

Skagit County Planning Commission
Annual Business Meeting
February 1, 2011

Planning Commissioners: Jason Easton, Chairman
Carol Ehlers
Elinor Nakis
Matt Mahaffie
Annie Lohman
Dave Hughes
Mary McGoffin
Josh Axthelm
Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn

County Commissioners: Ron Wesen, Chair
Ken Dahlstedt
Sharon Dillon

Staff: Gary Christensen, Planning Director
Bill Dowe, Planning Deputy Director
Kirk Johnson, Senior Planner/Supervisor
Brandon Black, Senior Planner
Betsy Stevenson, Senior Planner
Tim DeVries, Building Official
Carly Ruacho, Senior Planner
Josh Greenberg, GIS

Others: Emma Whitfield, Contractor
Peggy Flynn, Envision Skagit 2060
Citizen Committee Member

Chairman Jason Easton: Good evening. We call the Skagit County Planning Commission meeting to order (gavel). On tonight's agenda we have seven items. There'll be introductions, followed by comments by the Commissioners, who have joined us tonight, and also comments from ourselves back and forth to the Commissioners. We'll go over the Planning Department's accomplishments for 2010, followed by the 2011 work plan. We will hear a presentation on Envision Skagit 2060. We will have our elections, and then we'll conclude with general business.

So at this time I'd like to turn things over to Director Christensen.

Gary Christensen: Thank you. Good evening and Happy New Year. This is our first meeting of 2011, so welcome, and to the Commissioners as well, and staff

who have joined. I want to just offer a couple of brief opening remarks and then I'll turn it over to my staff who will go through some introductions, talk a little bit about what it is that they do, and then prior to getting on to the next agenda item we can go through further introductions, if you so please.

I'm Gary Christensen, Director of Skagit County Planning and Development Services, where we help you –

Commissioners Sharon Dillon, Ron Wesen and Ken Dahlstedt, and Mr. Christensen: – plan and build better communities.

Mr. Christensen: Yes, thank you.

Chairman Easton: Wow.

Mr. Christensen: PDS, or Planning and Development Services, has twenty-two FTEs, full-time employees. Our annual operating budget is about \$2.6 million. We have two divisions in the Department. One is Planning, which primarily deals with long-range legislative issues, and then the other division, which is here, is what we refer to as "Development Services." And within the Development Services division we have Current Planning, we have Natural Resources, and we also have the Building Department. And under those two divisions then there are four teams, one of which is Community Planning. And then under Community Development we have Current Planning and Natural Resource, and then the Building team as well.

You can see then, based on this organizational chart, some of the personnel and staff who make up each of these teams. And what I'd like to do now is just briefly have each of them come up and spend just a minute or two introducing themselves to you and talking a little bit about what their programs and the responsibilities and duties are in the Department. This is important because as we work with you on developing plans and policies and codes and regulations these staff may appear before you, advise you on certain policies and programs. There may be questions that we have throughout the year regarding the work program and we may call upon one or more of them to come and work with you. So it's always best to have a face and a name together.

So, with that, Bill.

Bill Dowe: Hi. Good to see you again.

Chairman Easton: Good evening.

Mr. Dowe: I'm Bill Dowe. I'm the Deputy Director for Planning and Development Services. Where Gary oversees the long-range and legislative and political actions, my stuff is all day-to-day. Most of his correspondence is from

commissions, from the Commissioners, and legislators; mine is mostly from attorneys who either do or don't want something to happen. So my job is to direct the daily work, which is the administrative portions of permitting; watch over the other work groups. The people that work for me are Brandon, Betsy and Tim from Current Planning, Environmental Planning and Building. I do a lot of our budgeting. I take care of our database. So it's the daily work that's my job. And code compliance. That's one of those attorney letters that I get where they either do or don't want us.

All right. That's it.

Chairman Easton: Thank you.

Mr. Christensen: Okay, let me introduce Kirk Johnson then, who is the Team Leader/Supervisor for the Community Planning team.

Kirk Johnson: Good evening. I know most of you. So, Kirk Johnson, Team Leader for Community Planning, and our team these days consists of Carly and me. We used to be bigger and brawnier but we are getting by with a smaller staff and still trying to crank out a lot of work.

So we work primarily with the Comprehensive Plan – updates and amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. Each year we get – we may get submittals for amendments from individual property owners. We also work on things like the Capital Facilities Plan and other – I'm blanking on the word. What is the –

Unidentified voice: Functional.

Mr. Johnson: Functional plans – correct. And also help to coordinate amendments to the development regulations, zoning code and the like. Carly typically brings those to you and helps to coordinate the public hearings and take your input and the like.

I've been working, as most of you know, for the last couple of years on what started as the Skagit Alternative Futures project, now known as "Envision Skagit 2060," which is a fifty-year planning effort. Our other planning under the Growth Management Act is a twenty-year planning horizon, so this is taking it out a little bit farther, and I'll be talking with you later this evening about that and getting your input on it. But I think that's the overview that I wanted to share ___.

Mr. Christensen: Thanks, Kirk. I didn't reference earlier two handouts which I provided you. One is the organizational chart by staff and by person's name. That's the colored one. That's the one that is appearing on the overhead here. And if you flip that or if you look at the other organizational chart, it's by function. And so you'll see it correlates with the organizational chart by division and teams. I would put that up here on the overhead, but the print is so small on my copy

that it's not going to be legible to those who might be watching. But I have provided you and Carol with an oversize so that you can know a little bit more about what it is that each of the team leaders and teams and divisions do within the Department.

So, with that, let me introduce Brandon Black, who is a Senior Planner/Team Leader with the Current Planning team.

Brandon Black: Good evening. Thank you, Gary. Brandon Black. Again, Senior Planner/Team Supervisor with the Community Development Division of Planning and Development Services. And it is unfortunate that we don't have the other organizational chart up here. You can see a wide range of what my team is involved in with what we refer to as the "Community" – or the "Current Planning Team." I supervise four team members, made up of two Senior Planners, Marge Swint and Grace Roeder; one Associate Planner, Michele Szafran; and one Customer Service guru/Planning Coordinator, Tawnee Bosman. And we deal a lot with the day-to-day land use and zoning issues that arise from mostly the public coming in to inquire about what they can do with their property and what the codes in effect today will allow.

So we do a lot with land divisions, special use permits, variance requests, lot certifications and project and action SEPA reviews, among other things, as well as all other kinds of zoning and land use-related issues from the initial land development stage when people are dealing with their landscaping, parking, on into some of the things that Bill Dowe deals with with compliance issues.

So that is our team and some of the functions we do. If you have any questions with current land use issues, feel free to give us a call.

Chairman Easton: Okay. Thank you, Brandon.

Mr. Black: Thank you.

Mr. Christensen: Thanks, Brandon. Okay, moving from left to right the next one on the docket is Betsy Stevenson. Betsy is a Senior Planner/Team Leader, primarily works with the Natural Resource Management team.

Betsy Stevenson: Good evening. Welcome, new member, and some of you who I know a little bit and some of you I know quite a bit better. Thank you guys for coming tonight, too. I'm Betsy Stevenson. I guess it's my pleasure to work with a great group: Leah Forbes, John Cooper and Alison Mohns. Some of our major duties and responsibilities include critical areas review for building permits, land use permits, land divisions. We do mitigation compliance work, site assessment review, field reconnaissance. We just at the end of the year completed work on a grant with the Department of Ecology for education and outreach and compliance work in the Samish Watershed.

We also do, in partnership with the state Department of Ecology, shoreline management regulations and administration, so shoreline permits, exemptions, map and code amendments. We do forest practice work. We either review applications that DNR submits to us or we also process the conversions when people are cutting trees for conversion to other land uses. We also provide geologic technical support to other departments in the County as needed. John Cooper does that work quite graciously. We do water review, which is Alison, for building permits, land use permits, land subdivision – or land divisions. She also provides oversight and management of our state revolving loan and grant for septic systems, which is a very successful program that the County has had for years. So if people need to do a repair of their septic system, they can get a grant or a loan to help with the cost to do that. They also track the reservations for the Skagit Instream Flow Rule. We do code compliance, along with everybody else, because I think we all get involved in that. We also provide department representation for the Forest Advisory Board, for the Water Resources Advisory Committee, for the Edison Subarea of the Clean Water District, for the Marine Resources Committee, for the Clean Samish Initiative, and for the Ecosystem Technical Committee of the Envision Skagit 2060.

We are in the process – and I'm going to take a minute to do this because Gary told me I could, but I'll be quick – we are in the process of doing our Shoreline Master Program update. We just recently got our grant signed with the Department of Ecology so we will be coming before you regularly, often looking for your input, giving you updates. I don't want to wait until the end and say, Oh, look; here, adopt this. I think we'll do it – hopefully, if it's okay with you – similarly to the way we did the critical areas ordinance with the study sessions and workshops and have speakers and let you ask questions and kind of – it's a real detailed process and there's a lot of rules that we have to follow, and we're only allowed so much wiggle room in there. But we want to make sure that we're on the same page and we get your feedback along the way as we go. And as we have community meetings set up and things we'll sure let you know, and if you guys want to come I think you'd be more than welcome to be a part of that process, too. So, thank you. I know my two minutes are up.

Chairman Easton: Thank you, Betsy.

Mr. Christensen: Okay, it's now Building. Tim DeVries, who is also our Building Official, as well as our Floodplain Manager – new title, same pay. But with that, I'll let Tim tell you a little bit about himself and his team.

Tim DeVries: Thank you, Gary. Good evening, Commissioners. As Gary said, my name's Tim DeVries with Planning. I'm the Building Official and Floodplain Manager.

As Building Official, I supervise the front counter group – Lori Anderson, Georgine Rosson and Cindy Gauthier – who are responsible for the intake and issuance of permits. And so I supervise these activities. I supervise the development review group, which has skinned from three people down to one, Robin Tempest. And they review for zoning, access, address. They make sure that everybody who needs to review a file is notified and that before we issue it that everybody has given their approvals.

I supervise the Building division, which is Bob VanderLinden and Brad Wold, who are Building Inspectors, and Steve Kramer and Al Jongsma, who are Building Plans Examiners. So I administrate the building codes including the mechanical, plumbing and energy codes through that.

As the Floodplain Manager, I administer the Flood Damage Prevention ordinance for construction and other developments in the floodplain. I act as a point of contact between various agencies and groups operating within Skagit County that have – may have floodplain activities in development, just as a central source so that we can try and make sure that one hand always knows what the other is doing. I'm the point of contact for our new flood maps – contact and information for the new flood maps that everyone has heard so much about lately. I am working with others on compliance with the National Marine Fisheries Service Biological Opinion to protect salmon and salmon habitat in the Skagit floodplain, and there will be changes to codes that will be coming before you this year in that regard.

I am the CRS Coordinator. The CRS is the FEMA program called Community Rating System that rates how well you manage your floodplain on a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being the best. Skagit County currently has a rating of 4, meaning that it's in the top six flood communities in the United States. And as a result of that, the residents of Skagit County receive a 30% reduction in their flood insurance rates, based on how well we manage floodplain. So that's an ongoing type of activity.

And there's a new program, a grant, a hazard mitigation grant that has recently been transferred to our department from Public Works as a buyout of some flood damaged properties, and so I'm administering that.

Chairman Easton: All right. Thank you, Tim.

Mr. Christensen: Okay, so that is the Department's management team, with one exception. Patti Chambers was not able to join us this evening. She's one that probably all of you are familiar with or have spoke with on the phone, because she's the one that really keeps everything together, makes sure packets get out to you, works with staff and makes sure that we're all coordinated, as her name would imply, or her position.

I do want to introduce Carly Ruacho, who is a Senior Planner who appears before you quite often. You will note that in our list of accomplishments in our work program for last year and this year that Carly's name appears numerous times as the Project Manager. And she does a lot. We're leaner, we're smaller, we have fewer resources, but we still try to get the job done, and really Carly has stepped up and helped us do that. So, with that, Carly, if you'd like to say a few things?

Carly Ruacho: Good evening, everyone. Since I'm the only non-Team Leader, I guess that makes me the follower here today. So just to add on a little bit to what Kirk said – he kind of went through what our team does. And Kirk's half of the team is the Envision, which is probably more than half – quite an extensive project that he's got going there and so that consumes a lot of his time.

So, as he mentioned, when we're not doing code changes that relate to zoning, land divisions in general, planning, when it's something that's one of the specific disciplines that came before you already – say critical areas or floodplain – you'll be seeing those individual folks, but if it's anything else then you'll be seeing me. The Capital Facilities Plans that most of you will so fondly remember over the last year when we did two of them – hopefully we can limit that to one a year from here on out.

We work a lot on code and Comp Plan implementation in the Department, so we work closely with the Current Planning team on how you actually apply these codes and Comp Plan policies that we work so hard to develop.

We work on UGA planning, so some of those map amendments that Kirk talked about that come forward during the years can be the Cities' comprehensive UGA plans for the seven-year periods that they can plan for.

We are before you on most of the legislative projects. Again, other than the specific disciplines that'll come before you, the exciting one that we'll be dealing with together this year will be the pipeline safety project. That'll be coming up on Gary's work plan, so I won't spoil too much of that.

We provide Department assistance, as Kirk said, for a lot of the functional plans. Some examples of those are the Parks Comprehensive Plan that is required by statute; the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan; and then we're also heavily involved in the NPDES permitting requirements. Public Works administers that but it has a strong code component and so that's my involvement there.

We also act as the GIS and Mapping liaison for the Department, again as it relates to general planning issues, so the Comprehensive Plan maps that our folks use to review permits daily or the iMap system that the public uses. If there's issues with land use, we work with Mapping to resolve those.

