up with one more question on that issue? Do we have any idea how many ADUs would be – could be approved for Skagit County if this goes through?

Mr. Gill: I do not have that analysis ready, but we could look at that. I can tell you that – this isn't going to give you that information but I can tell you right now ADUs are already allowed and so what's being proposed is to basically allow existing structures to be used as the ADUs without a size restriction. All right? So right now if you wanted to use an existing structure that's already on the farmstead you could but it would have to be segregated to be less than 900 square feet or 50% of the primary residence, but no bigger than 900 square feet. I think I got that right. So what this proposal mainly does is allow those existing structures to be used as ADUs without a size restriction and it removes the familial relationship that is currently part of the code to be intact. So the landowner needs to either live in the primary unit or the accessory dwelling unit. So that is what's being proposed to change. Hal will tell you that last year we approved about 30 ADUs – not all within Ag zone but just within the unincorporated county. So it is a fairly popular option right now for obvious reasons.

Chair Raschko: Okay, are there more questions for staff? Do I see a hand up? Is that Commissioner Rose?

Commissioner Martha Rose: Thank you. Going back to the Terramar thing, the permits that are required for special events: Is there a certain number of those that can be applied for annually? Like, is there – you can do two a year or one a year or ten a year? How does that work?

Mr. Gill: So it's up to 24 per year.

Commissioner Rose: Up to 24.

Mr. Gill: On the temporary events. Correct. Twenty-four calendar days. So yeah, 24 events.

Commissioner Rose: And that's under one permit? In other words, what if I'm the property owner and I want to have an event each week. Can that be under an umbrella permit?

Mr. Gill: Yes, that could be permitted all at once.

Commissioner Rose: Yes. Okay, thank you.

Chair Raschko: Are there other questions?

Commissioner Woodmansee: I have maybe a comment and a question. On the ADU, I think that the new proposal has it going from 900 to 1200 square feet, if I recall correctly.

Mr. Gill: That is one of the options that was presented in the staff report. Correct.

Commissioner Woodmansee: Okay. All right. And it is possible that it wouldn't be an existing building. It could be a new structure built, I believe. And the other comment I have on that is if you're in the NRL zone, I believe that you – like, you couldn't do an ADU three acres away from an existing house. Don't you have a footprint you have to stay within that's, I'm assuming, less than an acre?

Mr. Gill: Yes, the Department does have non-agricultural buildings siting criteria and that is fairly complicated, but most basic is you've got to get all of them within one acre and it's got to be as close to the existing non-ag building as possible.

Commissioner Woodmansee: And that would be in a contingent – an acre – like, you can't have a half-acre here and a half-acre there.

Mr. Gill: No. Correct.

Commissioner Woodmansee: Contiguous acre.

Mr. Gill: Yeah, yeah. All contiguous, yeah.

Commissioner Woodmansee: Okay. And then I'll comment on the Small Business. I mean, I see, you know, a fairly uphill to climb to achieve the worst of the fears of the community. So that gives me optimism. But I would like – I do want to say that I was pretty impressed with the amount of support from the community for that proponent on that. So I just wanted to say that out there. It's nice to see a lot of comments.

Chair Raschko: Okay, thank you. Is there anything else for staff?

Mr. Gill: Not from staff. Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Well, thank you. That was very helpful to me. I presume very helpful to most of my fellow commissioners.

Commissioners Henley: Yes. Quick question, if I may.

Chair Raschko: Okay. Commissioner –

Commissioner Henley: I've been up there on the list there for a while. It seems to me – and I'm just looking at three of these proposals on the docket that I'm more familiar with ____, you know, 20-02, -05, and -07. It seems to me, at least in the discussion that we've had here, there are enough loose ends that we might want to write down those concerns that we have and the things that we want to have staff answer questions about and provide them to staff for the next meeting. I'm not particularly comfortable in going into a work session at this point in time with what I know about each of these individual docket items. So is there an absolute necessity to get it all done tonight or can we, you know, send this stuff to the staff in writing and have them give us an answer?

Chair Raschko: I think you're making a very good point, Vince. I was going to propose that we take a few of these items over which nobody has any great consternation and maybe handle those. But there's a lot of them I'm certainly not comfortable tonight beginning deliberations. And if, you know, everybody has the same mix of some they're comfortable with and some they're not, how much overlap there is you don't know. So I'd be inclined to take your advice: Have written questions or comments go in to staff and then tackle this in a meeting when we're all fully prepared. Any other comments on that?

