

**Skagit County Planning Commission
Work Session: 2022 Docket Introduction
June 28, 2022**

Planning

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

Staff: Hal Hart, Planning Director
Jenn Rogers, Assistant Long Range Planner

Chair Tim Raschko: (gavel) Good evening. Welcome to the June 28th, 2022, meeting of the Skagit County Planning Commission. Do we need a rollcall? I can see that we have everybody present, if the record could please show that. I'd appreciate a motion to approve the minutes of our prior meeting.

Commissioner Vince Henley: I so move.

Commissioner Kathy Mitchell: Second.

Chair Raschko: It's moved and seconded to approve the minutes. Is there any discussion of the minutes?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Corrections?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: No? All those in favor, say "aye."

Multiple Commissioners: Aye.

Chair Raschko: So that passes unanimously. Thank you. Which brings us to our main topic tonight, the Introduction to the 2022 Docket. Ms. Rogers, please.

Jenn Rogers: Thank you, Commissioners. My name is Jenn Rogers and I'm an assistant long range planner for Skagit County Planning and Development Services. Today is going to be our first work session on the 2022 Planning Docket, so we'll go through each petition that was included with a brief analysis on what we've studied so far.

So first of all, the Comprehensive Plan amendments review is a yearly process whereby citizens and County staff can submit petitions to make changes to the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations. The first part of the process is where all petitions that have been received on time are reviewed by the Board of County Commissioners. The Board hosted a public hearing on May 24th and staff provided recommendations in a staff report on which petitions should be included in the docket. On June 14th, the Board approved two citizen-initiated petitions and three County petitions to establish the 2022 docket, and we have provided the Planning Commission with a memo detailing the docketing process and a short analysis of each petition.

After today's work sessions, we – excuse me. After today's work session, we will have another work session and later this summer there will be a public hearing and also deliberations will occur after the public hearing.

All of the previous staff reports and memos, including today's memo to the Planning Commission, petitioner applications, public comments from the first open public comment period, and hearing transcripts can all be found on our project website at www.skagitcounty.net/2022cpa.

So our first petition is LR22-01, Small Scale Recreation and Tourism Rezone. The petition has been brought by Bertelsen Farms and they seek to rezone four parcels on Starbird Road just east of I-5 from Rural Reserve to Small Scale Recreation and Tourism. The total acreage of the rezone would be about 69 acres.

There are two wells on the sites, one on the southern side, one on the northern property. The Bertelsens have indicated that they plan to potentially work with PUD to bring out a line to their properties to increase water capacity.

The southern parcels are currently being used as a winery, which is compatible with the Rural Reserve zone. The rezone to Small Scale Recreation and Tourism would allow the petitioners to expand the uses to include campgrounds, restaurants, and outdoor recreation facilities. These properties are surrounded by other parcels zoned Rural Reserve. To the east there are areas of Industrial Forest-Natural Resource Lands, Secondary Forest-Natural Resource Lands, and Rural Resource-Natural Resource Lands. The property uses just adjacent to the Bertelsen properties are residential and light farming, as well.

The Growth Management Act allows for Limited Areas of More Intensive Rural Development (LAMIRDs) to allow for some development in rural areas. So Small Scale Recreation and Tourism is among two of the types of commercial LAMIRDs that can be established for new development in rural areas. The designation is intended to provide diverse economic development that is recreational or tourist-related which relies on a rural location and setting, and the designation also allows intensification of development on lots containing, or new development of, small scale recreation and tourism. The use is not required to be principally designed to serve the existing rural population, so it can be used to attract other populations outside of the county to our area, and public services and facilities are limited to those necessary to serve the recreation or tourist use and shall be provided in a manner that does not permit low density sprawl.

Our second citizen petition is LR22-05, Agriculture Accessory Use Amendment, and which is brought by Tony Wisdom. The petition is requesting to add permanent and/or seasonal farmworker housing as an allowed accessory use in zones which allow agricultural activity. The petitioner has brought this forward to increase the amount of farmworker housing available in the county and provide onsite housing options for farm employees.

The Agricultural-Natural Resource Lands and Rural Reserve zones do allow for one temporary manufactured unit as an administrative special use, which could be used for one farmworker and his family. That unit must be removed as soon as the use is no longer needed or the employee moves out. State law does allow –

Chair Raschko: Excuse me, Jenn. I'm sorry.

Ms. Rogers: Yes?

Chair Raschko: I apologize for not asking you prior.

Ms. Rogers: Of course.

Chair Raschko: But if somebody has a question would you – would it be appropriate for them to ask it at the end of each of these individual ones?

Ms. Rogers: Yes. Would you like me to go back? Do you have a question about Bertelsen?

Chair Raschko: No, no. Why don't you finish this one and then we can go back to number 1 at the end?

Ms. Rogers: Okay. Sounds good.

Chair Raschko: Okay. I'm sorry to interrupt you. Thank you.

Ms. Rogers: No problem.

So state law does allow for temporary farmworker housing located on rural worksites for employees employed on the worksite and shall be considered a permitted use for purposes of zoning or other land use review processes. The state farmworker housing program is overseen by the State Department of Health and L&I, so they have their own separate regulations that are outside of the County purview. Like I mentioned before, the state does allow for temporary farmworker housing. Skagit County does limit that to that temporary manufactured home. You could, in theory, have a manufactured home onsite and an ADU, which would provide you two units onsite. So those previously is how we've allowed farmworker housing in the county. So the petitioner would like to see that expanded to allow for more units onsite on a farm to allow for more farmers to have additional units.

And that does sum up for that, so are there any questions?

Commissioner Henley: I have a question about LR – the first one, yeah – sorry – the 22-01.