We also handle Boundary Review Board annexation requests that come forward. Our division reviews those – special purpose district plan review, mostly water plans. So all the water plans that need updating need a land use consistency review. Our division does that review.

We staff the Planning Commission and that's why we are just so lucky to see you guys so often and you hear from us so much. And we also staff the Ag Advisory Board and provide liaison services to them.

And then, like the other folks, we spend a lot of our time on customer service. And our customer service, unlike Bill and Brandon, which they handle those permitting questions, we get all the rest. So when it doesn't have to do with someone's individual permit and they just have general land use questions – Can I rezone my property? That's one we get a lot. How to get certain policies or development regulations enacted – those are the folks that we talk to a lot.

So I look forward to working with you over the next year.

Chairman Easton: Commissioner Ehlers has a question.

Carol Ehlers: Water plans. I thought the Department of Health was obligated to deal with water plans. Those are done every six years for each one of the water systems. And Lorna is the one who has the technical knowledge. What do you do in this regard?

Ms. Ruacho: We do what is required by the State Board of Health, which is called a Land Use Consistency Review. So Lorna reviews it more along the health line as far as the water quality and those types of things, those standards that those water systems need to meet. And what they need from us is a letter of approval that says that their plan, what they plan to serve and how they plan to serve them, their number of connections would be consistent with the land use and the zoning for that area and their future proposal. I think so that a water system won't anticipate certain growth that might not be coming, so that there's that communication. I think that's why the State Board of Health requires that we have some communication with those systems so that they don't expect to, you know, be able to serve several more connections than they really are going to be able to due to zoning, so that they can plan accordingly and there isn't a miscommunication there regarding land use and future development.

Ms. Ehlers: So if a water system has a plan they have to turn in this year, as mine does, to whom do they turn it in first?

Ms. Ruacho: I don't know if it matters who it goes to first, but they'd go to the Department of Health and we work closely with Jennifer Kropack who's going to be reviewing it for the State Department of Health, and then I'll work closely with

Lorna, who's going to review it for our Health Department, and then it also needs to come to the Planning Department to get that land use review.

Chairman Easton: Okay.

Ms. Ruacho: And that'll be me.

Chairman Easton: Thank you, Carly.

Ms. Ruacho: You're welcome.

Ms. Ehlers: It would be useful for board members of any water system that has to do that kind of plan if they understood that this is what's going to be required before they get deep into it.

Mr. Christensen: Thanks, Carly. So that's who we are and what we do. I think before we work our way around through the Planning Commission and then to the Board of County Commissioners I want to acknowledge and welcome our new Planning Commission member, Josh Axthelm, whom Commissioner Dahlstedt and I met with late last year and we're pleased that he was ready and willing to serve, but maybe doesn't quite know what he's getting into.

(laughter)

Chairman Easton: None of us did.

Mr. Christensen: Yeah. But, with that, I'll just –

Chairman Easton: Welcome, Josh.

Mr. Christensen: Would you like to introduce yourself?

Elinor Nakis: My name's Elinor Nakis and I'm from Sedro-Woolley and I'm in District 3.

Matt Mahaffie: Matt Mahaffie, also from Sedro-Woolley.

Ms. Ehlers: Carol Ehlers from West Fidalgo Island. That's District 1.

Annie Lohman: Annie Lohman, Bow, District 1.

Dave Hughes: Dave Hughes, District 2.

Chair Easton: Jason Easton, District 1.

Mary McGoffin: Mary McGoffin, District 3.

Josh Axthelm: Josh Axthelm, District 2.

Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn: Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn, District 2.

Chairman Easton: At this time I want to turn it over to the Commissioners for their comments and start the conversation between us. This is an annual meeting that we have jointly. We've invited them to join us. We'll start with – past-Chair Hughes suggested I set a limit for how long you can speak.

Commissioner Wesen: There's no problem there.

Chairman Easton: But I'm going to go ahead and give you as much time as you'd like. Commissioner Wesen, do you want to start?

Commissioner Wesen: Sure. Just first I'd like to thank all you for serving on the Commission. I know it takes an awful lot of time and there's a lot of material that you have to go through to understand before you come to your meetings on a monthly basis and I do appreciate that. I know that I've been here many times at six o'clock when you guys are coming in and hopefully we'll keep the doors open so you don't have to knock on the door and get phone calls to come out and open the door. I do appreciate all that. There's a lot of things we're doing here in the County and a lot of the things that all our staff is doing. We have mandates from the state and federal mandates that we have to do and so we must follow those things, and that's a lot of material to come up before you. But we also have our funding sources in the County: We have had our Planning Department working on a basically self-sustaining and so they need to make sure they have enough revenue to cover their costs. And so that's one of the reasons they've been reduced in staff the last two years. I think about a third?

Mr. Christensen: Yes.

Commissioner Wesen: And so that is a dramatic change in the way they've had to operate and how well they've been able to handle it over the last couple years. I know it's a lot more work. Things have changed in what they've been – maybe when they first took the job. And now this is our reality. We just have to deal with the amount of money we have coming in. And I do appreciate the staff for all the time they do put in on the issues. The Commissioners get some of the things that happen, but usually just a very small percentage of all of the things that are dealt with through your department on a daily basis. We just hear the anomalies and we do appreciate how well you all have been working, and hopefully this next year we'll turn around a little bit and we'll be doing a little better.

But, once again, thank you for the Planning staff and thank you for the Commissioners for being here tonight, and we do appreciate it. And our doors are always open, phone calls. Anything you want, just let us know. Thank you.

Commissioner Dahlstedt: First of all I would like to thank all of you for serving. It is something that's really important to all of our citizens because as I look around the room, I always remember who I work for. I work for you, as well as everyone else, and I think that's always the challenge for us, is expectations over the last few years of what people thought the country, the economy, the potential development – a lot of things have substantively changed. And so plans that you've worked hard and diligently on for the last ten years in many cases we're having to re-look at what is the future going to be. What are we going to build? What are we going to need to build? How many people are going to be here?

Drainage is always an issue. Our ag community – their viability of being able to stay alive financially. And Commissioner Wesen, Commissioner Dillon and I just – we ran over to the Burlington Library for a few minutes – it was their 100th birthday – and on our way back we noticed how many empty storefronts there are and malls that haven't been redeveloped. So I think there's an awful lot of challenges as we work and move forward, and there's also people that believe that there should be no more growth. They'd like to close the door and not let anyone else come here. And we a while back attended a presentation by a professor from, I believe, the University of Nevada, I believe.

Mr. Christensen: Out of Las Vegas with Dr. Lang?

Commissioner Dahlstedt: Yeah, and basically from Portland, Oregon, to Vancouver, British Columbia, because of our transportation, our location, our amenities, and a lot of wonderful things that we all enjoy we're going to have substantive growth. I think they believe that, you know, we'll go up to as maybe double the population in the entire corridor. And so with your help we're going to plan carefully so that we can protect the ag community and the viability of the timber industry, and still be able to enjoy the amenities we have but accommodate the population growth that's going to come here.

So it's a team effort and I really appreciate – you know, to be honest with you, in the time that I've been here I have not had one complaint that I recall about the Planning Commission, about people having opportunities to come and testify and be heard and be involved in the process. And I think that speaks very highly of you. Some of you have been here for longer than I've been here!

But, anyway, again I want to say thank you and, as Ron said, we want to always be available when you've got concerns and things that you're interested in, or if you need us to come here and have a meeting with you we've done that in the past when there's been issues that have gotten a little bit complicated. So thank you.

Commissioner Dillon: Thanks, thanks. I want to thank you, too. I know when I came into office four years ago it was a completely different Commission than is up there now, and I'm glad to see that when a position comes open that there are people volunteering to serve on these boards because they're hugely important to what – we listen; we need your input on what's going on and I'm hoping that you have your thumb on the pulse of Skagit County so that you could let us know what people are thinking out there and from a different perspective.

I know that this coming year is going to be huge with my pet project, I think, is Envision Skagit. I love the project. I think the vision for somebody – you know, there are people that go, Oh, fifty years. We can't plan for fifty years. But, you know, if we don't start thinking ahead, fifty years will be here and we'll go, We missed our opportunity. So I'm hoping and my plan is to get you all involved in what we're doing in that, and hopefully you'll embrace it and move forward and give us your input on what you think some of the ideas and some of the vision is for Skagit County.

And I know that Betsy and her shorelines is something that's hugely important as you look at how many miles of shoreline Skagit County has. How do we make sure we protect those shorelines and protect our water? So I thank you for your being able to volunteer to do this job. It's not easy. It's a lot – as has been said – a lot of reading, a lot of caring. And I think that's what's important up there, is each one of you would not be here unless you did care about Skagit County. So thank you very much.

Chairman Easton: Thank you, Commissioners.

Commissioner Wesen: One other comment – just I do want to thank you for all the work you do. It makes our decisions easier when we have a unanimous decision coming to the Commissioners, and so we do appreciate you guys going through and taking the time –

Chairman Easton: It's only easier when they're unanimous?

(laughter)

Commissioner Wesen: I do go back and watch most of the presentations you give and so I do appreciate that. Thank you very much.

Ms. Nakis: Nice pitch for you ____.

Chairman Easton: Yeah, I think it is. So at this time I'd like to – if there's anyone on the Planning Commission who'd like to make a comment to the Commissioners, and then we're going to let them leave before the rest of the meeting goes. So if you have anything you'd like to add. Commissioner Ehlers?

Ms. Ehlers: I'll have some comments when we get to the Envision Skagit and I understand you won't be here at that time, so I wish that you would listen to that section of the program.

Commissioner Dillon: Okay.

Chairman Easton: Okay.

Commissioner Dillon: I'd be glad to.

Chairman Easton: And I just want to say as Chair and a member now who's been on through some transitions – I mean, when I came on there were six different members that are here now – this has probably been the most peaceful and productive year that I've seen our Planning Commission have in our relationship with you all. And so I want to commend staff but I particularly – we worked through some difficult issues when we re-did our bylaws a year ago – a year-and-a-half ago now – and I think we have the sense that we're being heard. Our Commission, as we work through our findings and the way that we're set up now being televised, which we appreciate. We know that's an investment on your part but I think it's been great for the community. We hear – I mean, I know I hear from other people in the community how important it is for them to be able to see these hearings and hear them.

But there's just been some improvement – you know, I mean that's no slight to where we were in the past – but I think there's been some improvement in the way in which we're working both hand and glove with each other. And so as someone who's, you know, been here for a little while – not quite as, compared to some of my friends here – I'm excited about that and I look forward to another productive year. I think the Commission has some important work to do in the next year and in relationship to understanding what "community planning" really means. You've done a great job of appointing a diverse group *and* you chose people who get along well, which isn't always the case in these types of situations. So you're to be commended so thank you for that. Yeah, Commissioner Dillon?

Commissioner Dillon: You know – now I lost my train of thought! As we move forward into this thing – oh, yeah. Having it televised was huge for me because I can go back. And you know you can read the transcript and you hear the words or you visualize the words, but if you can go in and actually listen to what the person has said, the inflects or the way they've said it makes a little bit of difference. And I really appreciate your allowing us to be able to record these, because I know some of you in the past have not wanted to be recorded. But it's – I think it's a tool that we can use for us to go back and see how the debate has went, you know, and how you've come up with the decisions you've come up with. So I thank you for that.

Chairman Easton: You bet. Commissioner?

Ms. Lohman: This is probably a group question. I've been following the Ruckelshaus and been an active member of the ag community as we worked our way through our critical area ordinance, particularly addressing agriculture use, land use. That is kind of reaching its push to the finish line now and I believe in the next couple weeks there'll be a bill. What is Skagit County doing so that we are ready for that bill, whatever it might – I think we're up to draft seven or eight or nine. I've lost track. But have we been working in the background on those trailing compliance issues? And are we – I don't – I forgot to bring my work plan so I didn't look for that specifically, but I'm concerned because we have a lot invested in that.

Commissioner Dillon: Gary _____.

Mr. Christensen: Yeah, let me start and others can certainly weigh in, as well. It is an important process, the Ruckelshaus. It's the so-called "time-out." We're not able to make amendments to our critical areas ordinance in dealing with an issue that's important to all of us, and that's the ag-fish buffer. As you know, we've been debating and discussing and arm wrestling over that for probably a decade and spent millions of dollars, and so we're hopeful that there will be some consensus and some resolution about how we can best move forward.

The County does have active participation in I'm going to call it the Ruckelshaus Committee. There's probably another name for it, but we do have a staff member – legal counsel – who has been attending and advising the Department and the Commissioners about progress and progress that hasn't been made. We also work closely with our state affiliate, the Washington State Association of Counties. And, of course, you know, this is just not a Skagit County issue. It's close and dear to us but there are other jurisdictions and counties that are affected and waiting to see what this outcome might be. So we are communicating with state associations and really collaborating with a number of parties to make sure that our interests and their interests are best served.

Chairman Easton: Great. Anything you want to add? Okay.

Commissioner Dahlstedt: Well, I think the challenge will be for us as it always has been: They will bring recommendations forward and there may be those who support that and there may be those that don't. And it doesn't take away those that don't like it from taking litigation and efforts that have gone on and confounded us for many years. So, I mean, so some of it is our hope is it will be successful, that it will be a good partnership, and the parties will come together. That's what we're hoping for, but we'll have to be prepared for whatever steps might be necessary if that's not the case. And it's a – I think we're kind of in a wait and see, you know. This process has been way longer than it was ever

anticipated and part of that is because there's a lot of folks that aren't in total agreement with what the recommendations may come out. So we're hopeful, we're ready, we'll deal with whatever steps we have to take.