Commissioner Henley: Tammy has her hand up.

Chair Raschko: Let's use the Chat Box, please, because I can't see those little dinky pictures on my screen. So, Commissioner Candler?

Vice Chair Candler: Thank you. I agree with Commissioner Henley in that – well, even though I think that these are somewhat straightforward petition items or docket items, a couple of them have the potential to have pretty big impact to the County. The Terramar, I'm thinking of, and the – certainly that one, and I think – all of them have – you know, certain ones have implications. The parks one I'm less concerned about. But anyway, I'm not really comfortable going forward on deliberations given that it wasn't on the agenda. So I just wanted to say that.

Chair Raschko: Any other comments or opinions?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: I don't see anybody in the Chat Box. I don't see any hands up.

Mr. Gill: This is Peter. The only thing I would – if I could – say is if you all can get your questions to staff prior to the next meeting, that would certainly help us to give you the best, most complete answer that we can, and probably prepare you better for deliberation or follow-up questions. So I certainly would appreciate that approach.

Chair Raschko: Yeah, I think Friday would be late. I mean, if you can get them in in the next few days, that would be most helpful. Okay, so at this point I think that our consensus is to move on to the Director's Update, unless there are any last thoughts on the docket and how we handle it.

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Okay, thank you, everybody. Let's move to the Director's Update. Mr. Hart?

Mr. Hart: Yep, thank you. Peter, I sent you an update Director's Update, even during this meeting. We're adding one slide. But let's just see if we can –

Mr. Gill: I can get here.

Mr. Hart: Okay.

Mr. Gill: All right. Bear with me for a second here. Which one are you seeing at this point?

Mr. Hart: It's the dual slide, so it's not just the presentation.

Mr. Gill: Okay. I'm about to fix that. There we go. How's that?

Mr. Hart: Still seeing the – oh, now we got it. Okay, good. Okay, let's just start. Let's go to the next one. Okay, so the first question that just came up is FCCs. So the Board is determined that the best way to take that forward is to bring it back to the regional cooperation group, and that's the mayors and the Commissioners themselves, the steering group for the region, and the next opportunity to do that would be in 2023. So that's kicking the can down the – so, you know, the question is, Is it dead? Not necessarily. It's kicking the can down another year, and a lot of things could change in a year but, on the other hand, a lot of things probably won't change when it comes to FCCs. Anyway, that's what it effectively has done is following the process, the regional process. And it would have regional implications so the Commissioners felt that would be the appropriate place for that discussion. So that's where we are right now. And I'll stop right there and Peter and I will – if you have any further questions, we can deal with that one.

Chair Raschko: Are there any questions for staff on the FCCs?

(silence)

Mr. Hart: Okay.

Chair Raschko: Thank you.

Mr. Hart: Yep, you bet. So growth and interest and applications are already beginning to ratchet up. You know, it's really interesting what we're seeing out at the beginning of the new year – is we actually have a lot of growth and we do the permit review for La Conner. Right? So little La Conner! There's a lot of interest in going there and a lot of people like to use that as kind of a corporate retreat opportunity. I think we may see more of that in the future. There's housing, there's a new public library. They are also ___ and I was looking at it this evening – was the middle school's going to be doing some expansions. There are both long term and short term rental, kind of one project that incorporates both long term and short term rentals. So I think that's kind of interesting and it's a change definitely (in) market conditions there. And so – go ahead. There was a question? Okay.

This week we have a number of short plats and a long plat. So there's a lot of interest in dividing property up still in the county. It's getting more difficult to do so but there still a lot of opportunities to do that. So one was an eight-lot short plat – or a long plat and two short plats. And that's just this week, so we'll see where this goes. We have several long plats that we are working towards completion. Now a long plat is dividing properties up into many other future housing units, and we do have one that's as large as 103 units and that would be in the Big Lake area. These things are moving forward. We expect that they would be – that they would continue to move forward and that they would – in one of these cases it's been around for a long time, but the stormwater has changed since it was originally approved so, therefore, they have to re-engineer stormwater to modern standards, and we're working through those kinds of problems, Commissioners. So expect more housing, even in the rural part of the county in the future. And there's a number of ways they can get there, but either a short plat or a conservation long plat or conservation short plat, where you're taking those development units and you're clustering it.

We've also signed off this week on another 18-plus acres. I did that this afternoon. And we have another 51 that we're researching this evening, so after this meeting I'm going to continue to look at that. Let's go to the next slide, please.