Ms. Rogers: Mm-hmm?

Commissioner Henley: At the end under Public Comments – okay – there's a word there I'm not quite understanding. I think it should be "isolation." I think it means "insulation" in the wording you've got here. But my question is, Why wouldn't an expansion of the existing winery be a more appropriate use for the current zoning than what's being proposed?

Ms. Rogers: If I'm understanding your question correctly, I think the expansion that they are hoping to do would require the rezone for those uses. So they're hoping to add things like a campground, a dog park, also –

Commissioner Henley: Yeah, I understand that. My question is, Why is that series of new activities viewed as being compatible with the current – *incompatible* with the current zoning, and if it is, why wouldn't they expand the winery as a better use of the same zone?

Ms. Rogers: I don't know the answer to your second question, on behalf of their intent. Mr. ___ is in the room with us. He's –

Commissioner Henley: Okay.

Ms. Rogers: But on the first question – Why is it not compatible with the current zoning? – is that – am I understanding?

Commissioner Henley: Yes. I mean, I understand it *isn't* compatible with the current zoning, but my question is, Why make the change if there's a path where you could use the property and its current activities, all right, for expansion?

Ms. Rogers: I'd have to look more into that. I don't have an answer for you right now. Hal, do you have anything that might –

Hal Hart: I'm still debating the question that you're asking. What is it that you're trying to assess out of that, the path being –

Commissioner Henley: I can't hear the answer. I don't know – can you hear what he's saying?

Several Commissioners: I can.

Commissioner Henley: Okay.

Mr. Hart: Okay. I'm sorry. I'm not sure what you're asking at this moment, if – whether it's a business plan question or it's a code question.

Commissioner Henley: I think it's a rezone question.

Mr. Hart: Okay, and can you restate the question one more time?

Commissioner Henley: We already have a zoning where the winery is in operation and it's a permitted use within that zoning. All right? And my question is is, Why do we want to expand this more commercial kind of thing what is essentially on rural property instead of expanding an already-existing use? I'm questioning why we – give me a good reason to vote for approving this rezone, is what I'm really asking. At the moment I don't see one.

Mr. Hart: Yeah. Okay. So this is the time where we ask those questions and if there's research that we can do to answer the question we'll bring back the research.

Commissioner Henley: Okay.

Ms. Rogers: I can certainly do that comparison in our analysis. Like I mentioned before, there will be a full staff report with a thorough analysis released later this summer which will answer a lot more of these questions and give us a little bit more time to do that study. But I will certainly make sure that that is answered in the future.

Commissioner Henley: Okay.

Chair Raschko: Tammy?

Vice Chair Tammy Candler: I have a question about the second one we've covered so far. And, again, we'll probably cover this as well, but I'm just kind of wondering right now if the petitioner has stated a – like, what kind of a scale increase we're talking about? How much more are they asking for?

Ms. Rogers: How many more units?

Vice Chair Candler: Yeah.

Ms. Rogers: He doesn't have a number specifically. I believe the state allows about 10, depending on the size of the farm. So that's something that we would have to come up with if we were proposing to approve it in the code language – how many units would be allowed.

Vice Chair Candler: Okay, thank you.

Chair Raschko: Go ahead, please.

Commissioner Martha Rose: So on the second one, I've seen these clusters of small houses, probably in eastern Washington. I'm not sure. But it would be cool to see some examples from other counties in the state. Because I think you stated that the state allows for it but our code doesn't.

Ms. Rogers: Correct.

Commissioner Rose: And so some of the other codes in the state obviously allow for this, so it'd be interesting to look and see how they're handling it.

Ms. Rogers: And we – it will definitely be in the staff report – some of the ___ cabin style of allowances – you're right, especially in eastern Washington. And the petitioner specifically in his application stated either seasonal and/or permanent housing. His preference would be for permanent housing so that folks can live there year-round rather than having to worry about cycling in and out due to seasonal issues. So he's trying to make something a little bit more permanent.

Chair Raschko: Any other questions? Please go ahead.

Commissioner Amy Hughes: This is some background knowledge I'd like to have from staff. On our Planning Commission we've had a lot of institutional knowledge of these issues and we don't – they've all moved on. Specifically I'd like a synopsis of the 1990 about (the) original Comp Plan where these decisions were made. There was a lot of work done at the beginning of the '90s. And so just a synopsis of all the different zones and why those places were zoned, and then specifically these zonings. It would be something for institutional knowledge for the future that if somebody in

the Planning Department could pull together before *that* knowledge leaves too? Just sometimes to know the history to go forward is a good idea. And that would be kind of for the second one as well. We had a discussion about this approximately seven years ago when I was brand new, and it had to do with farmworker housing. And it's where Burlington stepped up and did some housing over where they could cycle it into septic. And so a little bit of background in pulling that together, I think, would be good information for us.

And then I have one more question, or I could wait for another round.

Chair Raschko: Well, go ahead.

Commissioner Hughes: Okay. On the first one, Small Recreational, why isn't this being tied to tourism?

Ms. Rogers: Why is it being tied to tourism?

Commissioner Hughes: Is it *not*. We're going to be working on a big tourism package soon, and even though this is a rezone and this is capable of doing it, I'm a little bit uncomfortable without knowing where we're going with the other tourism to take one property. And it may not overlap or it may, so I'm just working that through my mind.

Ms. Rogers: Mm-hmm.

Commissioner Hughes: And you don't need to have an answer now, but if you could help us in the future.

Ms. Rogers: Yeah! And rezoning to Small Scale Recreation and Tourism was one of the options we explored for agritourism, and so I'll try to have an update for you the next time we discuss this on how that might impact this rezone, or if they don't rezone how it might be impacted. Does that kind of answer your question?