Commissioner Wesen: Last week Commissioner Dahlstedt and Commissioner Dillon were down in Olympia. They were down Wednesday and Thursday. And Commissioner Dahlstedt is on the executive committee for WSAC and Commissioner Dillon's on the legislative steering committee down there, so we have two of our Commissioners who are very involved with our WSAC – which is Washington Association of Counties – and so they are down there, they do meet with our local representatives. And part of the issue is there was this time-out. Does the County spend money and time and staff time to figure out, Well, we don't know what the end target's going to be so we haven't done a lot of work trying to figure out what the end game is going to be. It depends on whatever gets passed down in Olympia on how we react to it. So that's one of the things that's been going on.

Chairman Easton: Okay.

Commissioner Dillon: And, Annie, I need to know, you know, if there's something that's really glaring when you get however many versions we're at, you need to let me know. Because we have made it very clear down there that we believe in WSAC in being united and together and we go to the legislature together and do our thing. But we've also made it clear that if there's something that Skagit County just can't live with we will deviate from that and we will do our own fighting, if you want to say, to get things changed and to get things the way that we think they need to be.

Chairman Easton: Mary has a question.

Ms. McGoffin: We spent a lot of time on the Capital Facility Plan, and I think it was a good one. I realize that our job is to just recommend things to you, so I'm a little concerned that there's a lot of leeway for the Commissioners to still buy and sell property, build things. You know, it's ultimately up to you.

Commissioner Dillon: We can't have that!

Ms. McGoffin: And I know that probably before any of you served that some projects may have happened that way. So it's in your court, but I just encourage you to follow that Facility Plan carefully so we don't have to worry about it.

Commissioner Dillon: I'll try.

Ms. McGoffin: Okay.

Commissioner Wesen: I've been here since January of '09. I do not believe we've bought any property since I've been here! The budget keeps going down and going down. We aren't spending money we do not have. The Plan is there for people to look at and understand what our plan is going to be. But just because it's in the Plan doesn't mean we have the dollars to make it happen. So thank you for all the work you've done on it. It's another one of those mandated the things we must do, but if you don't have the money you aren't going to spend it.

Chairman Easton: Sure.

Commissioner Dillon: Well, and we get to review it every year so – huh, Carly!

Chairman Easton: Commissioner Dahlstedt?

Commissioner Dahlstedt: One other thing, I think that is a little bit of a concern and is a little bit out of our control is the potential of a nine-county ferry district. On behalf of Commissioner Dillon and Commissioner Wesen I went down and met with the Governor and seven other counties' representatives to hear the Governor's proposal about this ferry district. And so one of the things that I pointed out to them is we already have a ferry of our own that's currently 600,000 behind in recovering the fees to make that process work, and that in the event that they were to consider a ferry district we would – I told them that I doubted that my fellow Commissioners and I would want to go to our taxpayers and ask them to pay not only for our ferry but also for everybody else's ferries, and that if they were going to look at that that they should look at the counties with ferries and maybe if you're going to have an overall regional coordinated ferry organization that they're going to have to look at those county ferries, as well. And so that's something that, again, is totally out of our control.

There're so many things happening now that we just have to – you know, we try to plan ahead and I think that Capital Facilities Plan is a good one, but, as you know, a lot of things are happening we have no – well, Commissioner Dillon and I met with our legislator Kirk Pearson and he talked about the Northern State property. And he said that they're – the state's considering selling the property or potentially maybe even looking at giving it to Skagit County to deal with. So, you know, there's a lot of things that we're not necessarily out trying to look or create, but these things happen and we'll have to respond.

But, again, I think we have a great working relationship with you and we want to keep you in the loop, and we want to keep the community in the loop. So I don't know where this ferry thing's going to go, and the three of us have to sit down and really scratch our heads on what we're going to do with our own system to make it, you know, affordable for the people that live on the island but acceptable to the people in the county that pay the difference. And so it's a huge challenge.

Chairman Easton: Okay, well, at this time we're going to –

Ms. Ehlers: Excuse me?

Chairman Easton: Oh.

Ms. Ehlers: While we're talking about plans, the Six-Year TIP, the road transportation plan, is state-mandated and it has a principle in it that I think is sound, which is if you're going to do something with a road you have to put it on the Six-Year TIP. That authorizes you to consider using local and state or other monies to do the thinking about that problem and developing it until you decide what is the most prudent thing to do and do you have the money to do it.

So something can be on the Six-Year TIP road transportation plan for years because frequently a problem is complex enough that the solution to it isn't obvious and it requires a good deal of negotiation, as well as the financial.

If it were clear that that is the same process for the capital facilities fund, and the same process for a drainage plan that was separate from the CAP so that people could actually talk about the drainage plan – which wasn't done this year – and if it were done later with the flood alternatives, all following the same principle that these are things which are on the docket to be considered if we have the money, if real science indicates that's the good thing to do, then the public would have confidence that there was a process, and you would be better off because then if suddenly some money came up for something, if it had been on those plans you'd have the legitimate reason to spend it. I'm thinking particularly of things that came up the way the Guemes Ferry project did for the stimulus monies. And that would create – because all four would be on the same pattern, then the public would have a much better chance of understanding the process.

Chairman Easton: All right. Well, at this time we're going to adjourn for one minutes to allow for some preparation for our next part of the meeting. So we'll stand in recess for one minute (gavel).

(recess)

Chairman Easton: I call the Skagit County Planning Commission back (gavel) into order. At this time we're going to go over the accomplishments for 2010 and I'll turn it over to Director Christensen.

Mr. Christensen: Yes, hello again. And you should have in your packet a memorandum from me to the Board of County Commissioners, dated January 12th of this year, which alludes to 2010 accomplishments and achievements. And so as we have in years past, we like to at the beginning of the following year take a little bit of time reflecting on what it is that we've accomplished, what our successes and celebrations are.

The list is long, and rather than spending a lot of time on any one of them, just to simply get through these in a feasible allotted time, I won't spend a lot of time on each of them but just want to touch on some of the highlights.

So, again, most of these programs and projects were accomplished or achieved last year in 2010. They're not listed in any order of importance; they simply are just going to appear to you somewhat randomly, so don't expect the first one to be any more important than the last one.

As you know, there are many, many participants who make this all happen. There are groups, there are associations, certainly starting with the County Commissioners and the Planning Commission, as well as Planning and Development Services, other County departments. There are a number of various committees and boards: the Agricultural Advisory Board, the Forest Advisory Board. There's also agencies with jurisdiction, and simply interested parties, non-profit groups, different organizations. And last but not least, really the public who will come and testify and let you know about the programs and policies and projects that we're involved with.

This presentation is going to really focus on three different areas of 2010 accomplishments and achievements, one of which is Development Review, which you heard earlier includes Current Planning, Natural Resource, Building and Code Enforcement and Compliance. The second area then will be Projects. Those are plans, policies and codes – typically legislative actions. And then Administration: boards, committees and commissions; standard operating procedures; and public assistance – so things that we just do in kind of day-to-day operations, kind of some of our standard operating procedures.

So first area again: Development Review. So under Current Planning projects this last year, we had 257 applications. Those are plats; land divisions; cluster developments or "CaRDs," as we call them; special uses; variances; et cetera, which we reviewed and approved. Some of the notable projects are the Skagit Transfer Station Upgrade; the Anacortes Water Treatment Plant; and progress toward the Welts land division and landfill remediation.

Under Natural Resource, there were 265 applications reviewed. Of those, 209 have been finalized. Those deal with critical areas; shorelines; forest practice; mining; et cetera. Some of those notable projects for the last year were the Fisher Slough restoration; the Skagit Environmental Bank; and repair of the last failing septic system at Similk Beach, which now has enabled us to reopen Similk Beach for shellfish harvesting.

Under the Building area, there were 415 applications for things such as residential, commercial, industrial, remodels, mechanical, plumbing, et cetera. They were reviewed and approved. Some of the notable projects this past year

were Marsulex, which is a refinery by-product in which solid sulfur pellets are created for fertilizer. That's up in the Bay View industrial area; Fire District #2, which built a new station on Memorial Highway; the Alf Christensen Seed Company, which relocated from downtown Mount Vernon and built a 12,000 square foot office addition in the old Transform factory near the Port; and the Skagit County Public Works Transfer Station.

Under code enforcement, we opened 142 cases last year. Of those, 100 cases were resolved, so the 42 remaining are requiring more research and further legal review and action and consultation.

That now takes us to Projects. One of the kind of long-standing projects that we've been involved with is the Bayview Ridge Subarea Plan. We are now proceeding with the drafting of a Planned Unit Development code. That has been drafted. It's not yet ready for public review. We're still working with partners on finalizing that and polishing it up before we can release that for public review.

The Guemes Island Subarea Plan. This is one that you remember came before you. It was recommended by GIPAC, or the Guemes Island Planning Advisory Committee. They then drafted this Subarea Plan. The Subarea Plan addresses rural character, groundwater protection, land capacity, transportation and ferry service, and also included a 220-acre rezone from Rural Intermediate to Rural Reserve. It was adopted – I was going to say earlier this month, but we are the first of February so it was just a week or two adopted by the Board of County Commissioners.

Master Planned Resorts/Recreational Vehicle Park Code Standards. Again, this was a matter which came before you. There were drafted development code standards for Master Planned Resorts, or what we call "MPRs," and recreational vehicle parks, or RVs. The Master Planned Resorts standards addressed, amongst several things, the siting of significant natural amenities, what short-term visitor ratios are, the total unit size limits, land compatibility, and clearer project submittal requirements.

RV standards address the definitions for "developed" and "destination" campgrounds, and "pre-existing" campgrounds in Rural Reserve zoning districts.

Skagit County Capital Facility Plans. There was – we had some earlier comments and discussion on that. We did it twice last year, which is not typical. But we did update for service provider plans for the 2010-2015 CFP period. That was primarily County facilities. And then later in the year we included other service providers and updated the CFP to reflect the next six-year plan from 2011 to 2016. That also coincided with the Skagit County budget for this year.

Annual Skagit County Code Amendments: Initiated and drafted revisions, amendments and new development regulations and standards for Skagit County. Substantial work has been completed. The purpose of annual code amendments are to clarify the intent and to assure consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. That work program has carried over into this year. We will be meeting with various organizations this month prior to our releasing that I think in – is it March? We'll release and have a public hearing with you this spring. So that's something to look forward to.

The tenth accomplishment and achievement for last year is the update of the County Zoning Use Matrix. It provides a snapshot or at-a-glance view of land uses, zoning districts and land use permit approval requirements. Any of us who were to look at Skagit County Code would know it's a three-ring binder with hundreds of pages of codes and regulations. We now have for quick reference developed a matrix of the various zoning districts and all the uses, and you can determine then if it is a permitted use or a precluded use or whether it is allowed by a special use type of permit. So it's very handy for the public and the front counter in trying to ascertain what kind of land use activities might be allowed in what zones.

Ms. Ehlers: Where is it?

Mr. Christensen: It is – do we have it online, Carly? No.

Ms. Ruacho: The format – because there're so many zones – there're so many zones, there're so many uses the only way to fit it on a piece of paper is to print it on 11 by 17, and to put that online a person would have to scroll so far across the page it doesn't really make it user-friendly. We worked with our IS Department to try to figure out a way to get it in a digital format that would be usable by locking parts of it. We've tried different things, but so far it's just kind of a monster to be able to view it online. We do have it available in paper copy, as Gary said, (at) our front counter, and those folks who – it's kind of the reverse of the zoning code. The way the zoning code works is you look at a zone and it tells you what's allowed. So if you own a piece of property and it's a given zoning designation, you want to see what you can do with your property.

But the reverse is often true. Somebody has a use that they would like to undertake and they would like to see quickly, What zoning districts do I need to be looking for property in? And the zoning code didn't really allow for that type of quick review. You'd have to read every single zoning district to figure out if it was allowed. And, as Gary said, just our zoning chapter alone is over a hundred pages. So this gives kind of the flip side where you can look at a use and find out what zones it's allowed in. So it's really a nifty tool. It takes an absolute ton of time to update and keep current, so it's not part of the code because we don't want it codified. We just want it as a reference tool. But right now it's just

available in paper format, but if anybody's interested in it just let me know and I can send you a copy.

Chairman Easton: Thank you, Carly.

Mr. Christensen: Moving along: The U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency – or FEMA – the Flood Insurance Rate Map – FIRM – and regulations. So we conducted initial review last year. There were community meetings held throughout the county. We also worked on trying to disseminate that information – the floodplain/floodway maps – and we did so on Skagit County website via iMap. So if any of you have looked at the paper copies that there are would simply, if you unrolled them, cover this entire table and there are many, many of the pages to look at, so you can actually now online at home, at your job or traveling – if you so desire – you can call up the maps and take a look.

U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency – FEMA – and National Marine Fisheries Service – NMFS – Biological Opinion, or what we call the “BiOp” for short, because that's a long, twisted name. This is a regulatory scheme that requires Skagit County and other jurisdictions and cities within to protect certain Puget Sound species of salmon and Orca. We were initially required to have something done by September, October of last year, and because of the complexities and the fact that information didn't come out early enough for local governments to utilize it, the federal government granted a one-year extension. So we are going to be utilizing that time wisely so we can meet the new deadline.