Ongoing development: I always like to go out and give pictures of the latest. So that's Amazon to your far left. And the important thing about this is that we've met with the Port and that area

between where I'm taking this photo and Amazon is a lot of acreage. The Port owns that land and is thinking about, Okay, what's the future of that land? And would come in and subdivide that. But some of the key things that are – that they're going to have to deal with are going to be stormwater. You know, where does all the water go? What does that look like? And how do they meet the new – the modern guidance for stormwater? Do they do it regionally? Do they do it onsite in individual lots? Some combination? And that's a big issue for surrounding agricultural farmers and salmon and everybody else in the watershed. So they'll have to satisfy the Department of Ecology and everybody else in that process. So that will probably drive a lot of future discussion and we'll put a significant investment in stormwater infrastructure, I'm sure.

To the right is the work Sakata Seed is doing, is moving forward. That's both a laboratory, a research facility, and – you know, again that is another international investment in our community. So let's go on.

This is a neat one. If you haven't been out there you may want to take a drive out to the – and I say that because it's housing units going in the city. So from my perspective as the County guy, that's housing units not occurring in the county. And so it's within an area that they recently or somewhat recently created an Urban Village, mixed use overlay that allows it to go up to 60 feet. The other thing to know is that they allow that to occur – and Joe may understand this better than I do – but I was just reading their zoning this evening, Joe. So the setbacks on this are also part of how you get the height above the third floor. So and that's a really common thing that you – you do it for scale. If you were going to build more of these units it makes it more livable and creates a better product for the City. So there will be at least a second building here, I'm told, and that's the only point I wanted to make – that that *is* going up in Skagit County. So pretty interesting. Let's go to the next slide.

This is a really important slide. And I see this every day. This is a four-bedroom house in Bothell, and you go, Well, why? Bothell's a long ways away. Remember the drive to qualify. This four-bedroom house, which was probably created, you know, in the early 2000s, is now going for 1.399 million this week. Everything down there is going up very, very fast. And you would say, Well, why the heck is that? What's driving that is – I believe – is because Seattle is a global cluster. Vancouver figured this out a few years ago. They started passing all sorts of ordinances trying to slow it down, but it's having a huge effect in BC as well. And once you become a global investment location then it's bigger – the interest in your region is so large that it starts to drive the market in a different way. And I just think that's really important to note that increase. But it's driven by job creation in this case.

But my whole point here is, Hey, let's look who, just in the last couple of weeks, has announced that they're moving to this area just to the south of us. The newest one is ZeroAvia. It's a hydrogen-powered aircraft. There's a revolution going on in aviation and what they've done is they've kind of lifted up – just like they did in rocketry – they've lifted that up and said, Okay, we've got to find new ways for aircraft. And so we are becoming a cluster in Snohomish County and in Washington State and we actually have in our county – we have aerospace companies in our county. You might remember a couple years ago I was telling you about one, Systima Technologies. Systima is growing very, very fast. They are in our county. So far nothing is proposed in our county – I was just on their website – in addition to what they have. They kind of have a lab, a physics kind of lab, to make sure that they can do testing up here. They were kind of – there wasn't room in Kirkland anymore, where they originated, so they've moved to Paine Field right now and they have grown like crazy and they've taken over buildings that Boeing has left behind. So there's this move. They're bringing in 20 design engineers and software engineers just for this one company, but multiply that over and over. SpaceX is moving in. They're expanding. We had an

Israeli firm coming up to Arlington. And so there's definitely this experimental aviation cluster and there's a lot of – there's a work force that understands this. There's engineering that understands this. And we have a worldwide reputation for quality here in the northwest. So that impacts general aviation when it kicks out other firms out of Arlington. And then so what we see at our aviation complex is we see an expansion. We have three to four new aircraft hangars coming in right now, so we're reviewing those as I speak. And we're looking at the stormwater for those. Some of these are pretty big and some of these are medium scale, but there's this kind of downward – it's a regional impact. That's all I'm saying. And I'm trying to – so I'm going back up and I'm going, Well, what's going on in aviation to kick – why is there so much interest in this area? It's really kicking in right now.

