

**PLANNING COMMISSION
 COMMISSIONERS HEARING ROOM, COUPEVILLE, WA
 TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 9, 2008**

	<i>Members Present</i>	<i>Members Absent</i>
<i>District 1</i>	<i>Val Hillers</i>	
	<i>Ray Gabelein</i>	
	<i>Mike Joselyn</i>	
<i>District 2</i>	<i>Terry Reynolds</i>	
	<i>Bill Massey</i>	
	<i>Alan Schell</i>	
<i>District 3</i>	<i>Wayne Havens</i>	
	<i>Deb Eidsness</i>	
		<i>Scott Yonkman</i>

Chair Alan Schell called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Ray Gabelein, Mike Joselyn, Alan Schell, Terry Reynolds, Val Hillers, Bill Massey, Deb Eidsness and Wayne Havens via video link

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Minutes from August 12, 2008
Commissioner Hillers moved to accept the minutes as written, Commissioner Massey seconded, motion carried unanimously.

ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

None

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Jeff Tate provided an update on the Camano Gateway working group and Camano Gateway planning effort, which is an overlay district evaluating commercial development regulations for the gateway corridor for Camano Island. It includes the stretch of highway beginning as you first drive onto Camano up and through Terry’s Corner at the Y. There are four commercial areas along that stretch; two are small isolated single commercial uses; the Camano Marine Store and the Camano Senior Thrift Store. The other two areas are larger commercial areas; Terry’s Corner itself, which has commercial developments located within it and then the Gateway which is located at the intersection of Good Road and the highway. The Board directed staff to work with the community in the area to re-evaluate some of the regulations that govern commercial development in those four areas.

The first meeting was held September 4th, it is a very solid working group comprised of twenty individuals. Five or six are significant commercial landowners within the area, two are architects, a couple are land use consultants. There are members from Camano Action for a Rural Environment (C.A.R.E.) as well as several interested citizens that have expressed support and opposition for development proposals in that area in the past.

There are five meetings scheduled to discuss building design, landscaping, lighting, signage and connectivity between these commercial areas. It was a productive first meeting, talking about economic viability and economic development in the area. No-one came to the table saying no commercial development should be allowed there, those who have been opposed to some of the permits issued in the past only expressed concern about how development looks and how it functions.

The Department is hoping by the end of October a package of development regulation amendments will be brought to the Planning Commission. The group suggested members of the Planning Commission may wish to attend some of these meetings. Mr. Tate stated he would send the schedule of these meetings to the Planning Commission.

Countywide Parks Plan

Handout - initial draft of the Countywide Parks Plan.

Mr. Tate provided background to the update of the Countywide Parks Plan. The current plan was adopted in 1998. It is basically a summary of current inventory and is out of date. The Planning Department assumed responsibility for Parks January 1, 2008. Outside funding for projects and ideas is unavailable unless the Parks Plan is up to date, therefore updating the Parks Plan is a priority both to become eligible for funding and to provide more planning behind Parks, rather than just maintenance.

Mr. Tate stated the draft Plan has sections where data still being collected and will need to be inserted. This data is primarily summary statistics of what different agencies have on different properties in terms of acreage, how many camp sites, etc.

The Island County Planning Department is one of fourteen agencies in Island County that manage parks. The Federal government has holdings and management responsibility and State Parks has nine holdings in the County. Other agencies include Fish and Wildlife, DNR, two cities and a town are responsible for managing parks. There are two Port Districts, two Parks & Recreation Districts and schools also provide an active park recreation opportunity. For a small jurisdiction like Island County, that is a large number of managers of open space and park land.

There are other land managers that operate in this county under non profit status such as the Nature Conservancy, Whidbey Camano Land Trust and Seattle Pacific University.

When the Planning Department started thinking about Parks planning, we started thinking about the public and their priorities. They don't care who the manager is, they just want the open space and the resource. It became obvious that the place to start was looking at things holistically and then narrowing it down to what the County can do to with its' holdings and its ability to partner with other agencies to build better relationships.

Moving through this Parks Plan there is a basic introduction, a draft vision statement, a section on relationship to other Elements of the Comprehensive Plan and other laws. Growth Management requires consistency between the different elements of the Comprehensive Plan, the Parks and Recreational Chapter is an element of the Comprehensive Plan. The Growth Management Act states it is an optional element, but it has been incorporated as one of the Chapters in Island County's Comprehensive Plan.

There is discussion about GMA and the Comp Plan, about how to interact with the Capital Facilities Element and the Non Motorized Trails Plan that the Public Works Department works on as well as the Capital Improvement Program which establishes essentially six year financing plans for different projects.

There is a section on page 8, Identification of Other Park Agencies and Land Stewards that tallies the basic holdings and the different managers and what their holdings are. This is one of the areas where the statistics are still being gathered. Countywide it shows there are about 150 properties and about 7,000 acres of Park and Open Space Recreation Land. The standards that some of the State agencies have put together, such as the Interagency for Outdoor Recreation establish what goals and standards that communities should strive for in Park lands. This is translated into something called a Level of Service, which is essentially how many acres per thousand people there are.