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System – NPDES – Phase II permit. We worked with Public Works to draft and adopt amendments to Skagit County Code that address stormwater systems and runoff from new development, redevelopment and construction sites in census-defined urban areas in unincorporated Skagit County. Cities have to do this within their own jurisdictions, as well. So in those urbanized areas, which are areas beyond cities and towns, NPDES requirements pertain.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – EPA – Envision Skagit 2060. You'll hear more about this project from Kirk later on tonight's agenda. Formerly referred to as “Alternative Futures,” to date we've received about \$1.5 million in grant money. The project is to develop and evaluate alternative development scenarios for fifty years, so Skagit Valley out through 2060. We have worked with a technical advisory committee. Recently there was a citizens committee appointed who is now working extensively on getting up to speed and looking at various alternatives, and we are continuing to work with our County-City elected officials.

You heard earlier about one of our public outreach opportunities in which at the Lincoln Theater there was a presentation on “The Cascade Corridor: How Regional Growth Will Shape Skagit County and Northern Puget Sound.” We are

scheduling some additional Lincoln Theater presentations in the coming months, and you'll probably hear a bit more about that from Kirk.

The Washington State Department of Ecology – DOE – Skagit County's Shorelines Master Program Update. You heard Betsy talk a little bit about that. We've secured a grant for about \$740,000 and developed a Scope of Work. Work is underway. The SMP must be consistent with state guidelines and the update will address new development and use along the shoreline areas, along our rivers and larger streams, lakes over 20 acres, and our marine waters. We're also going to be working with Lyman and Hamilton – is that right, Bets? Yeah. So they're going to kind of piggyback and work with us so that they can get their SMP done for those jurisdictions as well.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – EPA – Clean Samish Initiative. We have worked with a number of agencies, departments and organizations to address water quality issues in the Samish River Watershed. This is a multi-year project trying to get that watershed healthy again so that our shellfish operations can continue to prosper and be open for business, and to try to reduce the closures we have, and simply address water quality issues.

Washington State Department of Ecology – DOE – Samish River Watershed Direct Implementation Fund. We had received about \$33,000. This enabled us to coordinate a public outreach, education and code enforcement compliance efforts in the Samish River Watershed. And this is kind of a – coincides with the previous program that I just addressed, but this was a state grant or fund.

Last year we applied for and late last year we received notification that the U.S. Department of Transportation, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration Pipeline Safety Standards grant – I have to take a deep breath to say that one. We secured about a \$50,000 grant to develop code language and regulations pertaining to transmission pipeline safety. There's four major transmission lines in Skagit County. All of us can probably remember a couple of years ago the travesty up in Whatcom County in which there was a pipeline rupture and lives were lost. So this is an opportunity to do some education and to develop some standards and regulations and guidelines which may help prevent those types of things from occurring in the future.

Last year we received the Washington State Governor's 2010 Smart Communities Award for the Skagit Countywide UGA Open Space Plan. This is something that the Planning Commission had worked on. Skagit County's Countywide UGA or Urban Growth Areas Open Space Plan identifies and prioritizes open space corridors and greenbelts within and between UGAs in Skagit County, including lands useful for recreation, wildlife habitat, trails and critical area connections.

Chairman Easton: Gary?

Mr. Christensen: Yes?

Chairman Easton: Wasn't that – that plan after it left us, didn't it have to go back to SCOG and all the members of SCOG? Has it been approved?

Mr. Christensen: It wasn't probably voted on per se, but certainly they were all recognized for their joint effort in moving that plan forward, yes. They all now will, through their own implementation plan – so through their own city comprehensive plans and development regulations – use the Open Space – because the Open Space Plan is not regulatory. It's conceptual in nature and it really only has recommendations for each jurisdiction then to implement at the local level.

Chairman Easton: Okay. Thanks.

Ms. Ehlers: Gary?

Mr. Christensen: Yes?

Ms. Ehlers: I listened to the people on the flood committee talk about a number of the things which that plan included but they didn't know it included, because it didn't occur to them to look at a UGA Open Space Plan for lands east of Burlington, let's say, in the river – in the river in the floodplain. I got a paper copy of that so I could wave it more effectively and insist that people look at it. But there's one map that seems to be missing that we had that I think needs to be available. And that was the map that correlated all of the various components – the trust lands and the fish protection areas and the open space, the open space zoning where people have open space because they have ag land or forest land or wetlands – that composite map, which was so persuasive as to how much had been done in protecting the Skagit River in the environmental issue. I don't find it.

Mr. Christensen: Okay. Why don't you and I after this meeting or before the next meeting have a conversation and we can talk about that?

Ms. Ehlers: Because I think it's a very practical, money-saving device –

Mr. Christensen: Yeah.

Ms. Ehlers: – and temperature-reducing device.

Mr. Christensen: Okay. It's a good point. Okay, now we're going to move to our last subject, Administration. And the Department representation – well, the Department is involved and participates with a number of boards, committees and commissions: the Forest Advisory Board, the Agriculture Advisory Board, the

Conservation Futures Advisory Committee, the Clean Samish Initiative Committee, the Water Resource Advisory Committee, the Swinomish Climate Change Initiative Committee and, of course, you, the Skagit County Planning Commission. And I probably have omitted some. There are probably some others. But this simply illustrates that the Department works with a number of committees, boards, organizations and commissions on various work programs and projects.

The Department created a standard format for Department Administrative Decisions. We redesigned the form in which Administrative Decisions are published, and what this did is it created an official document and provided more clarity. In the past, Administrative Decisions were really not much more than a letter to the applicant on Department letterhead. And because there seemed to be some confusions as to whether it was an official decision or not, we've changed the form. It now follows kind of the same format that the Hearing Examiner uses in his order and decisions.

An Administrative Official Interpretation on the construction of residential dwellings in the Ag-NRL zone was issued. This provided guidance on the requirements and standards for constructing residential dwellings in the Ag-NRL zone. Dwellings must be accessory to agriculture. There can be no farm land conversion. There are siting requirements and we now require that there be a three-year farm income submitted.

FEMA Community Rating System – CRS – three-year audit. You heard Tim briefly discuss this earlier this evening. Skagit County is currently classified as a CRS number 4, community offering lower floodplain insurance rates. Skagit County's Flood Prevention Program is rated among the top six flood communities nationwide. That's very significant and quite an accomplishment. Provided documentation to FEMA to maintain the CRS number 4 rating, and we worked with Geographic Information Services, Emergency Services and Public Works. So we put a lot of work and effort into maintaining that rating because it certainly helps protect private – well, property and life, as well as reducing the cost of flood insurance for all the residents who need to purchase that within the Skagit Valley.

Established Public Disclosure Request – PDR – protocols and procedures. We're starting to receive more and more of these and so we needed to develop a standard operating procedure for public requests for information and records. We've identified a project manager and coordinator. This allows for quicker processing, data entry and more responsiveness.

Ms. Ehlers: And who might that be?

Mr. Christensen: Patti Chambers. Also we did a new look at – in the foyer. If you walk into the foyer or the front lobby of the Department, you'll find our 1966 Comprehensive Plan and on the other side of the wall our 2010 Skagit County

Comprehensive Plan. And, of course, our tag: "Helping you plan and build better communities." It's quite interesting to look at the '66 Plan and look at the 2010 Plan. And you'll note that that was forty-four years ago, and yet we are thinking about a vision for the future which is fifty years. So you compare one with the other, it's very revealing.

(recorded sound of applause)

Chairman Easton: The crowd goes wild.

Mr. Christensen: Yes, standing room only.

So that was a quick run through. I hope not too fast or not too slow. But it's important to be able to reflect on the things that we've accomplished in the past year. And the Planning Commission had a lot to say about what we got done and certainly join us in our successes and celebrations.

Chairman Easton: Thank you, Gary.

Ms. Ehlers: You know, Gary, when you think of how much staff you've been cut and you think of how tedious and detailed a lot of this work is, I think that the Planning Department needs to be complimented and feel good about what they did, because this was a heavy load and you finished some things that have been hanging around for a long time.

Chairman Easton: So let's talk – that's a great segue to talk about how we're going to keep –

Mr. Christensen: What happens next?

Chairman Easton: – keep that up for 2011.

Mr. Christensen: Okay, so we –

Chairman Easton: Give us the quick version, Boss.

Mr. Christensen: So we move from 2010 to 2011. And what I do have is a few kind of opening remarks. Certainly it's – and I've provided you with a memorandum that you're going to hear some of the highlights here, but certainly the viewing public wasn't privy to that memorandum, which went to the Board of County Commissioners earlier this month when I discussed with them the work program for this year.

We appear before the Board of County Commissioners and the Planning Commission periodically. Certainly the list is long, the demands are many, and the resources are tough to come by. So it's very important for us to be able to

prioritize what it is we can do. Back in 2005 when we were doing our Countywide Comprehensive Plan Update, through that process there were fifty-five work program projects that were identified and twenty-four trailing issues. So some of those things have been addressed, some of which have not. But simply said, we can't do it all. And we've got to be able to pick and choose.

The 2010 budget and staffing and out-sources are – that should actually say 2011 – are limited. What usually drives our work program are those types of projects which are called “mandatory” or “discretionary.” “Mandatory” are projects that require action. We have to do it. State law requires it; maybe there's been a lawsuit; maybe a Hearing's Board order; or, simply said, the Board of County Commissioners have said, Get it done.

Those items which are discretionary are things that we'd like to do, and if we had more staff and more resources and more time, the list would be longer and we'd get more done. So we have to be able to consider the work which has to be done and the work that we'd like to do.

Now in past years the business model that the Department has focused on really is to look at but a few projects and to do those well, and to not create or commit resources that helps us get that job done but also avoids what I call “false hope or expectations.” If there's a thought that we're doing all of the fifty-five and all of the twenty-four, at the end of the year – simply said – somebody will be disappointed. So rather than try to promise a lot, we promise a little and we try to do a good job at getting it done.

And it's even more so important with these current economic times and climate, and so it does require that the County be more prudent and use its resources wisely. What we do with the Board of County Commissioners is provide periodic reports on a quarterly basis, so they're going to get three, if not four, reports during the course of the year as to how we're doing on the work program.

So let me talk about those work program projects which we discussed in mid-January with the Board of County Commissioners, the first of which is familiar. It's the Bayview Ridge Urban Growth Area Implementation. So, as you know, we have a Subarea Plan that now is adopted for a 4,000-acre area. We also know that that Subarea Plan anticipates that by the year 2025 – you know, about fifteen years out – that there could be as many as 5,600 residents up there. The population could easily double in size.

We are working with our implementation partners, and, as I indicated earlier, we hope to be able to adopt the Planned Unit Development regulations, Low Impact Development techniques, a design standard manual and a community center conceptual master plan. All of this is to provide options and choices for creating a walkable, livable, sustainable community. That's the goal.

This is the only project that we don't have a project manager now identified. It may very well be that we're going to bring in a third party project manager to assist with this, given the complexities and such. But that's to be decided who that person, company or firm might be. Yes, Annie?

Ms. Lohman: Is this PUD, is this going to be your template for looking into the future? For example, on Kirk's sixty-year look ahead.

Mr. Christensen: Yeah, it certainly will provide some baseline data and information as to how new communities or urban areas might grow which are not affiliated with a city or town. So it could serve as a model, yes. So it would have greater benefit than perhaps just application at one geographical area.

The second legislative work program item is Envision Skagit 2060. Again, this is to develop and evaluate alternative development scenarios for the valley through 2060, and hopefully selecting a preferred alternative that will maintain ecosystem, conservation lands, natural resource industries and a sustainable community. The work continues with the Technical Advisory Committee, the Citizen Committee. We'll be working with the Growth Management Act's Steering Committee, which is the County Commissioners and the Mayors, and then ultimately the Skagit Council of Governments, or SCOG. Project Manager is Kirk Johnson.

The third work program project is the Shoreline Master Program – or SMP – Update. The SMP was first adopted in the 1970s, so forty-some years later we're looking at updating the Shorelines Master Program. That needs to be consistent with recent Department of Ecology guidelines. Local master programs regulate new development and use of shorelines along rivers and larger streams, lakes over 20 acres, and marine waters within their jurisdictions. Project Manager is Betsy Stevenson.

The fourth work program item is the Skagit County Capital Facilities Plan – or CFP. We need to on an annual basis update the six-year CFP inventory and projects. And we will prepare that so that it will be reviewed concurrent with this – with next year's 2012 budget. Project Manager, Carly Ruacho.

Annual Skagit County Code Amendments, the annual amendments to implementing regulations, or Skagit County Code, to clarify their intent and assure consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Project Manager, Carly Ruacho.

The sixth work plan item is Comprehensive Plan Amendments – CPAs – for the 2011 docket. We didn't have a docket last year. We didn't have any petitions that were submitted. Comprehensive Plan amendments include policies, land use designations and modifications to urban growth area boundaries. We don't know if we will have any this year. Those petitions are to be submitted by the

last business day of July. When we receive those, we evaluate those and take them to the Board of County Commissioners in early fall and we decide then to docket or not. So this one is kind of a placeholder.

The FEMA Flood Insurance Rate – or FIRM – Map and Regulations. The federal Emergency Management Agency issued updated FIRM and updated association regulations. We'll need to update those under Skagit County Code 14.34, the Flood Damage Prevention ordinance or code. Project Manager, Tim DeVries.

FEMA and NMFS Biological Opinion. The National Marine Fisheries Service BiOp regarding the National Flood Insurance Program and necessary actions to protect certain Puget Sound species of salmon and Orca. There's been a lot of work done to date in terms of trying to better understand those requirements, look at other jurisdictional approaches. We'll be moving aggressively early in the process to meet, I think, what is a fall compliance deadline.

Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Pipeline Safety Standards. As you will recall earlier, we received a grant from the feds to develop land use regulations/standards pertaining to transmission pipeline safety. Project Manager, Carly Ruacho.

And that's it.

Chairman Easton: Good job.

Mr. Christensen: Did we get caught up?