Commissioner Hughes: Yeah. What I am concerned about is backing ourselves into a corner, making a decision about this and then it not being compatible going back to the 1990 original plans. They tried really hard, I believe, to make everything very compatible and so it flows well, and so now we're taking one piece of property and we're kind of putting it ahead of everything else. It might make sense or it may be premature. That's what I'm trying to work with.

Ms. Rogers: Okay, we can do that.

Chair Raschko: Okay, any more questions on LR22-05?

Vice Chair Candler: I just have a comment just following up with what Commissioner Hughes was saying. I feel like when we had this – I think it was the Samish Bay Cheese petition last year – two years ago? – I think some of the comments from the Commissioners at that time were exactly what you're saying about this one, was we don't want to address this in its little vacuum and we want to look at the big picture, and I think we maybe recommended to deny that one because of it. So I recall that as well.

Chair Raschko: Thank you. Kathy?

Commissioner Mitchell: Okay, sort of an awkward question for Jenn and Hal both. So the Commissioners looked at the petitions and they opted to put this on the docket, so they must have had their reasoning knowing all that. Are we – is it okay to ask what that reasoning is?

Mr. Hart: Well, I think – yeah, I was just replaying that as Amy was asking her question. I think for four years this has been – the four years that I’ve been here – that this has been a pretty hot button issue: What is going to happen there? It parallels the larger question of ag tourism as well. Right? What’s going to happen? The larger question is this is outside of Ag-NRL, so what is the tourism relationship of the County with a property that’s *not* Ag-NRL? Doing very well. Needs this potentially for economic purposes, right? So the only thing I can think of is the Commissioners felt that this rose to that level of review by staff and yourselves. That it’s an important question and that the research that we do here could very well feed into other work that is going on. So this is a great time to do that research. I’m glad on Amy’s previous question as well that she asked us to go back and find out from the ‘90s. We’re going to do that. We need to do that anyway on many of these questions. So thank you, both of you. Yes?

Commissioner Mitchell: In the past – and it’s not like we always have to do things the same way – but there were some things in recent history – I think you were here when this happened – when the petitioners were able to come and tell us what they were thinking.

Mr. Hart: Yes.

Commissioner Mitchell: Instead of going through another party. Are we going to be able to do that with these?

Mr. Hart: Oh, I’m sure.

Commissioner Mitchell: Okay.

Ms. Rogers: Commissioner Mitchell, it’ll be a part of the public hearing. We’ll be allowing petitioners to provide comments as well.

Commissioner Mitchell: Well, I would expect that, but we actually had workshops where the petitioners – I’m thinking of mining overlay, the blue heron thing – you know, there were other –

Vice Chair Candler: Wells.

Commissioner Mitchell: Wells.

Vice Chair Candler: Rainwater catchment.

Commissioner Mitchell: Rainwater catchment, a lot of other things. And so they were labelled “workshops” where – it’s great when you guys put the reports together. But you are privy to discussions and things beforehand which may or may not capture the rationale from the petitioners themselves. And I remember thinking it was really helpful with one of the mineral overlay things when we heard from them and what they had done because otherwise we probably you know, we wouldn’t have heard that kind of detail. So if that’s possible – I don’t know if you’ve got time in the schedule to schedule a workshop to do that. That’d be great.

Ms. Rogers: Yeah, we’ll look at the schedule and see how we can fit that in for sure.

Commissioner Mitchell: Thank you.

Mr. Hart: That's a great idea.

Chair Raschko: All right, anything else on LR22-05?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Okay.

Ms. Rogers: Okay. So those are two citizen-initiated petitions, so we'll move on to the County-initiated petitions. So these come from staff. The first one is C22-1, Wind Turbine Use Amendment. So the petition would add wind turbines as a small scale use accessory to a residential structure, one per property and only for net metering purposes only. Net metering is the production of renewable energy meant to offset part or all of the customer-generator's requirements for electricity. Wind turbines are defined in the code but no zone lists wind turbines as an allowed use. And that's because wind turbines used to be in the code before 2008 as a major utility development which required a special use permit that could cost more than \$3,000 at the time. On July 1st, 2008, an Administrative Official Interpretation was issued to deem windmills and other small scale renewable energy systems as accessory uses, which do not require special use permits.

In 2013 the Department then conducted a study with the Department of Energy – excuse me, with a Department of Energy grant – to evaluate how windmills could be incorporated into the code, and the study resulted in two options the County could use moving forward. Those options and the study, the AOI, are all in your memo as attachments. The intent of the AOI and the study was to develop new regulations to replace the old ones to allow for personal use wind turbines, but new language hadn't been developed or approved as of yet.

Are there any questions?

Commissioner Rose: So there must be a size of the lot associated with this. Because what little bit I know about wind turbines is they need a certain height and they need to be a certain distance away from other structures and trees and things like that to actually do the thing they're supposed to do. So is that part of the picture, is to make sure that there's a minimum lot size and location on (the) lot and an allowance in the building code to allow the certain height? It's probably higher than building heights are allowed. Things like that.

Ms. Rogers: Yes. And we have – in 2008, at the time Whatcom County was going through their own windmill study, and so I found in some of our notes that we were hoping to use a little bit of what they learned for regulations like that. But you're right. So there are setbacks. For example, in Whatcom County they require 1.2 times the tower height from the property line as a setback. So there will be regulations with minimum lot size, maximum height, and setbacks and such to ensure not only the safety of the property owner but, you know, other impacts that we need to account for.

Commissioner Rose: And that the thing will actually function as intended, right?

