

Skagit County Planning Commission
Public Hearing: 2020-2025 Capital Facilities Plan Update
November 19, 2019

Planning

Commissioners: **Tim Raschko, Chair**
 Kathy Mitchell, Vice Chair
 Mark Lundsten
 Annie Lohman
 Amy Hughes
 Joe Woodmansee
 Tammy Candler (absent)
 Martha Rose (absent)

Staff: **Mike Cerbone, Assistant Planning Director**

Public

Commenters: **Ellen Bynum, Friends of Skagit County**

Chair Tim Raschko: (gavel) Good evening. Welcome to the November 19, 2019, meeting of the Skagit County Planning Commission. The purpose of tonight's meeting will be a public hearing. Before we get to that, I'll ask the fellow Commissioners: Is there anything about the agenda?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Okay.

Vice Chair Kathy Mitchell: Looks fine.

Chair Raschko: So we will open this up to Public Remarks. If anybody would wish to make one, you have three minutes and please understand that the agenda tonight cannot be the subject of the speaking at this point in time.

Ellen Bynum: Good evening, Commissioners. Ellen Bynum, Friends of Skagit County, 110 North First – soon to have a new address – in Mount Vernon. I am bringing you – because I'm cleaning out my office to move after 15 years – the bumper sticker that was created for the Farmland Legacy Program. And what the County had originally printed – I think it was 50,000 of them. They're around. They haven't reprinted them. There is an issue with the copyright on it. But I wanted to take a minute to say that the Farmland Legacy Program is still in effect. It's an active program of Skagit County. It is governed by a citizens board that determines which development rights are purchased off of agricultural-zoned land. And it's the reason that we have the landscape that we have and hopefully the reason that we'll have it into the future.

The program – hopefully you'll get somebody who is a member of the board – of the citizen board – to come and speak with you sometime to tell you the history and whatnot. But the little-known fact is that you can, as a citizen, give money to the County for that program and it's the same kind of deduction you would take for a regular donation to a charity. So I have done this as memorials

for people or celebrations of birthdays or whatever, and I encourage other people to do that. If you go to skagitcounty.net and forward slash farmland, you can also see about the program. They have about 12,000 acres conserved with a permanent conservation easement that the County holds. We have 90,000 acres of ag land. We are a long way from getting it done. So I'm just making this plea to you and to the public to support the County's Farmland Legacy Program and to be informed about, you know, what the importance is of conserving land *permanently* with a permanent conservation easement. It's not a transfer of development rights. It's a permanent transfer to the County and then that development right cannot be used. So I brought the bumper stickers and I'll leave them if you guys want them. Thanks.

Chair Raschko: Thank you. Anybody else?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Okay. With that we will turn to our public hearing. This is a public hearing on a legislative proposal to amend the Comprehensive Plan's Capital Facilities Plan Element, to adopt a 2020 to 2025 Capital Facilities Plan and incorporate by reference the updated 2020 to 2025 Transportation Improvement Program.

The purpose of this hearing is for the Planning Commission to take comments from the public on this proposal. The Planning Commission will deliberate on November 26th on a recommendation on this proposal to the Board of County Commissioners.

So before we begin, we'll hear a brief presentation from staff.

Michael Cerbone: Thank you, Chair. Mike Cerbone, assistant director of Planning and Development Services for Skagit County. As you said, tonight's public hearing is intended for the Capital Facilities Plan and Transportation Improvement Program 2020-2025 Update.

About the document a little bit: The entire Capital Facility Plan is in one document. It includes a six-year financing plan. It lists all the capital facilities policies that are in our Comprehensive Plan. It incorporates our Transportation Improvement Program. Those who were here at the last meeting, we had the gentleman responsible for preparing that document come in and present that to you and (he) answered several questions. So this is an update to that plan. The State recommends we do it at least every two years. The County has made the decision to do it every year. And we are pursuing adopting that and amending the Comprehensive Plan pursuant to an exception allowed in state law that allows that to occur concurrent with the adoption of our budget. So it can be adopted outside of the docket. The County budget adoption is planned for early December.