Chairman Easton: We're back on time.

Mr. Christensen: Are we right back up on time? Good.

Chairman Easton: Almost.

Mr. Christensen: Yes?

Chairman Easton: Commissioner?

Ms. Ehlers: For the record: Older in 2010 you told us you had to do a Comprehensive Plan update in 2012. I understand that's been put off. Could you tell the public what has happened?

Mr. Christensen: Yeah. Last year the legislature – there were a number of bills proposed, one of which passed. I think there was some consolidation, either a House bill or a Senate bill, but they provided extensions for many if not all of the counties planning under the Growth Management Act. Skagit County was required to do its seven-year update in 2012, which would have been next year,

which would have appeared certainly on this year's work program had that still been a deadline, but it's been extended now to 2015. And I understand that there is another bill this year being proposed which may even be providing a longer extension or trying to coordinate and find greater consistency with other statutes and updating requirements. So Shorelines, Growth Management, although this doesn't affect Skagit County but building capacities – not building capacities –

Chairman Easton: Buildable Lands.

Mr. Christensen: Buildable Lands, capacity – those are typically the metro jurisdictions or the larger counties. So you have all of these statutes, all of which have different deadlines and I think this year what they're trying to do is reconcile all of those so that there is some consistency in that. So I wouldn't be surprised if yet we see another change to that 2015 deadline.

Ms. Ehlers: To have things coordinated makes a lot better sense than what has gone on, but do your best to avoid the kind of problem that arrived in 1999 when the public was given a thousand pages to review in a couple of weeks.

Mr. Christensen: Yeah.

Ms. Ehlers: And they couldn't do it, we couldn't do it and it was a mess.

Mr. Christensen: Yeah. Lessons learned – yes. And so we do have another plan to move forward, yes.

Chairman Easton: So practically speaking, the next item for us to deal with going into this – into the next few months – of these nine, which do you anticipate us working on next?

Mr. Christensen: Probably the annual code amendments.

Chairman Easton: Okay.

Mr. Christensen: We may have some workshops with Envision Skagit 2060 with you. I don't think we'll have anything early this year on Bayview Ridge. We may have some workshops with you on Shorelines Master Program. So you may find early this year more kind of work sessions.

Chairman Easton: Okay.

Mr. Christensen: And then probably some hearings more late spring, summer and, of course, as always, into the fall.

Chairman Easton: Okay. Great.

Ms. Ehlers: Could I encourage you to have work sessions on the Shoreline Management Plan because it's – no one here except Dave and I have worked on it since when, since forever. It's complex. It involves issues that require – I found when I was dealing with it – require a certain learning curve because it's not the kind of information that most of us deal with most of the time. So there's –

Chairman Easton: Well, I was encouraged earlier to hear from Betsy that she already had planned to do those, so. For the essence of time – Annie?

Ms. Lohman: Gary, on some of these is there any grants from the state or agencies to assist you? I'm thinking on the Shoreline Master Plan and some of that. So they come with some –

Chairman Easton: We got a big grant –

Mr. Christensen: Yeah, the Shoreline Master Program we have about three-quarters of a million dollars on that. And Alternative Futures we've got two grants. When you add those together, that's about 1.5 million.

Ms. Lohman: But some mandated stuff, like the Shoreline update and the –

Mr. Christensen: The Shoreline would be a mandated one in which we got state assistance.

Chairman Easton: Yes.

Ms. Lohman: Okay.

Ms. Ehlers: What's this "BiOp"?

Mr. Christensen: The Biological Opinion? It's the result of a lawsuit in which it was felt that not enough was being done to protect five species of salmon – well, I don't know; let me say, "species of salmon." I don't know how many – and the Orca whale. Now the Chinook, and which I think that's an endangered species, is a primary food source for Orca. So, and as you know, the Skagit River has all five salmon species in it and we have Orca whales in our bays. So the Biological Opinion now will require that development on the floodplain also has to be – well, let me back up a little bit.

FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, for the most part up until this lawsuit, like a year or two ago, the primary goal in floodplain regulation and management was to protect life and property. Now they are also having to – they have a biological component: salmon and Orca. And there are three, if not four, options that local governments can take. They can adopt a model ordinance, they can require that each project go through its own environmental assessment,

you can look at existing programs and policies and regulations. So there's what we have kind of jokingly referred to as "door number 1, door number 2, door number 3 or door number 4." We have to pick one of those. And then that is submitted to FEMA and they will evaluate whether or not we're in compliance with the Biological Opinion.

Ms. Ehlers: How does that relate with the Ruckelshaus?

Mr. Christensen: They're similar. And what I mean by "similar" is we may very well be able to say that what we do under our critical areas regulations under Growth Management Act are very complementary to those things that we would have to do under the regulatory scheme that we might choose to address the Biological Opinion.

And I just – that's real general. I mean, the Biological Opinion is three or four hundred pages long, I think.

Ms. Ehlers: Has anyone done it?

Mr. Christensen: Mount Vernon has.

Ms. Ehlers: Oh, but I mean any county that actually has ____.

Mr. Christensen: I don't know of any other counties that have, but there are some jurisdictions which were able to meet the deadline last year. But most jurisdictions were very frustrated with the lack of technical advice that the federal agencies were to provide, which was called for, and left us all very little time in which to react and to consider.

Chairman Easton: All right. So at this time we're going to move to the next item on the agenda, Envision Skagit 2060. Senior Planner Kirk Johnson.

Mr. Johnson: Hi.

Chairman Easton: Again.

Mr. Johnson: Again. Let's see. I think Elinor may have picked up some of these but, if not, maybe you could pass these down.

So I think with your meeting announcement, I sent kind of a lengthy homework assignment. I hope that was okay with everybody. But I thought – we thought – it would be nice to get your input into the process, but you're going to have some PowerPoint presentations already. So that's what we want to do tonight.

Let's see. I'm going to put an image of the website up for people who are watching. There's a lot of information on the website. There're some videos of

PowerPoint presentations and other presentations, which are some of the materials that we asked you to look at. So if people don't know anything about the process I'm not really go into that here, but we will take some questions. We want to limit this first section to about fifteen minutes and then we want to reserve about forty-five minutes for asking *you* some questions about *your* vision of the future of Skagit – the Skagit Valley – and what you see as some of the opportunities and the challenges as we look fifty years ahead. So that's what we want to do in the next hour or so. And I'm going to be assisted by Peggy Flynn back there, who is a member of the Citizen Committee, and she'll be facilitating the question and answer part. And then Emma Whitfield is going to be writing on that flip chart and I'm going to be writing on this flip chart recording your comments.

So let's see. And Josh is here, in case you have questions. One of the presentations that you would have seen was about the model – the Envision model. If you have specific questions about that, then Josh Greenberg back there is our GIS analyst guru who is working most in-depth with the model. So he's here to answer those.

We're just in the last week or two moving into a public outreach phase for the project. We've been working for about two years. I know that sounds like a long time to just now be getting to the public outreach, but there was a lot of work early on kind of developing the land use model and the like. Now we are moving out into communities in the county and holding community meetings. The first one that we held was in Edison. I think it was – was that one week ago? – or – okay. And we've got another one coming up in Concrete in early February. So up here is a list of those community meetings, which hopefully is visible. And these are just opportunities for people who live in the general areas where the meetings are being held to come and share their thoughts about the future of the Skagit Valley. And, again, we'll be going through a very similar process here tonight and asking you the same.

We also have some upcoming presentations that I'm pretty excited about. They're – in part – had been planned through the grant all along but also in response to some of the questions, comments and requests from the Citizen Committee looking for – wanting to know about good examples of other communities around the country who are trying to do what we're trying to do, which is look forward fifty years. As Commissioner Dahlstedt said, looking at probably or possibly a doubling of the population and trying to find ways to accommodate that growth while still retaining what's unique and special about the Skagit Valley.

So we have a couple people coming up who, I think, will be able to shed some light and some insight from other areas that are also working on these same challenges.

So the first one is – these don't fit on the screen very well – but “Honey, I Shrunk the Lots.” This is a presentation that was done in Skagit County in 2005 at the Lincoln Theatre. It was very popular. I didn't happen to see it, but my understanding is that it was a full house, kind of like the Robert Lang presentation. And it was a coming together of conservation interests, agriculture, builders and developers looking at how developing residential houses on smaller lots is a way to accommodate population growth, address some of the demographic and economic changes that we're facing in this country, and also preserve some of our natural resource lands and environmental values.

So Bill Kreager, who's an architect who has developed the presentation, is coming back to do that on February 15th at the Lincoln Theatre. We've had a small army of people out taking photos from different Skagit communities of small lot development, and he's going to incorporate some of those into his presentation and talk about kind of some of the principles that they illustrate and how we might see more of this kind of small lot development in the future in Skagit County in a way that it will be well received by the public and people in existing communities, rather than rejected as is sometime the case with higher density housing development. So that's a presentation coming up soon.

I think those were some of the highlights that I wanted to hit in terms of things coming up in the near future, so at this point I guess I'd just ask if you had any questions from the materials you reviewed. If you want to ask Josh anything about the model or where we are in the project, where we're going. Yes, Carol?

Ms. Ehlers: I have a couple hundred, but I won't. My first comment, and I realize this wasn't your decision: Anacortes has been going through their Futures project. They met at five o'clock and there was a lengthy discussion during the first meeting about the fact that the younger generation wasn't there, younger generation being anyone under fifty. And that is because Anacortes found that a huge percentage – over 30% - of the people who work in Anacortes are commuting. They investigated the number commuting into the city. They ignored the issue of the number exiting the city. And this commuting issue is something I hope you will pay attention to in the future because it is a huge issue in the development of the county and various components of the county and of the transportation infrastructure for the county. And I would like to make sure that the younger generation, for whom this fifty years is real, actually get to have a say in what they think it ought to be. So that's – and the way I would start looking at it – because I've been trying to figure that out ever since the Anacortes meetings – I would start with the February data on State Route 20. I would look at the data going to and from Concrete; I'd look at the data going from Sharpe's Corner down to Whidbey and from Sharpe's Corner in and out of Anacortes, because I think that would give you the current real figures and then you can extrapolate out from that.

Mr. Johnson: Okay.

Ms. Ehlers: I think that's one of the biggest things that you need to do in regard to what you've just given us.

Mr. Johnson: Okay. Thank you. Are there questions, comments?

Ms. Ohlson-Kiehn: I just want to – could you just summarize what the process is after the Citizens Committee come up with their idealized version of what the future will look like, or their composite version – whatever it's called? Who are they proposing that to at that point?

Mr. Johnson: They will be proposing that eventually to the County Commissioners and to the Mayors who make up a body called the GMA Steering Committee, which is the three County Commissioners and the mayors of Anacortes, Burlington, La Conner, Sedro-Woolley and Mount Vernon. They've all signed something called the "framework agreement," which is kind of an agreement of how we'll work together with the other jurisdictions on GMA planning issues. For reasons I won't go into, it doesn't include Concrete, Lyman and Hamilton. But so we will also be taking the committee's recommendations to the Skagit Council of Governments Board, which includes those three towns, as well as the Swinomish Tribe, the Samish Tribe and the Ports of Anacortes and Skagit County. And I think there will also be both before the Citizen Committee finishes its recommendations, but also once that's been passed on to these elected bodies, I think we'll meet with community groups and public groups and the like and continue to take public input on those recommendations.

Ms. Ohlson-Kiehn: Okay, so you're collecting public input from all those folks and then after that public input has been incorporated into the proposal, then it will go to the Board of County Commissioners?

Mr. Johnson: Yeah, so there will be public input on the committee's recommendations as they're being formed and then they'll be passed on to the elected officials. But I think before anyone takes action on them, there will probably be additional, you know, opportunities for public comment and discussion.

Chairman Easton: So there really are six entities within the GMA Board that operate jointly to oversee GMA issues like urban growth boundaries, expansions, things of that nature, but there's nothing in the way this is structured that requires the Growth Management – that I can find; maybe I'm wrong – that the Growth Management Board has to adopt some sort of 2060 plan?

Mr. Johnson: Right.

Chairman Easton: And that brings me to my question/slash/heartfelt concern. Going on nine years now in the county and spending since 2004 in some facet

around growth, I'm concerned that – the testimony of the five mayors repeatedly over the last sixty days is not creating an atmosphere that makes me feel very comfortable that they think thinking fifty years out is reasonable. I don't – I recognize that it's a touchy subject, but as a Planning Commission member who – we spend all of our time thinking about things as they relate to the future – I'm very concerned that we're taking a \$1.5 million investment and five out of our eight parents aren't really sure we should even be taking this college course. I'm not sure how the Citizens Committee is going to address that, and as Mayor Norris noted, sort of quietly and eloquently at the same time recently on the tape that I saw, that's five mayors who also serve five councils who have ultimately the responsibility – and their planning commissions – who ultimately have the responsibility, too. Are we designing a framework that's actually going to ever come off the page and be used to measure future plans?

Mr. Johnson: That's a fair question. I'm not going to spend too long. I think we've got about two to three minutes before we want to get into asking your opinion. But originally the County applied to the Environmental Protection Agency for this grant and the County, you know, from those applications to the contracts it signed with EPA, is very committed to moving forward with recommendations from this project. Now there're things that the County can do that are outside of the purview, outside of the boundaries, of the Cities and Towns. And so while the County can't and doesn't want to force any of the Cities or Towns to adopt something against their will, nor can the Cities and Towns prevent the County from doing things within its jurisdiction that it thinks is in the best interest of the future.

Chairman Easton: Of course.