Ms. Rogers: Correct. Yes. It might not necessarily work everywhere, right? There are locations that are more beneficial with wind power than other areas in the county, so that is certainly something the property owner will take into account.

Commissioner Rose: Thank you.

Ms. Rogers: Mm-hmm.

Chair Raschko: Go ahead.

Vice Chair Candler: My question would be – as we're going forward, and I don't expect you to answer it tonight – but when you're talking about net metering, are there some examples, you know, that we could use from other counties or other areas that would tell us what that might look like – like how much of a difference it would make if this were allowed?

Ms. Rogers: So the potential for electricity generated as a result?

Vice Chair Candler: Yeah. And I know that's going to be different in different areas of the county, but if we could have *some* idea of what –

Ms. Rogers: – the benefits are?

Vice Chair Candler: The benefits are, yeah.

Ms. Rogers: Certainly.

Chair Raschko: Okay, Mark has the floor next, followed by Kathy. Okay, go ahead.

Commissioner Mark Knutzen: Oh, me now? I can't hear. The email that you sent out with all the attachments last week, there're three attachments regarding work that was done by the Planning Department, some in 08 and some in 13. I'm assuming this is in relationship to what we're talking about right now.

Ms. Rogers: Yes. So the AOI and the press release were what was released in July 2008, which changed the use from a major utility, which was an administrative special use. It removed that and made it an *accessory* use. But the language was never changed in the code – right? So we removed it as a major utility use but then never added it back in as an accessory use with the necessary regulations. So the study with the Department of Energy grant was meant to decide on what those regulations could look like in Skagit County moving forward.

Commissioner Knutzen: Okay. Okay, just checking. Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Okay, Commissioner Mitchell.

Commissioner Mitchell: Yeah, so the language is going to be very generic for wind turbines as a whole? That means all kinds, all types? Or will there be preferences on what kinds and what types, because there are certainly different designs?

Ms. Rogers: It's something we'll have to work on with our current planners and our building team to see what would work best in Skagit. And that's something we'll be doing this summer, so we'll have code language to present to you as an option ____.

Commissioner Henley: These are pretty small turbines, though, actually. I mean, they're – I mean, you're proposing to limit them to 100 kw so that's relatively small, as wind turbines go. So this is like single property use for a single dwelling kind of thing.

Ms. Rogers: Right. It's only meant to be for personal use for a residential structure.

Chair Raschko: Go ahead, please.

Commissioner Hughes: I would need an education on what those would look like.

Ms. Rogers: I can do that, too.

Commissioner Hughes: And the comment regarding birds, how that is going to work together. I'd need that whole education since that is a very popular issue in our county. So just remember to educate us as well as give us the code stuff.

Ms. Rogers: Absolutely! Tim Manns would not allow us to provide the regulations without some kind of assurances for migratory birds in the area.

Commissioner Hughes: Yeah, so just – I'd like to know how they work, what their size, pictures of what they look like.

Ms. Rogers: Okay.

Chair Raschko: Okay, Kathy?

Commissioner Mitchell: Yeah, so that's right where I was thinking because the sizes, the designs, and those kinds of things. You know, they have the oscillating ones versus the fan ones, et cetera and so forth, plus more designs and things that are pretty intriguing. But we've – anybody that's read the stuff in the past when we were touching on this in 2008 looked at what was happening with wildlife – birds, bats, you know, et cetera and so forth. And that certainly comes into weighing, not to mention that. So I'm giving you sort of a catch list of things I'd want to see and I think other people would too. The same thing with the sound. The resonance, the reverberation, the distance – those kinds of things because they make a difference in the valley. You know where I'm getting with this. But all those kinds of things make a difference on impacts around.

Ms. Rogers: Certainly.

Commissioner Mitchell: Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Anyone else?

Vice Chair Candler: That was basically what I was going to say too. For a look at the benefit of the metering I would like to see – you know, we have this program where they bring birds up here from the airport, from the airporter, and we have extra birds and so I would definitely want to see that.

Ms. Rogers: Absolutely. We can do that.

Vice Chair Candler: The detriment and the benefit.

Chair Raschko: Okay. All right, thank you.

Ms. Rogers: C22-2, our Critical Areas Ordinance Correction. This is a very simple code fix. So in Skagit County Code 14.24.080(4)(c), subsection (vi) currently refers to subsection (vi)(b) in the

language when it should be referring to subsection (v)(b). There is no code section (vi)(b) so it's just an error in the code that we'd like to fix.

Chair Raschko: Well, that looks pretty straightforward. Does anybody have questions?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Okay, thank you.

Ms. Rogers: And our last County petition is the Guemes Island Overlay Setback Amendment. So this petition would remove the preferential side setback requirements for the Guemes Island Overlay so they're more consistent with the rest of the county. Currently the code states "Each side setback must be at least eight feet" but "The total of both side setbacks must be at least 30 feet, or 30 percent of the lot width at its widest point, whichever is less."

So the original code language was established to maintain view sheds and protections on environmental concerns on Guemes Island, but this proposal was put forth by County staff specifically as a result of discussions and complaints from building applicants on Guemes Island and current planners from Skagit County because the requirements are incredibly arduous to regulate in their current manner, and they believe that we can find a compromise that would both ensure continued view sheds and protections on the island while also simplifying the requirements for building applicants and County staff.

Chair Raschko: Questions?

Commissioner Jennifer Hutchison: I'm just curious how many petitioners are actually approaching with this type of request. Is it, like, 5 to 10 residents, or are you looking at, like, 50 or more complaints over the years? Is it just more the builders that are kind of –

Ms. Rogers: Well, it's folks who are applying for building permits on the island. It could be developers or, you know, individual applicants. Quite a few, is what I've been told, but I can try to get a better number for you in the report.