Our Capital Facilities Plan is organized into groups. We have General Government, so that's fungible office space, things like that. We have our Community Services; Law and Justice; Parks, Trails, Recreation, including the fairgrounds; Solid Waste; Stormwater Management; and Transportation.

In the plan we also reference the capital facilities plans for the cities and towns within the county, and also some of the special districts – the drainage districts and things like that.

A very brief overview. The draft is posted online. It was presented to you, like I said, at the last meeting. Your deliberations are scheduled for next meeting, which will be next Tuesday at 6 p.m.

in the same room. And like I said, the Board consideration is anticipated for early December. So if you had any questions, I'd be more than happy to attempt to answer them.

Chair Raschko: Have we questions for staff?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: No? Thank you.

Mr. Cerbone: Okay, thank you.

Chair Raschko: Okay, so I'll open up to public comment. Have we had anybody sign up?

Mr. Cerbone: No.

Chair Raschko: No. Okay. That being the case, we're already into the meeting.

Mr. Cerbone: Mm-hmm.

Chair Raschko: I thank everybody, and the public hearing is closed. Thank you.

So we'll move on to our Department Update.

Mr. Cerbone: Not much of an update this evening. The Board of County Commissioners is in Spokane at the Association of Washington Counties. That is where the director is this evening as well, so his apologies for not being able to join you this evening. And that would be the only update unless you have any specific questions about the Department that I could answer.

Chair Raschko: Any questions?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Okay. Thank you much. So it is time now for Commissioners to have an opportunity to make any comments.

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Nobody? Boy, this is easy. I'm sorry but I just have a short comment. What I want to talk about a little bit is the upcoming retreat that we have planned, and I hope everybody can make it. One reason I wanted to have a retreat is because – I think I've been on this since 2016 late in the year, which in my opinion is not very long. And so I really can't claim to be a real seasoned person in the responsibilities that we have. And since I've come on we've had three new commissioners and we will have a fourth to replace Commissioner Del Vecchio. And at the same time, most of the staff at the top levels has turned over. So we're basically a group of people who are largely new. We have – what? – maybe four veterans here sitting at this table.

So one thing I'd like to do is thank Ellen Bynum. She sent us all, I believe, an email with an attachment that was a short pamphlet by the State of Michigan on the roles of planning commissions. And I read through it. It's a very short, easy read. I would suggest everybody do so. I thought it very helpful. And what I see happening for a large part of this retreat is for all of us – new people and veterans alike – to sit down and digest some of the information that was in that

pamphlet, as well as have a review of the enabling legislation that created this commission and its stated purpose, so that we can all at one time sit and talk about what different people's roles are, what our expectations are, and get a more clear understanding of what it is we are really charged to do. And I think if we do that we can move forward and work together much more efficiently and better serve the people of Skagit County. So that's what I have to say about that.

So are there any comments further?

Vice Chair Mitchell: I have one.

Chair Raschko: Yes?

Vice Chair Mitchell: Thank you very much for calling that retreat. I think that would be helpful. We have had a lot of turnover between Planning Commission members, new staff, new ways of doing things, and it'd be very helpful to revisit things. Also it might be a good opportunity for people to look at the current Planning Commission bylaws that we have and be real familiar with those. Perhaps those might need to be updated somewhere in the future since we do 100% legislative work now and no longer do the quasi-judicial portion. So thank you very much for calling for that retreat.

Chair Raschko: You're welcome. Anything else? Yes?

Commissioner Mark Lundsten: I second that. I'm – as the second newest member here at this point, I completely agree with what Tim says and appreciate the opportunity to review the fundamentals of this. That would help. Like the parliamentary procedure thing we had almost a year ago was a good exercise, I thought. So along those lines, I think that kind of stepping away and dealing with each other in a different frame of reference is always a good idea in this kind of forum. I didn't realize that you were the one who suggested it, Tim. Good on ya!

Chair Raschko: Well, thank you. Appreciate it. Anybody else?

Commissioner Joe Woodmansee: I can appreciate, being the newest member, the concept and I'm looking forward to _____ bit of that information. _____ of the camera, I guess.

(laughter)

Chair Raschko: Great. Okay, well, thank you, everybody, and have a good meeting. I call the meeting adjourned (gavel).