Mr. Johnson: I'd also say when we held our first community meeting out in Edison, the fifty people who showed up there seemed very interested in talking about the future of Skagit County and how to keep this a special and a unique and a vibrant place. And so, you know, there is a lot of interest. I know Gary back in the early '90s went around the county and talked to people about the future of the county then and that became the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan, and that's a document we're still working with now, just as the 1966 Comprehensive Plan still has traction for the county.

Chairman Easton: Sure.

Mr. Johnson: So there is a lot of interest. We've offered to do presentations like this to all of the City and Town councils, and that's really up to the mayors and the councils and their planning directors as to whether they want to take us up on that. We're moving forward in as cooperative a manner as we can, trying to address the issues that are of concern to them including population growth, employment, tax base revenues – how do you provide for services? – and so

there are different elements of the project that seek to respond to those issues and concerns and questions.

I guess the last thing, and then I want to get on to, you know, getting your input, but the land use model that we are working on will be just as useful looking out twenty years as it is looking out fifty years. And Josh has just spent about the last – I almost said two years – about the last two weeks doing some refinements to the model so it will really become a useful tool for looking at land use development patterns and potentials in Skagit County.

So as a result of this project, and I think in the near future, we're going to have our first rural capacity analysis – I hope I'm not overselling this, Josh – but our first real sense of how many developable lots there are out in the rural area and the resource lands. And we think that'll be very helpful to your work, you know, in the next Comprehensive Plan update in 2015, which we'll probably start working on in a couple years from now. So, you know, it's hard to say what's out there fifty years from now, but twenty years is the timeline we're required by law to plan under and this tool will be very helpful. And, frankly, the discussions we're having and trying to have with the Cities about: Where does the population go, Where does the employment go, Do we have a fair balance between the different cities of population and employment? These are fundamental questions that we need to talk about for the next GMA update so, you know, we think this is a valid process and we hope they agree.

Chairman Easton: I agree it's a valid process. My concern is not about fifty years from now, as much as it is about the next two years and whether there's enough agreement from the local partners to help build the plan so that when it comes time to use the plan to help fix and adjust their future growth management responsibilities that they're actually using the plan. With only four-plus years on this Commission, I've seen enough reports already that are only referenced by Carol in passing because they're not being used or applied. And whether that's from flooding – you know, and I just – I would hate – and my other concern, and this ties in – you know, this probably goes more to your feedback than it does to questions, but the tendency then is if we continue to feel the tension that I'm noticing about with some of the Cities is that I'm afraid that when you take the four different versions, we're going to end up with a County-centric – not necessarily for bad reasons, but because we are adjusting to the actions of the Cities, we're going to end up doing Conway and Alger in all these Bayview-type developments. We're going to adjust in that direction because it's easier for us to work with ourselves, and I think it's a – I hope, for the Commissioners and for the Citizens Committee, that they try to discipline themselves to remember to keep playing and working with the Cities because that's my biggest – that is my biggest concern. That probably doesn't come across in the form of a question, but, you know, I'd like that input to be out there.

Ms. Ehlers: I agree.

Mr. Johnson: So I'm changing our time allocation, but, Peggy, do you want to speak to that at all in terms of your interaction with the Mayor of Anacortes and your involvement in the Anacortes Futures project before we jump into asking them questions?

Peggy Flynn: (inaudible)

Chairman Easton: Could you come to the microphone, please? Thank you.

Mr. Johnson: You can come to this one over here.

Ms. Flynn: I think you hit the nail on the head. I think that it's important to have the Cities engaged in this process and that's one of the reasons why. As members of the Citizens Committee, we encouraged the meeting that took place in January to have the mayors present with the Commissioners so that we could all be in one place at one time and hear what people's current thinking is. I keep in touch with our Mayor in Anacortes and our Planning Director on our activities and they're interested in what we're doing.

Chairman Easton: Good. That's great. Thank you. Elinor? And then Carol.

Ms. Nakis: I had a question about funding. I know that that grant is given to the County, but is there funding available to encourage the participation from the Cities?

Mr. Johnson: Yeah. We're not handing chunks of the money over to different jurisdictions and saying, Here. Go do what you want. I mean, we're ultimately responsible for what gets accomplished through the grant and which includes a lot of administrative work for the Environmental Protection Agency and to the Code of Federal Regulations, et cetera, et cetera. But, for instance, we're working very closely with the City of Burlington over the next several months to take a new look at their retail area, their I-5 retail area. Margaret Fleek is the planner there – an interesting person, very – I think has a lot of vision. She sees that in the future as a livable community where people will live and shop and work and walk. Walk out to the dikes, enjoy Gages Slough, which will be a clean water body running right through the heart of this retail portion of Burlington. And we're going to use money from the grant to bring the Urban Land Institute up here – bring some experts from that group, which is kind of the leading edge of the kind of real estate and development sector, to help us learn about how we can do that, how we can redevelop the Burlington area to keep it thriving economically but also to make it more – I mean, I don't hear too many people say, you know, What's your favorite place in Skagit County? Burlington mall, or Burlington I – you know – retail corridor. So and that's an example of how we're working with one city in particular to address an interest of theirs and also, I think, an interest of the Citizen Committee's and of the County Commissioners, as well.

Chairman Easton: One more question from Carol and then we'll move on in your program.

Mr. Johnson: Yeah?

Ms. Ehlers: Well, this is a comment because you've given a nice contrast to what Anacortes did in its Futures project when they deliberately ignored everybody who – on Fidalgo and Guemes Island – who didn't live in the city, and assumed that they wouldn't be buying in the city, for the discussion of how the Plan was going. They ignored the people from Whidbey – except they want them – and they ignored the San Juan Islands – and that's been a huge – San Juan Islanders have provided much of the money for the banks and much of the money for the hardware stores there. And the interrelationship among all of those areas – that is, north Whidbey, the San Juan Islands, and the area outside the city – is crucial to the growth and development of the city, but the city didn't do the research to find it when they hired a really good consultant to do some really good research. It's much better than I think Burlington – than Mount Vernon did, and it's certainly much better than SCOG did recently for the Skagit-Island Transportation Plan.

So I would hope that the rest of you could look online for the Anacortes Futures project and look at the information. My illustration of the commuting traffic is – and the map that goes with it – is dynamite in terms of your understanding for the subtlety of relationships and economics in this county, as well as the importance of any kind of road development.

Chairman Easton: All right.

Mr. Johnson: Okay, take it away, Peggy!

Ms. Flynn: Okay. We're moving into the visioning portion and I'd like to keep this on an informal basis, if everybody's okay with that.

Chairman Easton: Sure.

Ms. Flynn: And you can call me "Peggy" and I'd like permission to call you by your first names, if that's all right.

Chairman Easton: Sure. That's fine with us.

Ms. Flynn: Okay. So as Kirk explained, this is – what we're doing tonight is a piece of what happens in the community as part of our outreach. In those communities, Kirk will do about a fifteen-minute PowerPoint presentation letting people know about the Envision Skagit project, and then we moved into the workshop. And Annie was at last Monday's workshop in Edison, where we had a

lot of participation, and we're anticipating that we'll have turnouts for the balance of these community meetings.

So I'm going to make an assumption that you've all been through a visioning exercise at one time or other in your careers. And simply what we're going to do tonight is ask three basic questions. The first question will deal with your values and the identity of where we live; the second one will deal with a positive change; and the third one will deal with challenges. So what I'd like to do is ask the question and then Emma and Kirk will be scribing what you have to say. And at the conclusion of question number one, when no one else has anything else to add, then we'll go to question number two and then question number three. At the conclusion of that, you'll get some dots and you'll get to prioritize the responses so that we know what the priorities of this group are. And we're going to try to do that in forty-five minutes.

Mr. Johnson: Probably half-an-hour!

Ms. Flynn: Or half-an-hour. Okay! And in the interest of everyone having air time, I think that what I'd like to do is make sure that everyone is participating and yet – you know, put your hands up and we'll call on you, but we'll try to be pretty fair so that everyone has an opportunity to participate.

So the first question is really very simple. What do you value most about where you live? In other words, what is special and unique about the Skagit Valley that needs to be retained? So I open the floor to all of you. What do you value about where we live?

Ms. Ehlers: Those are two questions. Where we live is not necessarily in the Skagit Valley.

Chairman Easton: From a –

Ms. Flynn: It's a visioning exercise and it's pretty ___.

Chairman Easton: Because we have a limited amount of time, Commissioners, I'm going to turn the chairmanship over to Peggy and she'll call on you and then we'll – and we'll answer our questions quickly.

Ms. Flynn: Quickly, right. And they could be one- or two-word answers. So, Kristen?

Ms. Ohlson-Kiehn: Okay. So this is a little bit more than one or two words – sorry, scribes. But what I value about Skagit County is the patchwork of protected forest areas along with working forest lands and working ag lands. That mosaic, I think, is essential to the quality of life in Skagit County.

Mr. Johnson: Could you say that one more time, because I need to learn to –

Ms. Ohlson-Kiehn: Scribe?

Mr. Johnson: Yeah. “Patchwork of protected forests, working forests...”

Ms. Ohlson-Kiehn: And working ag lands.

Mr. Johnson: “...and working ag.” Okay.

Ms. Ohlson-Kiehn: It’s a mosaic that’s essential.

Ms. Flynn: Mosaic. Next. Just raise your hand. Actually, if you’d like, why don’t we just go on down the line? That way everyone has good air time. Josh?

Mr. Axthelm: Okay. I just like about the Skagit Valley is the community – that it’s a tight-knit community and then with that community, you’ve got the farm land, you’ve got the mountains, you’ve got the ocean, you’ve got the city. You know, there’s all those things combined and that’s what I really appreciate with the valley.

Ms. Flynn: So a diversified community.

Mr. Axthelm: Yes.

Ms. Flynn: Not just in our towns but in our natural resources and our natural beauty.

Mr. Axthelm: Yes. And economics here, we have work, we have – it’s not just a place where people commute from and commute back to. It’s a place where people live and work, as well, so that’s important.

Ms. Flynn: Okay, several ideas there. Did we get them all?

Mr. Johnson: I think Emma caught the first and I think I caught the second.

Ms. Flynn: Okay. Mary.

Ms. McGoffin: I’ve been watching Cairo, Egypt, and what I value is our freedom and safety. I mean, I could walk from Rockport to Anacortes safely, so I want to see that continue.

Ms. Flynn: Okay. So freedom and safety. Thank you. Jason.

Chairman Easton: I think the value that I’d put the highest on is the – I think it’s the mosaic, the word “mosaic.” It’s the combination of what you can experience

in a short amount of time. There's a – so many other places where I've lived where you have one – there's one lifestyle for a hundred miles around you. And within a half-an-hour of my front door and I can experience five, six distinctly different lifestyles. And, you know, living in Anacortes, by the time I get to Mount Vernon and then another half-an-hour from here through Sedro-Woolley and up the hill. So that's unique and I think that's something that has to be protected. That's what I value.

Ms. Flynn: Thank you.

Mr. Hughes: Well, I'm going to have to agree with what Jason said because, there again, you can see just about anything you want. But I also want to stress that I have been a farmer my whole life and, you know, I think Skagit County has had and has a very strong opinion about protecting farm land. I mean, you can go back before 1990 and the GMA and Skagit County *still* had 40 acres. So I believe the County has tried to protect farm land a lot longer than the state decided to *tell* us that we had to protect it. They've always supported the natural resource industries. And, but, yeah, the various – driving half-an-hour and seeing anything you want to see.

Ms. Flynn: So two answers there: One is the protection of the natural resources, including ag land, and also the diverse array of opportunities. Does that kind of capture it? Thank you. Carol? I'm sorry – Annie?

Ms. Lohman: Well, I'd have to – everything they said! And I value the cohesiveness of our small communities. There is no really big city in Skagit County. I mean, Mount Vernon really, and Anacortes and Burlington, they're really not huge. They're still small. And then, saying that, we have a lot of unincorporated community. They're not – there's no city but there's a community so have opportunity to volunteer and to be invested in your community in ways that you can't do in other places. And I just value that, and, I guess, everything else they said.

Ms. Flynn: Thank you. Carol?

Ms. Ehlers: Well, I'm going to agree with everyone also, and that forces me to think of something different. One of the things that is most unusual about this county is that the governments, at least the ones I have anything to do with – the County, and I've seen it in Anacortes – really want to know what the people who live here think. They really value the skills and the background and the knowledge which people who are here have, and they do know how to listen – most of the time. When they don't, unfortunately there's an uproar and then they listen. But it's a different value than there is in much of the rest of the world. And that, I think, must be continued.

As far as where I live, where I live is in a residential zone and it's peaceful and it's quiet. Dave once asked why people buy 40 acres, and part of the reason is that's one way they can make sure that where they live is quiet. And so one of the things I want to preserve in the residential zones is that kind of quiet, because that is a major part of the assessed value of the property.

Ms. Flynn: Thank you, Carol. Matt?

Mr. Mahaffie: Makes it kind of tough coming at the end here.

Ms. McGoffin: We'll go the other way next time.

Chairman Easton: Yeah, we'll switch it up.

Mr. Mahaffie: Kristen kind of said it best for my views, but I'd probably add the eclectic community that Skagit Valley has, whether it's the people themselves, the businesses they try, the different communities from upriver, you know, all the way down. You can have a night life that's still family-oriented. I mean, it's something you don't see really anywhere else – you know, how many different kinds of people live in the valley without conflict, really. There's no one way or the other, like you see in some other communities.

Ms. Flynn: Thank you. Elinor?

Ms. Nakis: Hi.

Ms. Flynn: Hi.