Chair Raschko: Okay. Go ahead, Joe.

Commissioner Joe Woodmansee: It seems to me like you could actually force somebody to build in somebody's view corridor by having this restriction, because the view corridor might be right down the middle of the lot. Now you've pushed the building right in front of the view.

Ms. Rogers: Correct. There is – the regulations do not require a person to move their house dependent on who's behind them. It does require that you're offset – right? You can be offset on the lot. But it doesn't require you to ensure that whoever's next to you or behind you continues to have their view.

Commissioner Woodmansee: Okay.

Chair Raschko: Tammy, did you have something?

Vice Chair Candler: No. Thank you.

Ms. Rogers: One thing I will add, Commissioners: We'll have examples of some of the site plans that have been requested and the variances that have been needed, and try to paint a picture of what it looks like to go through the math for the regulation process.

Commissioner Rose: I have a question.

Chair Raschko: Go ahead.

Commissioner Rose: So on Guemes Island do they have covenants where all the building lots are – you know, where places are, in other words? Is it like a blanket type of covenant that restricts blocking views or, you know, has height limits over and beyond what the building department wants? Does that make sense?

Ms. Rogers: I'm not sure what's in the covenants, but this regulation's in the overlay, which is in – was specific to Guemes Island.

Commissioner Rose: It is sort of a covenant, yeah. Yeah. Thank you.

Ms. Rogers: Mm-hmm.

Mr. Hart: I'll follow up. I think part of our research would be to look at the larger subdivisions on Guemes to see what they thought when they built those out originally. So I'll check to see if there are view corridor protections of some kind within that subdivision itself.

Commissioner Rose: Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Anything else on 22-3?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Okay.

Ms. Rogers: Well, those are all of our petitions on the docket this year – much smaller than last year. As for Next Steps – I'm sorry, did you have a question?

Commissioner Knutzen: I do have a question on the total docket process. My understanding is the County Commissioners *may* have some more docket proposals but is that – that would be *added* to this year's docket? But is that maybe not true?

Ms. Rogers: There will be no more proposals added to the 2022 docket as of this point.

Commissioner Knutzen: Okay, so this is it?

Ms. Rogers: Yes, this is it.

Commissioner Knutzen: Thank you.

Ms. Rogers: You're welcome. Last year was a little different because they combined the 2020 applications and the 2021 applications.

Commissioner Knutzen: Oh, it was two years.

Ms. Rogers: Right. So they ended up having a hodgepodge of two years of applications. This year it's just these five.

Commissioner Knutzen: All right. Okay, thank you.

Ms. Rogers: All right. As I mentioned previously, for Next Steps we will have a second work session in the next Planning Commission meeting on July 12th, so I'll try to address some of the follow-up questions that you had that I can between now and then, and also talk a little bit about the outreach plan that we will develop to collect more information on these applications. There will be a public hearing later this summer, which will coincide with the release of the official staff report and SEPA designations. After the public hearing the Planning Commission will deliberate on a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners. And also you may find all of the petitions and staff documents and comments that have been submitted on our project website at the link listed on the slide. And that is it for my presentation. Do you have any other questions?

Chair Raschko: Are there any other questions?

Mr. Hart: Chair?

Chair Raschko: Yes?

Mr. Hart: If Planning Commissioners have another question that strikes them, we would ask that you send those to Jenn and then Jenn will make sure that I see it as well so that we can determine how best to research it. You may not have all the ideas but the discussion you have with neighbors or with others may raise questions, and so we'd welcome that. But at some point we have to cut it off so we can give you the information, right?

Chair Raschko: Would you be copying the rest of us on what that was?

Mr. Hart: That's exactly the way we would do it. We don't have the chain, so – yet.

Chair Raschko: Okay, well, thank you very much. What?

Vice Chair Candler: Sorry, I changed my mind. I do have a question. This Guemes Island Overlay Setback Amendment, I just – is there a consistency with the rest of the county and would this change make it more consistent with the rest of the county?

Ms. Rogers: Most of the county is at least eight feet. That is the requirement for most of the other zones nearby. So that's kind of where we'd be looking at going forward. That's in our Shoreline Master Program as well – at least eight feet. So if we end up going that route, that would be the most consistent. But, of course, we would like to work with GIPAC and other folks that are interested to ensure that we're finding a compromise that meets the intent of the regulations.

Vice Chair Candler: Okay. Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Hutchison?

Commissioner Hutchison: Oh, thanks. In the addendums that you have in our printout here, drafting – I guess this was from 2013, it looks like – the Graham-Bunting Associates drafting where they're giving two approaches here, Approach 1 and Approach 2. Is this kind of a starting point for us or are we going to be, like, revisiting everything from –

Ms. Rogers: That information was a starting point for County staff, so we're going to be using that research as well as neighboring counties' other regulations that we can pull from to decide on what would be the best fit going forward for Skagit County.

Commissioner Hutchison: Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Okay, if anybody else has something, please raise your hand high. Okay, Joe?

Commissioner Woodmansee: I have a question back on the setbacks. When you say "eight foot," you're talking about eight foot on each side?

Ms. Rogers: Correct. Side setbacks.

Commissioner Woodmansee: For a total of 16.

Ms. Rogers: Yes.

Commissioner Woodmansee: I just wanted to clarify that.

Ms. Rogers: Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Mitchell?

Commissioner Mitchell: Kind of a housekeeping thing: One of the things that you guys have gotten pretty good and we really it and I'd just like to encourage it as it moves forward, when communications do come in that we should be seeing, whether it's from the petitioners or from somebody else, could you make sure that we're forwarded that fast?

Ms. Rogers: Yes, I can do that.