The other thing I wanted – so this is kind of going on my global thing. I had to – my kids wanted to get some new school clothes for the new quarter and a pair of jeans, so we went to – we went down to Bellevue and grabbed a pair of jeans there. But this was going on, and this is pretty cool. Used to see this in Seattle all the time – because I grew up in a downtown Seattle business family so we'd see it there all the time. But it's also in Bellevue. Thirty-four percent of Bellevue's population is now of Asian descent. So things are changing rapidly. Also is the Spring District in Bellevue. And so it is – it has the Chinese MIT. I can't pronounce the name. It's Tsinghua University, in collaboration with the University of Washington, but it's all about high tech. And so it's a driver. It's yet another driver. And if you were to look at life sciences you would find that what draws life sciences and people from all over the world to be here are these three mega – maybe four: Swedish, Virginia Mason, University of Washington, Children's Orthopedic. These research institutions then spawn a lot of new businesses. And so the same is true with high tech and the same is true with aircraft industry as well. So there's this linkage between higher education spawning new startup companies. There's a lot of startup money here. And so continuing.

And then the final discussion: I was out looking at an Urban Village – and I told the County Commissioners this already – and I was looking at the Urban Village in Woodinville. And I was following a guy around and the guy was looking at me and I was kind of looking at him. I said, Hey, are you a developer? He says, Yeah, and so we started talking for about an hour out there and he was looking at how they were getting 50 units to an acre, and he was going, I can't believe the prices here. But it turns out he is the chief development officer for Google. So he was saying, Yeah, we're expanding Google here. And so they're looking at – I think in 2017 they were looking at 3500 Google employees. Today I think they're looking at more like 7,000. So that just gives me this one eye on – okay, that's a huge impact, and these folks are paid a lot more than even Microsoft. And so that has all sorts of downstream impacts and I think some of it are impacting Skagit County housing prices. I'm not sure *how* that's all connected but definitely there's regional impact. I am certain of it.

That's your Director's Update. And Peter? I think Peter has one more thing to talk about. I can't hear you, Peter.

Mr. Gill: ___ muted. Yeah. So, yeah, I don't have a slide tonight but I just wanted to make sure everyone was up to date with where we were with the Shoreline Master Program. I want to make sure to give you an update whenever I've got one. This morning we did present an introduction work session to the Board of County Commissioners on the Shoreline Program, including your recorded motion. We basically just kind of gave an intro, so we went over the whole process. We talked about the most significant changes and we described the Findings and the Recommendation by the Planning Commission in there. We have another meeting set to talk a little more specifically about the recommendations on February 7th. You're all invited to join us. And the following meeting – and this is news – is to have a public hearing in front of the Board of

County Commissioners on the SMP. So we don't have a date yet. We're just figuring that out, and so we'll let you know when that is occurring and whether you want to participate or not.

So that's my update. Just keeping you informed on what's going on here with the Board. Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Thank you, Peter. Are there any questions for Hal or for Peter?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Okay. I do have a question. And first I'd like to say that I think Hal's report was very, very interesting. You know, we're kind of in this small island in the middle of an explosion here in western Washington. It's really going to be interesting how it all plays out. The question I have, though, is regarding that the farmland that was preserved. I'm just curious as to what that means. I mean, what kind of protections are there? Will it still be farmed? That sort of thing.

Mr. Hart: This was 18-plus acres and there's a conservation easement upon that. So the intent is that it would continue to be farmed, Commissioner.

Chair Raschko: Okay, there won't be any change in land use proposals then and that type of thing.

Mr. Hart: That is correct.

Chair Raschko: Okay. Very simple. Anybody else? Questions for staff?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: If not, we'll move to Planning Commissioner Comments and Announcements. And we'll start with Commissioner Candler.

Vice Chair Candler: I don't have anything tonight. Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Thank you. Commissioner Henley?

Commissioner Henley: I would like to thank the staff for their good work on the docket. I appreciated the effort. So I'll try to get you some good questions for the next meeting. Okay.

Chair Raschko: Okay. Commissioner Amy.

Commissioner Hughes: Thank you. I'd like to thank Peter for being able to answer questions on the spot. You're well versed. I applaud you for being able to do that. And Hal, your information today was fascinating. Thank you for your end report.

Mr. Hart: You bet.

Chair Raschko: Mark?

Commissioner Mark Knutzen: I have nothing. Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Okay. Kathy?

Commissioner Mitchell: Nothing tonight. Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Martha?

Commissioner Rose: I also don't have anything. Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Thank you. And Joe.

Commissioner Woodmansee: Nothing tonight.

Chair Raschko: Okay. I would just like to echo what Amy said. I thought Peter did a great job tonight. But I also want to commend Amy. I thought it was really helpful, the series of questions that she had about process and that type of thing. So thank you very much, Amy, for that. So if there's nothing else tonight, then we'll stand adjourned.