Ms. Nakis: Well, what I value most about where I live – I live out in the country, rural area north of Sedro-Woolley, and I like my open spaces. And I like to be surrounded by forest. And when I come into town on my drive down there I like to see little groupings of trees. And I've really enjoyed the trees that I've watched to grow over the years and I'm really saddened that they've been all chopped down along Highway 20 there in Sedro-Woolley, and I hope that more trees are planted. Trees are very special to me and I think they add to a healthy environment and climate.

I like the vicinity where I live to all the different hiking trails. I was just thinking, well, what's close by me anyway? I have the Northern State Recreational Area, which I'm so happy to have in my backyard. I have Rasar State Park not too far away where I go hiking. There's a lake right outside of Alger that I can drive up to and hike around. There's the fisheries at – let's see – Friday Creek. I mean, I could just go on and on! And as I'm sitting here waiting for my turn I'm just getting more excited about where I live! And I just hope that we continue to develop those places and hold those precious to us so that we don't get in a hurry to bring more people into Skagit Valley, you know? And I – oh, yeah – and

I also like that we have limits to the growth potential here. So when I watched the films and the mayors were talking about all the limitations which, wow, you know, I really agree with them in that there *are* a lot of limitations, but that's another good thing to celebrate. Because then we can't, you know, just go hog wild and overdo and – you know? So, anyway, that's all I have to say.

Ms. Flynn: Thank you. Does everyone feel like they had an opportunity to express themselves, or is there anybody else that would like to add one more thing before we move on to question number two?

(silence)

Okay, let's go to question number two then. And this has to do with positive change. What do we need to work harder on in the future? In other words, what would improve the quality of life for Skagit residents? And so, Elinor, may we start with you?

Ms. Nakis: I would like to have more public opportunities for – like a regional swimming, you know, pool? A pool in our area that's more regional that we encourage all of our schools to join in instead of – like a school district the size of Sedro-Woolley or even Burlington or Concrete, I mean they would be hard pressed to build their own pool. Right now all of those schools send their kids over to Mount Vernon YMCA, which is very small, and they bus them over. And that's their only opportunity – for most kids in Skagit County, that's the only place where they can learn how to swim. And I think that pools would be a really good investment in our community. I think they could serve everyone from our newborns to our new mothers to our, you know, Native American community, to our older community or seniors, to our hospitals, to, you know, everyone. So if I were going to change anything or add anything to our county it would be pools.

Ms. Flynn: Thank you. Matt, what do you think we need to work harder on in the future?

Mr. Mahaffie: I would say my little pet peeve is public access. Things that I remember as a child being able to go to – go into some of our forest lands, some of the recreational opportunities I was afforded are no longer available. I don't really know what the solution is for that, but I feel bad that my children can't go to the places that I did. That's my little pet peeve on what needs to be worked on.

Ms. Flynn: Thank you. Carol?

Ms. Ehlers: Well, the closer I get to it the more I think about what it would be like to be old. It happens to you. And when I was young, I hiked all over the county and climbed up Mount Erie and rappelled down. I went everywhere I wanted to with the Alpine Club. You can't do that now and you certainly don't do it when you're older. So I've been looking – when we did the Parks Plan and we did the

urban growth area thing, I took a good look about what was available on Fidalgo Island and there's enormous opportunities on Fidalgo as long as you're young and agile. There are wonderful things in Anacortes, but there's not a single park with a bus stop or access that a person who has a walker can get to. If they look at the parks elsewhere in the county I see people with walkers and canes using that trail that's between 20 and the railroad in Burlington. I've seen a lot of older people using that. It's very safe, it's open, it's public, it's level, it's paved. And that's the kind of thing I would like to see opportunity for.

There's a bus called 49-Plus in Anacortes that would be wonderful if it were actually administered in a way that's practical, because then you could take the bus to some of these places if you needed to. Now that applies also to young people who can't get around so much or who don't have someone who can take them someplace. But I'd like to focus on the places that that group of people I've gone to lunch with all these years. I'd like to take them to Sharpe Park, but we can't. It's one of the most beautiful places in this county but you don't go there by yourself and you don't go there when you're older. You'd trip over everything you could think of. And that's what I'd like.

Ms. Flynn: Thank you, Carol. Annie?

Ms. Lohman: I think I'd like us to have a definite flood plan. We spend all of our time focusing development in some of the most vulnerable places in the county – Mount Vernon, Burlington – and it puts a heck of a lot of stress on those of us in floodplain agriculture. And unless we think out of the box and maybe look into some of our forest lands that's pretty much three-quarters of our county, and think away from our existing communities that are putting all that pressure on our ag land – and I don't mean development pressure necessarily, but flood pressure and infrastructure pressure – that we need to kind of take a big step and really think out of the box.

Ms. Flynn: Thank you, Annie.

Ms. Ehlers: That's good.

Ms. Flynn: Dale?

Mr. Hughes: Make the cities –

Ms. Flynn: Dave.

Mr. Hughes: – live within their existing boundaries, especially when it comes to encroaching on natural resource lands.

Ms. Flynn: Thank you.

Ms. Ehlers: Mm-hmm.

Ms. Flynn: Jason?

Chairman Easton: So I'm a grandfather now.

Ms. Flynn: Congratulations.

Chairman Easton: Just in the last couple of months. Since – I know. It's hard to believe. 25 – no. But it has me thinking about what's important for me, and one of those quality of life issues is proximity for family to be able to live close to each other across different generational lines. And I'm concerned that we don't have an economic plan for really pursuing quality work to be done here. New industries, additional industries. So it's the expansion of our economic base so that we don't become a commuter community. Or at least we could hold that at bay to some degree. There's not an organized – as much as EDASC does great work and the Chambers, I feel like we lack a real organized effort to economically be vibrant and I think that out of that economic vibrance, which would be helpful for the – and I'm talking about doing that within the cities' current limits – the current city formats basically. It would take pressure off of agriculture and natural resource lands, I believe, if we weren't a bedroom community. If we actually had places for people to work there would be more opportunities for us to grow cities up.

And I'll add that my concern is growth management plus a river does not equal good planning. And so those are two really big things __ quality of life, one of you or Annie said. A river that runs through cities and then a state government that tells us we have to build in the city – you know, we have to build in the existing cities and a federal government that says, Don't build too close to the river. That's a conflict of interest that's pretty – there's a lot of pressure.

Ms. Flynn: Thanks, Jason. Mary?

Ms. McGoffin: I think we need to work harder on getting away from being so automobile dominated, because that drives the creation of all these roads and we already have traffic jams. So if we could envision a way to move people around without everybody alone in their cars, that would be good.

Ms. Flynn: Thank you.

Mr. Axthelm: Are we addressing all three of those questions on positive change?

Ms. Flynn: Oh, we're still addressing positive change right now.

Mr. Axthelm: All three? All three of those questions? All right. Okay, well.

Ms. Flynn: They overlap.

Mr. Axthelm: They overlap, okay. I have a couple different comments. One was that the – bringing in industry. I notice – I studied architecture and I notice that around this community there seems to be so many pockets of land and areas that need to be infilled – that we're trying to find new places to build industry, but yet there're so many areas that – empty buildings, buildings that are run down, sections of town that need to be revitalized, and I think there's lots of opportunity there. And it also creates a more safe environment. Some of those areas, I'm afraid to walk through there and I'm big enough that I don't have to worry about it. But there's some areas that I don't want to go. And I think that that's something a community – that we need to build up.

I appreciate saying about Burlington and Gages Slough. Some of those areas where we built in we put in some of the retail but yet it wasn't – it was car friendly. It wasn't friendly for people to walk through. And, you know, I spent a lot of time in Boise, Idaho, and what they do is they have their river there and they have areas that they walk along the river and there's parks and there's downtown areas and you feel comfortable walking there at night. Granted, there's police forces that go on the trails and stuff like that, but it helps and the community works together, too. And then it also connects the communities. It's not just one city; it's several communities connected together. And I think that as we grow we need to make sure that we consider that and we keep that up. So I've really been appreciative of Skagit County in its interest to do that and I think we need to continue that.

And then also your mass transits: making sure that we provide the transit for those people that don't have the vehicles. If you want to encourage less cars, you have to provide the transit to have that available. And like Skagit Transit – that's really improved it.

Ms. Flynn: Thank you, Josh. Kristen.

Ms. Ohlson-Kiehn: So I think we need to work harder to recognize the ecological values produced by working for us and how the existence of a healthy forest industry allows those lands to remain forested and not developed.

Ms. Flynn: Okay. Thank you. If we're ready to move on to question number – yes, Carol?

Ms. Ehlers: I would like to show the map that's in the Anacortes Futures Plan as to what kind of commuting goes on in this county.

Ms. Flynn: Do we have the ability to?

Chairman Easton: Can we do that?

Ms. Ehlers: Well, because it's not commuting *out* of the county.

Chairman Easton: I'm just concerned about time.

Ms. Ehlers: That's all right. I'm concerned that –

Mr. Hughes: No, it's not all right.

Ms. Ehlers: – that people are talking about commuting to Seattle or to Bellingham. I'm talking about commuting from Anacortes to Burlington.

Chairman Easton: Yeah.

Ms. Ehlers: That's the only way you're going to get to another job of a different kind. And I don't see anything negative about that. There happens to be a nice map on it.

Chairman Easton: Sure. Okay. Well, I think that we're really short on time so we're going to keep moving with the next question.

Ms. Flynn: Okay, so the third question relates to the challenges ahead. What do you see as the greatest threat or challenge facing Skagit Valley in the future? And this time why don't we – since we went that way and that way, let's mix it up a little bit. Let's start with Jason and then we'll work our way alternating out.

Chairman Easton: I didn't see that coming!

(laughter)

Chairman Easton: Okay, will you rephrase that? What is the greatest threat or challenge? What is the greatest threat or challenge facing Skagit Valley in the future? I think it's environmental pressures. I think it's the – and what I mean by "environmental pressures" is the greatest threat is that our natural resources are going to be killed by a thousand pricks. I think it's the death by the small things. It's the DOT expanding Highway 20, talking a great game as a state government about protecting farm land and suddenly I'm looking at large retention ponds, you know, in areas that used to be farm land.

It's the – so to me the greatest threat is just that – it's the losing our natural resources. I grew up in the Kent Valley, or not far from the Kent Valley in Black Diamond, and drove through the Kent Valley to school for years and saw one more rezone, one more city get a little bit bigger and one more warehouse be built into the valley. And then now, you know, it's not recognizable and comparable to where I picked strawberries with my parents and, you know, the places that I grew up in. Like Matt talked about the access. So I just – I think our

biggest – my biggest concern is how do we protect that. And one of the things I'm the proudest of is that since being on this Commission and seeing what we do is we have held the line, and I'm really hopeful that we hold the line for the next – I believe we can hold the line for the next fifty years, too.

Ms. Flynn: Thank you, Jason. Why don't we go to – is it – I'm sorry, is it "Dave" or "Dale"? I can't tell from here.

Chairman Easton: Dave.

Mr. Hughes: Dave.

Ms. Flynn: Dave. Thank you, Dave.

Mr. Hughes: Ditto. And plus I'd like to add that, you know, we're sitting here and what this is is to – we're looking at, what? 2060. And if half the people come that you say are going to come, I don't care where you're going to put them it's going to impact anything and everything that's in this county, whether it's the farm ground on Fir Island or the forest up in Concrete. There'll be impacts that won't be addressed before the population gets here. I'm just, you know, nothing against the Bayview plan but it's just going to be interesting to see if we do everything that was supposed to be done before the people come so it does it for impacts.

Ms. Flynn: Okay, do we have that? Mary.

Ms. McGoffin: I think one of the biggest challenges is developing industry that won't be driven out. I mean, because industry brings noise and traffic and, you know, some adverse effects. But we can't have just agriculture. You know, we can't be so one dimensional. So what kind of industry can grow here?

Ms. Flynn: Okay, thank you. Annie?

Ms. Lohman: I think we have to be careful of what we wish for – that we don't all of a sudden become urban because of our wants. I was thinking about that on the trail plan. People want interconnected communities. Well, before long you'll be like San Diego. If you've ever been to San Diego, California, there used to be some really interesting little communities not unlike here once upon a time. Now it is an enormous sprawl of city and there is no demarcation between the communities anymore, other than maybe a sign. I think you have to accept that if you want to live in a rural county that you're going to have some inconvenience, but that is part of the charm.

Ms. Flynn: Thank you. Josh.

Mr. Axthelm: Again? A sustainable community. You know, is our community going to be a place where people want to come and live and work and stay? You know, I'm in the building industry. I want to see Mount Vernon build, naturally, in that sense, but I also want it to be done right. You know, I see like this "Honey, I Shrunk the Lots." You know, are we building, are we shrinking lots so that we can get more houses in so we can get more money per lot? Or are we shrinking lots to keep the land – or to keep the houses on smaller lots or to not go out into the farm land? And are we doing it right so it's designed nicely, so it looks nice so it has a nice community, it has nice landscaping, it has nice amenities to keep people here instead of just going through a concrete jungle, you know?

Ms. Flynn: Thank you. Carol?

Ms. Ehlers: Well, I'll add to the previous collection of ideas. I'm afraid of lack of doing proper homework and actually knowing what people are doing. There were years when GMA started when the County denied that there were natural hazards here, and I remember my saying that it would be a good idea if we had a law that you couldn't put a house on a known earthquake fault. And everyone in the room told me that there weren't any earthquake faults in this county, and when I showed them evidence they insisted that that wasn't evidence.