Commissioner Mitchell: Thanks so much.

Ms. Rogers: Of course.

Chair Raschko: That's it? Nothing else? Okay, thank you very much.

Ms. Rogers: Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Okay, we'll now turn to the Director's Update.

Mr. Hart: Commissioners, in the back of the room we had Skagit County's Strategic Planning 2022-2032. If you don't have a copy of it, I can give you my copy, but there could be – yeah, I think there's more in the back. So I want to make sure that you all get a chance to grab that. I think it'll be at the website for the County as well. This was an effort that was developed by Skagit County looking at working very closely with Department heads as well as all the electeds. It will be the basis of priority problem-solving in the county going forward. One of the things that was identified has been housing: How the heck are we going to deal with the housing issue as a region? And so I don't know if you're familiar with the North Star Project. That's one of the many, you know, things that the County is pursuing. That is a regional, cooperative effort to look at behavioral health as well as homelessness situations. So that effort actually begins – I think the next meeting is in July at the Regional Planning Forum where the Cities are all going to be there,

and they're saying, How are you all dealing with homelessness? And this is a big issue and it is a very large issue for the Commissioners because we have a compliance team and we have a regional group that are looking at homeless issues, that are looking at behavioral health issues that occur out in the unincorporated county, too. So we may have 330 cases that are open right now of compliance, with various kinds of compliance. But this regional coalition that's looking at homelessness, behavioral health, and those kinds of things, we've zeroed in on some pretty tough, persistent issues that are on the landscape, and a lot of times they're out in the county. And so they could be upriver, they could be mid-river, they could be just on the edge of a town. And these are consuming a lot of resources across the board. So how we look at that going forward is really strategic. And the North Star Project is just one example. The coalition that's looking at – you know, how do we solve this? How do you do a cleanup? Cleaning up a property can cost 50 or \$60,000 per property, so what's the mechanism, then? When you spend that money as a public entity, how do you get that money back out of that property after you've cleaned it up? You've decontaminated it, you've done what you can. A lot of these are close to critical areas, they're close to rivers, they're close to streams and it's becoming a bigger and bigger issue. So I just want to kind of bring up one of the many issues that are in the strategic plan. How do we deal with those kinds of things going forward? And there's just lots of others that have come up. It might be good reading. Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Can I ask a question on that? You mentioned behavioral health.

Mr. Hart: Yes.

Chair Raschko: Do you know if there's still a behavioral health unit at Skagit Valley Hospital?

Mr. Hart: That's a great question. I will ask –

Chair Raschko: I know there was one years ago but –

Mr. Hart: Yeah, I'm not exactly sure. Commissioner Browning is on the Health – he's on the hospital board so I will ask him.

Chair Raschko: Yeah, because other than that, at that time that was the only thing there was in the whole area –

Mr. Hart: We'll follow up on that.

Chair Raschko: – and that's a critical need.

Mr. Hart: So this will also be used as a budget guide going forward.

So the rest of the presentation – I'm very sorry! So we continue to see strong growth. There are 84 permits in the single-family residential construction review system today but the last time I checked only about half of those were single-family homes themselves. So it could be additions, it could be other things as well. But that's pretty good for this time of year. That means it's a 200-home year perhaps. If we're at about a hundred or so already and then we have another 84 coming in, it looks like it could be a 200-home year. That's what we've had traditionally in about the last five or six years. So it's only June but a lot can happen. A lot of folks are forecasting a recession and a slow-down, and we know that we're getting lots and lots of calls from the public saying, Hey, I really want to lock in. Can we move this faster? I want to lock my money in, my

construction loan down, and all that. And it has a decidedly significant impact on people's housing efforts on an individual basis.

We continue on a lot of commercial projects as well right now, and longer term projects like that tend to continue forward although I wouldn't be surprised if some get cancelled. So we've seen that happen before.

Let's go to the next slide. Here's an example. Now this is interesting. This first one to the right here, this is the Farm – this is the – help me out there. It's the farmworker housing – thank you! You're looking in on College Way at that right now. And so there's also Martha's Place, which I have a photo of, too. The reason I put those in is because regionally we also are investing as a county in some of those projects and that's part of our overall combined housing effort. On the left side are some commercial projects that I visited in the last five days: a brewery expansion; remodel of the Farm House Restaurant. I didn't visit that one but I had a long discussion, our staff had a long discussion. They are trying to remodel some of that and so....

West Coast Reduction is a significant one. This is a green energy project. I've talked about it a little bit before, I think. We'll be in on the 12th meeting with – their CEO's coming back down. This is taking – their concept is zero waste from the farm, and so everything on the farm it can get reduced down and become green energy and will feed into the Cherry Point production facility. The facility that's doing that is going to be near the airport. And so that is our meeting in a week or two. We'll be going over the final construction process and they want to sprint through that, of course. And so it's pretty interesting to see that investment.

Sakata Seed Lab continues. I was out there and they are still working on it but it's looking more complete than ever.

Let's go to the next slide. Here we go: So I mentioned the brewery but this is actually – the first slide to the left is looking into the airport property where we just have a lot of general aviation rebuilding going on and larger hangars going in at the airport. They're not huge but they're – they're not like 40,000. They're smaller than that, but it will take larger-scale planes than we've seen before. This is Martha's Place about four hours ago. It's fun to watch that go up. That is right on College Way. So I'm hoping that we are – that the City will re-envision what that looks like on College Way if they're going to have a lot more pedestrians there. The concern I would have would always be pedestrian-car accidents there.

So let's move to the next one. This is a house. On the right-hand side you can see that that house is pretty nice and it's in the Bayview area. It's a very desirable place because you have regional views, you have a bucolic setting – I don't even want to say it too much because it may draw more people there! And then there's Sakata Seed.

So let's go to the next one. And then finally, this is – the cities, especially Burlington, have really stepped up with a lot of – this is in the – that picture, if you go to Fred Meyer, that's Fred Meyer this last week, so they are putting in new multifamily housing. They told us about it about 48 months ago. It's finally happening and so it's moving forward. It's interesting to always track the investors that are doing this and what is the – what's the door cost going to be? You know, the door to construct that: What's that cost, as well as who's their target audience? And all those – almost all of those commercial projects have kind of these lags of workers, right? So they're expanding. So Chuckanut Brewery expands. They're going to have 35 employees by 2026, 27, so they're adding. And it's the – they're not always big, dramatic adds to our workforce. There are some smaller adds. But they start to add up to the overall housing need when things are already

pretty tight. And so there's another project. I think it's going to go on the – although I didn't call the developer today – on the other side of Burlington to the west side of Burlington that is expected to be very much like Four Pines that went in. And the interesting thing about that one is they built it and then they quickly sold it to a different entity. And so it reminds me of how the market works, right? And that you're talking to the first person in that investment chain but what happens down the line to housing is also really important in the private sector too.

And I don't think there's another one but – oh, there is one more. A couple of other updates – sorry, I can't stop! Ag tourism: Looking potentially at another round of surveying to the community. Jenn and I have been discussing one-on-one with the Board and we'll continue to do that. We want to make sure that our outreach is robust and consistent with comments from the Ag Advisory Board as well as others in the county.

We're still shooting for a July adoption of the Shoreline Master Program as well, Commissioners. We're putting together all the history and the different pieces and Betsy is working on that right now. It may come out to the first week of August right now, but I'm – you know, I'm the pusher – Oh, let's get this thing done so we can get onto other things! – but I also – you know, this is vacation time and everything else.

One other thing I forgot to mention about the Skagit County Strategic Plan, if I may for one second, Chair? Thanks. I heard from an employee today who said – he was leaving the County and he said, Hey, one of the most strategic things the County can do – and it came up from Amy Hughes, too – is be sure you kind of memorialize that knowledge. We have lost 84 staff as a county since January 1. It's not just us. It's everywhere. You know, the City of Olympia lost 40% of their staff in the last two years, or 50%. And I see all these new faces there. And there's a lot of retirement. There's a, you know, there's a baby boomer generation that's retiring off and they've been involved for a long time. So one of the key things is addressing that, and the Commissioners said, That's got to be one of our top things is to understand we're on the I-5 corridor and we need to address – in some way we've got to make this a great place to work, live, and play. And so losing that staff throws us a little bit behind, right? And we'll get great staff in but we want to keep some of the staff that have been here for a long time as well to pass that knowledge along.

Yes, sir?

Chair Raschko: That number – the turnover – that's out of how many total employees?

Mr. Hart: That's a great question! I'm going to guess. I could probably Google that. I'm guessing...

Chair Raschko: Ballpark is fine.

Mr. Hart: I don't know right now.

Chair Raschko: Is it close to a million or a hundred?

Mr. Hart: Oh. Well – no. I will have to – jeez, I just really don't know that question.

Commissioner Rose: But you can clarify. Like, is it in the planning and building department?

Mr. Hart: Oh, no no no. I was saying it's countywide.

Commissioner Rose: Countywide, 84.

Mr. Hart: Yeah, 84 since the first of the year.

Chair Raschko: County employees.

Mr. Hart: Yes.

Commissioner Rose: Okay, that helps.

Commissioner Rose: Like office workers? You know, like –

Mr. Hart: It's – yeah, it's across the board. There are people leaving from different places. You will see a lot of the engineering staff changes and things like that have occurred. There's just high demand and not – especially for those high skills levels.

Chair Raschko: Well, I wouldn't spend a lot of time trying to answer that question.

Mr. Hart: If I find the number, I will get it right back to you.

Chair Raschko: All right. Thank you.

Ms. Rogers: Commissioner, I have one update, if I may.

Chair Raschko: Please do so.

Ms. Rogers: Today the Board adopted the new Stormwater Code Updates. So I just wanted to note two of the changes that they made. They accepted the amendments that you had processed. They made a couple of changes on the sunset date. So one was to extend any regional facility that was built before June 30th, 2022, would not be reviewed until 2032. The language that you approved was in 2027, so they gave them a little bit more time. And then also they exempted – from the sunset date, they exempted single-family residences from the review of regional stormwater facilities. And that was in the discussion that you all had as well on if you have a development – right? – that they had approved, you know, say 20 houses and they've only built 15 in the 20 years and they don't want that to be impacted on those last 5 that they had already thought would be able to be built with that regional stormwater facility – those projects would be exempted from this review process. Does that make sense? Those are the only two changes that they made.

Chair Raschko: Thank you. So are there any questions for Hal or Jenn?

Commissioner Mitchell: I've got one. When we had such heavy loads the last couple years – nothing to do with you guys! – we never got finished with the bylaws. So somewhere in the next year or two we probably – because we were so close to finishing really, you know, that we'd probably be able to sew that up.

Mr. Hart: Jenn, I'm going to schedule some bylaw times.

Ms. Rogers: I was just looking at those files. We still have all of the records that you had worked on previously so they're still there.

Commissioner Mitchell: Great. Thank you.

Ms. Rogers: Of course.

Chair Raschko: Any other – Joe, please.

Commissioner Woodmansee: A question for Hal. Of the 200 permits you were talking about, how many of those are new single-family?

Mr. Hart: That's a great question. I – hold on. I can look at last year's and kind of forecast this year, if that's helpful. I asked staff to give me a total number in May. Thirty-two were brand new single – that's the best way I can answer – that were in that line and so – you were asking brand new single-family?