So it's a question of doing the homework and knowing precisely when you're going to make certain decisions about infill or what the land will hold, and whether you're going to have septic or whether you're going to have sewer, and if you're going to have sewer where the sewer is. And if you're going to have water lines, do you understand the cost of the water line, of the tank, of the chlorinator and of all the subsidiary costs when it comes to the infrastructure? And are you going to plan the infrastructure so that if you do it now so you don't need a sewer, are you going to plan it so that when you put the sewer in you can afford to put the sewer in? I mean, *physically* afford to put the sewer in instead of having eminent domain the way they are in Anacortes right now regarding a road?

So it's a question of knowing the detailed kinds of information to the degree you can use them at the time and avoiding denial. Because I, too, grew up in a county back in New Jersey that was like Kent was. Bergen County was as beautiful as any place you want, and it isn't anymore because of what has been done partly with little itty-bitty lots and partly with big ones, and very poor transportation infrastructure to make it easy for access without using a lot of space.

Ms. Flynn: I'm just going to stop you there, Carol, and thank you. We have about five minutes left so we'll try to get through these questions and then do the dot exercise. Kristen.

Ms. Ohlson-Kiehn: So I think one of the greatest challenges facing Skagit Valley is one described by Robert Lang in his presentation where he talked about – he

described them as “colonies,” I guess, of high income commuters who only need to come to the office one or two days a week because they can telecommute. I think it’s better to frame it as a challenge versus a threat. “Threat” sort of sounds like we’re reacting in fear and, according to Robert Lang at least, they will come. So it’s a fact so –

Chairman Easton: They’re here.

Ms. Ehlers: They’re here.

Ms. Ohlson-Kiehn: And they’re here – great. And I’m not high income so I guess I couldn’t put myself in that category, but I’m not trying to demonize them either to say that they’re separate. But I guess for me, from the forestry perspective, one of the challenges I see this presenting is a set of values that come from the cities that perpetuate a misunderstanding, I think, about sustainable natural resource extraction. I think, at least for me, because I do come from the east coast and I do come from a suburban-urban area, I think rural communities like Skagit County, there’re a lot of folks who have grown up here who understand natural resource management. They understand what it looks like, they understand what’s involved. And those who come from outside of these rural areas – from these urban areas – don’t necessarily understand that. They do understand the problems that are created by lack of planning and urban sprawl, and I think that those values are important and that perspective is important to bring. But I see increases of high income commuters bringing values that could create public pressure against those industries that allow those forested landscapes to exist.

Ms. Flynn: Kind of like the impact of the “commuter shed,” is how I think he referred to it, on our natural resources.

Ms. Ohlson-Kiehn: Exactly. Yep.

Ms. Flynn: Thank you.

Ms. Lohman: Well, that’s kind of what I was trying to suggest. They’ve dovetailed.

Ms. Flynn: Okay, great. Thanks, Annie. Matt.

Mr. Mahaffie: I worry. I see these models of where the future growth is proposed and there’s a reason people didn’t build there a hundred years ago. It’s not the best land to be building on. It’s poor drainage, it’s flat. I mean, there’s issues when you start building. I worry not that it’s not valid to protect the farm land, but if you push so much development up there, issues like drainage is going to come back and bite you. If you overwhelm drainage on the farm land, I mean, the farm

land's no good. I mean, it's an infrastructure issue on all aspects, not just drainage, obviously. But, again, not the biggest threat, but what I thought of.

Ms. Flynn: Thank you. And Elinor.

Ms. Nakis: I think one of the greatest threats to our future is losing the historic sites that we have here and some of the historic buildings that we have in our towns, because they *do* need revitalization. And where does that money come from and how do, you know, how do people get it? How do they get help to –

Ms. Flynn: Historic preservation.

Ms. Nakis: Yeah.

Ms. Flynn: Okay. Thank you. And I found myself wanting to nod in agreement with so much of what was said, but as a facilitator I'm supposed to be neutral, so I hope I kept my head balanced.

Chairman Easton: You did fine.

Ms. Flynn: Anyway, thank you all very much. This is a mini version of the community meetings, the community outreach. So what we're going to do now in the – five minutes?

Mr. Johnson: Yeah, probably down to four at this point.

Ms. Flynn: Down to four. Grab your dots. And we have the three specific questions, so for each of the three questions you have three dots for the first question, three dots for the second question and three dots for the first – third – question. Put your dot by the response that most resonates with you, the top three responses that most resonate with you.

Chairman Easton: Can you vote for one more than once?

Ms. Flynn: (inaudible)

Chairman Easton: No.

Ms. Flynn: Oh, you can't? You can't use your dots as you like?

Ms. Ehlers: We could in Anacortes.

Chairman Easton: We're not in Anacortes!

Ms. Flynn: All right. He's the boss. Kirk says you can.

Mr. Johnson: Sure.

Chairman Easton: Oh, you can? Okay.

Ms. Flynn: I've been overruled.

Chairman Easton: This is going good on TV.

(many inaudible comments)

Mr. Johnson: While you guys are voting, I think if we have time at the end we'll report back on the ideas or concepts that get the most dots. But also to let you know, the summary of your comments and your dots will be provided to the Citizen Committee as input to their process and they'll also be put up on the website, as will all the comments from the different community meetings so that the community can see what others in the Skagit Valley are saying.

Chairman Easton: All right. Thank you, Envision Skagit 2060. I appreciate all you're doing and all the time you're putting in as citizens and staff. Thank you. Thanks for using those resources wisely and we appreciate your time tonight. I for one, I think, speak for the Commission that we feel honored that you're interested in our input. From a tactical point of view, this is – it's an interesting relationship. We don't have a direct relationship to the way in which the plan gets approved, so it's very kind of you guys to come and reach – you know, reach out to us. We know you have a lot on your plate so I think, on behalf of the Commission, I just want to say thank you.

Ms. Ehlers: May I add a comment to that?

Mr. Johnson: Thank you very much for your input.

Chairman Easton: You're welcome.

Ms. Ehlers: There are 40,000 of us who live outside the territory that the mayors take care of. And I think that the 40,000 of us should have easily as much vote as 40,000 people who are inside a city.

Chairman Easton: And on that note, we'll – thank you, Carol – we will move to the next order of business, which is Elections. So at this time I'm going to hand the gavel to the current Vice Chair and ask her to run the election for Chair for 2011. There you go. It's official. Mary?

Ms. McGoffin: Are there any nominations for the position of Chair? Elinor?

Ms. Nakis: I would like to nominate Jason Easton for President of this committee.

Ms. McGoffin: Okay. Any other nominations?

(silence)

Chairman Easton: Well, I'm honored. Thank you, and I will serve if you so choose. Thank you.

Ms. McGoffin: All right.

Chairman Easton: I guess we'll say that was unanimous then, huh? Did you want –

Ms. McGoffin: Oh, well, I don't know. I guess we need to –

Chairman Easton: Somebody might want to abstain, I guess.

Ms. McGoffin: So let's take a vote on that. All those in favor of Jason Easton as Chairperson, please say "aye."

Ms. Ehlers, Ms. McGoffin, Ms. Ohlson-Kiehn, Mr. Axthelm, Mr. Hughes, Ms. Lohman, Chairman Easton, Mr. Mahaffie and Ms. Nakis: Aye.

Ms. McGoffin: Opposed?

(silence)

Ms. McGoffin: All right, so it's unanimous. Thank you.

Chairman Easton: Well, thank you for your faith in me and I appreciate that, and I will do my best to serve you. And, please, if you have any ideas or suggestions – I know some of you have in the past – about how we can make this work better, let me know and I'll be as responsible as I possibly can to make those happen.

All right now we'll entertain nominations for Vice Chair. Any nominations for Vice Chair?

Ms. Lohman: I will nominate Mary to continue as Vice Chair.

Chairman Easton: Do you accept the nomination?

Ms. McGoffin: I do.

Chairman Easton: She does. Is there any other nominations for Vice Chair?

(silence)

Chairman Easton: All right, hearing none all those in favor of Mary as Vice Chair, please signify by saying “aye.”

Ms. Nakis, Ms. Lohman, Mr. Hughes, Chairman Easton, Ms. Ohlson-Kiehn, Ms. Ehlers, Mr. Axthelm, Ms. McGoffin and Mr. Mahaffie: Aye.

Chairman Easton: Any opposed?

(silence)

Chairman Easton: Any abstentions?

(silence)

Chairman Easton: Excellent. That was the fastest fifteen minutes of business we've ever accomplished.

(laughter)

Chairman Easton: All right. At this time we will turn this over to Carly. You were asked – one other little piece of homework – you were asked to do was to look at your contact information and your reminder notifications for our roster, so you need to –

Ms. Ruacho: (inaudible)

Chairman Easton: What's that?

Ms. Ruacho: If I put this up there, does it go on TV? Okay.

Chairman Easton: Okay. So just as way of edits, we'll start with me. Those work numbers and fax numbers are no longer – just use the cell phone. So if you need to fax me a document, I'll ask you to scan it and e-mail it to me.

Ms. Ruacho: Okay.

Chairman Easton: And you can switch my reminder to electronic. Thank you. Anybody else need to modify their contact information for Carly or how you are being notified of meetings?

Ms. Ruacho: Mary?

Chairman Easton: Dave?

Mr. Hughes: Delete my home phone number.

Ms. Ruacho: Delete the home – Dave.

Chairman Easton: Mary?

Ms. McGoffin: The reminder can be electronic and my home phone number is 856-5986. Okay.

Chairman Easton: Josh?

Mr. Axthelm: My address is 17166 Dike Road and no P.O. box. And then, let's see, that's good.

Ms. Ruacho: Okay.

Chairman Easton: Anyone else?

Ms. Ruacho: Matt had something.

Chairman Easton: Yeah, Matt?

Mr. Mahaffie: Reminder to electronic, and I thought I gave you my new address. Do you want the mailing address or physical address?

Ms. Ruacho: Probably mailing. So I think this is – you know, there are off times where I can't electronically mail you stuff so I do need an address to mail you things if I *can't* do it electronically.

Chairman Easton: If you want to give that to her off-camera that's fine, or you can do it – or you can tell everyone your address; whatever you choose.

Mr. Mahaffie: 320 East Fairhaven, number 204, is the mailing address.

Chairman Easton: All right, anything else? Carly, do you have a couple other items for us?

Ms. Ruacho: I do. I have copies of the Guemes Island Subarea Plan that was passed. You guys have your MPR/RV Park codes to utilize until they get codified, and they're online. They're pretty, you know, minor in comparison. The Guemes Island Subarea Plan is also online, but I do have, I think, maybe six hard copies here for anybody who wants an actual hard copy. I know Carol will want one!

Chairman Easton: You can give Carol mine, too, if she'd like it.

Ms. Ruacho: Yeah, yeah! And so I do have that. I also have – and I have to admit I've been remiss. This has been sitting on my desk, and any of you have seen my desk might understand why I've forgotten to give it to you. So this is from September and it was from Public Works and it is the South Fidalgo Island Stormwater Management Plan. So I'm sure Carol has been wondering, Where is this? So, unfortunately – or fortunately for someone? – I only have eight. So I have those so I'll just maybe –

Chairman Easton: I'll abstain.

Ms. Ruacho: – leave them in the back and anybody who wants to pick up a paper copy of either, feel free. If I don't have enough of something let me know and I'll get you a paper copy.

Chairman Easton: And Carol had – is that it, Carly?

Ms. Ruacho: I think so. Yes, except for Josh, if you could see me after so we can talk about mileage.

Chairman Easton: Ah, he's got to see the principal after. Okay. How about Josh making it through his first meeting, huh?

(applause)

Ms. Ruacho: Yay, Josh! That was a heck of a meeting for a first meeting.

Chairman Easton: Heck of a meeting – yeah. That's okay. I came in with 40,000 pages of Comp Plan amendments so I'll be whining about that for years! Comp updates. Carol had something to add to the agenda real quickly.

Ms. Ehlers: I had a request from Marianne Kooiman to bring this to the Planning Department in some sort of quasi-formal way so that all of us might think in case there's a grant opportunity that deals with something like this – because it's a follow-through for the Guemes Island Plan. Do you remember the reference in the Guemes Island Plan to the Interim Saltwater Intrusion Plan that suddenly got called no longer an interim because it was ancient history and you can only have interim for six months? Well, it really is quasi-interim. It's not finished, as far as the Department of Ecology and the Department of Health are concerned. It was finally agreed that Marianne and Lorna Haycox – Lorna Parent – would work on it together. They think they are about 70 to 80% done. They've run out of money. The County's run out of money. And so Marianne asked that I bring it as something that if people find grant money someplace, and I'm thinking particularly from the EPA or from the Farm because this relates to something that is dear to the agricultural community.

One of the things we talked about three years ago was the aquifer protection map. And it's online but you don't really see what the aquifers are in Skagit County until you get them on a long piece of paper on which you suddenly see that the Skagit River is entirely protected as Aquifer 1 by the Department of Ecology and the County. There are several areas of the county that are stunningly – if you look at the code – *un*protected in terms of heavy chemical pollution, which disturbs me enormously. But in this context you will see a narrow little green band that goes around the islands and goes around the ag lands, the delta for the Skagit and the delta for the Samish. And this little narrow green bank purports to be the saltwater intrusion threaten area. And fortunately it's obviously non-scientific and obviously ludicrous. But part of the issue we dealt with in the ag preservation ordinance was the question of saltwater intrusion.

Chairman Easton: Is there any disagreement with Carol adding this to the record? Is there anyone who disagrees with it?

(silence)

Chairman Easton: Okay. Then so be it. I'll entertain a motion to dismiss. Anyone want to move to dismiss?

Ms. McGoffin: I move to adjourn.

Chairman Easton: Move to adjourn – excuse me. Move to adjourn – a second?

Unidentified member: Second.

Chairman Easton: Second. All right, we are adjourned (gavel). Thank you.