Commissioner Woodmansee: Yeah, that's ____ a new living unit coming in.

Mr. Hart: Yeah. I know – well, the 200 I'm talking about, I think they would all be new single-family residential development. If that's our average, we're averaging 200. Now of those, 30 from last year – I'm going to use last year's stats – 30 of those were ADUs. So they're new single-family residential homes but they're a dwelling unit attached or detached from the main unit there. So maybe you would subtract that out from your total and so you would be at – okay, I'm at 170 new, discounting the ADUs. It depends how you want to count.

Commissioner Woodmansee: I would count it but I would have it as a sub-number. So there's 170 new and 30 ADUs for a total of 200 new units.

Mr. Hart: Yes. And we can break that down as well, Mr. Woodmansee, Commissioner Woodmansee, in manufactured homes or other categories as well. We can go single, double, or –

Commissioner Woodmansee: It'd be good information for us to see.

Mr. Hart: You bet.

Chair Raschko: Please go ahead.

Commissioner Knutzen: Hal, you just said 30 of them are ADUs? Is that the way it has been trending, or is this an increase?

Mr. Hart: I think the trending has gone up over the last four years but I'm not sure if 30 was a record over previous years.

Commissioner Knutzen: That just sounds like a lot.

Mr. Hart: It is a pretty fair amount of homes. We still know that there are homes going out there that we don't even – we find out after the fact, let's just say that. So we have those situations too, but I can't tell you how many of those we have at this point. But in terms of – yeah, I think it's a pretty significant number. We've seen it going up in cities as well.

Commissioner Knutzen: Okay, one other question. We know housing demand is strong, but what's in the business news the last few months? Interest rates are almost double of what they were. And Joe's shaking his head – the builder. A lot of people still want to buy a house but they're

getting priced out because interest rates are so high. Have you seen any trend yet in building permits or do you even track month-to-month?

Mr. Hart: Yes. I track *weekly*, if I can! So yes, we do see these shocks of – when the interest rate – there's a – typically it's a little bit of a delay, but you do see it. If the interest rate's going up then you're going to see people switch. It's substitution, right? So if you really want to have a second house or do something, you may not do a single-family home. You may do the reduced footprint. We've seen that. We've seen, ah, I'm going to cut the bedrooms off or something like that. We've also seen people ask about modular or manufactured homes, too.

Commissioner Knutzen: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Hart: Yeah.

Chair Raschko: Anybody else?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Okay. Well, thank you very much, both of you. We'll turn now to our Planning Commissioner Comments and Announcements. So Mark, what have you?

Commissioner Knutzen: I'm good, thank you.

Chair Raschko: Okay. Joe?

Commissioner Woodmansee: Nice to be back.

Chair Raschko: Okay. Tammy?

Vice Chair Candler: Nice to have you back. That's it.

Chair Raschko: Vince?

Commissioner Henley: Well, I have a query or perhaps a request. The director just mentioned that the SMP process is wrapping up. The SMP process is a massive document and it occupied the attention of the Planning Commission for a very long time and a lot of staff work as well. And part of that process, the Planning Commission passed a number of recorded motions for changes to the document. And my question is: Is there an audit trail so that we know among those recorded motions that were passed how many of them are in the final version of the document that the BOC is going to vote on? I think that would be interesting to know so that we can know whether or not we were effective in making changes or not.

Mr. Hart: All right, I'm writing the question down, if you wonder what I'm doing. It's like, oh, okay. Is there an audit trail of the motions, essentially, so that you can open the document up and you'd be able to find the –

Commissioner Henley: I've looked up some of them and so I know that you can easily find them. But I think it would be good to know because it did occupy our attention and staff's attention for a long time. It's a massive document. I mean, it's hundreds of pages. So I think that we would like to know whether or not we were effective in making changes presented to the BOC or not. Now

the BOC, of course, can take things out, put things in as they wish, but I'd like to know what happened in terms of the things that the Planning Commission thought were useful to put in.

Mr. Hart: Okay. We can ask staff to do that. We've got one staff person working on it with one consultant working on it, so Betsy will be the person that – and I will work with her, too.

Commissioner Henley: It would be good to have that information, I think.

Mr. Hart: Sure. And I think it's an interesting query, too.

Chair Raschko: Thank you, Vince. Martha?

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

Chair Raschko: Kathy?

Commissioner Mitchell: I was just going to concur with what Vince said. It's sort of a wrap-up. You guys have been very nice about helping us with sending us some things along the way but understanding what the final final is that you're going to take to the DOE, which, of course, if a whole new thing, I'd like to know what our track record is, too.

Mr. Hart: Okay.

Commissioner Mitchell: Were we on the right track?!

Chair Raschko: Jen?

Commissioner Hutchison: I just want to say thanks to you guys for being so responsive and always being so actionable when we have all these nit-picking little requests. You make everything so clear and easy to understand. And I never thanked Andy on our last meeting either – how fast you turned around that public comment, the information that needed to be added in and updated, and it's just really impressive to watch you guys. Thank you.

Mr. Hart: Yeah, Andy and Jenn are super sharp and it's in their DNA, I think. So thank you.

Ms. Rogers: Thank you.

Chair Raschko: I really don't have anything either. I just quickly apologize, though, apologize for missing the last two meetings. It wasn't for reasons that for me weren't very legitimate and I just want to assure everybody that I really take our obligation to be here extremely seriously, so there's always an endeavor to make every meeting if at all possible. So with that, I want to thank staff for their work tonight and everybody for their attention and good questions, and we'll stand adjourned (gavel).