The Interagency for Outdoor Recreations recommends 3 ½ acres of County Park per thousand residents. The preliminary calculation countywide of 7,000 acres and approximately 80,000 people translates into 88 acres per 1,000 people. If you break it down further into the County's share of about 2,100 acres of landholdings for Parks it translates into 22 – 23 acres per 1,000 people, which far exceeds the recommendation.

This County is in a fortunate situation. The Parks system has grown quite a bit in the last several years because the Department of Natural Resources has divesting itself from Island County. The County has assumed a number of properties. This coming year it is anticipated the County will get the last 6 or 7 properties DNR plans to divest itself from.

Commissioner Hillers asked about the expense of managing such large holdings.

Mr. Tate replied that it was a struggle, resources are incredibly limited. Parks has two full time people on Whidbey and one full time person on Camano. Three additional part-time employees help out primarily during the summer months; Parks staffing is at the same level it was ten years ago when the holdings were ¼ of the properties it has today. Parks is currently in the mode of maintenance, there is not a lot of park development or park enhancement. That is why it is crucial to have an updated Parks Plan that will provide the ability to find other funding sources.

There is excitement within the community when properties enter the system, either by local residents living around that property or by organizations that have an interest in horseback riding or trails, things of that nature. It is very challenging because you would

like to take advantage of that energy and excitement but there needs to be some methodical, well thought out plans for some of the properties.

Mr. Tate stated that another philosophical point about the Parks Plan is that in the past things have not been looked at regionally. This plan looks at amenities and services provided countywide such as football fields, baseball fields, soccer, tennis, picnic areas, horseback riding and boat launches. The Department has tried to identify by agency or level of government how many facilities and amenities there are; taking that information, breaking it down by region and comparing it to population in order to determine where future priorities need to be.

This Parks Plan is not meant to do the prioritization. It is intended to collect the data, show the data and allow for some prioritizing decision making to occur in the future. After the breakdown by region there are some basic goals and policies identified.

Mr. Tate then stated that the most substantive element of this plan starts on page 18.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES.

1. DEVELOP PARK SPECIFIC PLANS

He stated these were all new; nothing like this is in the past Plans. The Department feels park specific plans are a good idea, to start looking at individual properties to identify the needs. Some times it may be basic, raw acreage with some trails, open space and all that is needed is a small gravel area for parking or possibly controlling noxious weed or evasive plants in that disturbed area. It may be wise to address whether there are Forest Management or Habitat Management Plans within the forested areas?

Another property Rhody Park has a really interesting mix of uses; there is a campground, an off leash dog park and ball fields; there are probably different answers for different sectors of that holding in the County Parks system.

Looking at some of the Parks planning efforts in the past it is difficult to figure a financing strategy around Parks planning. Money is collected through real estate excise tax and through current expense to run Parks; it is not clearly defined how money should be spent in Parks. It is not clear where property dollars should be devoted or what improvements or plans should be put together.

In a few properties the concept of parks specific planning has begun. A few have been picked to hopefully use as templates because they are different types of parks. There is a wide range of services offered when looking at this from a business model point of view. There are active parks such as ball parks, open space and recreation areas, areas devoted to just boat launch and shoreline access, there is a cemetery in the system on Camano Island, there is a campground, a marina and Four Springs House which is its' own business, rented out for weddings and events. There are a lot of different types of mini business plans that need to exist to manage and run each of these properties.

2. CONDUCTING A NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR COUNTY PARKS

Evaluating demographics and population and Level of Service within these different regions to determine what the needs are and then prioritize those needs.

3. EXPAND FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Develop a Donation and Fund Raising Strategy. Certain properties and services should have a more active outreach for donation by the County or by a group for a specific property; identifying community efforts for donation to the Parks system other than taxation.

4. ESTABLISH LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

Determine which services should have a Level of Service standard.

5. MAXIMIZE VOLUNTEER WORKFORCE

Invite volunteer groups into Site Specific Plans and develop agreements between County and volunteer groups.

6. DEVELOP A PLANT SALVAGE PROGRAM

As the agency that evaluates Clearing & Grading Permits he stated they would be looking at these to see if there is an opportunity to draw on a core group to collect plants from these areas to be cleared and transplant them to a park property or store them on them on a park property keeping them alive for future use. The Department feels this is an idea worthy of exploration.

7. INCORPORATE LID TECHNIQUES INTO PARK PLANNING

Using the park properties as show cases of techniques the Planning Department is advocating. This will provide examples the Department can direct those interested in LID techniques to check out as well as allowing the Department to lead by example.

8. UTILIZE PARK PROPERTIES TO SUPPORT SALMON RECOVERY OBJECTIVES

Areas in the County could benefit not only from the environmental benefit of salmon recovery, but also by providing a leverage of funds from salmon recovery by identifying and implementing projects on park properties adjacent to salmon habitat.

9. DEVELOPING EFFECT DOMESTIC PET MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

This is an issue at parks; many do not pick up after their dogs at park properties. A lot of these properties are located next to water. The Department wants to be sure these areas have doggie pot stations and bags are present to enlist the help of pet owners to clean up after their dogs and thereby improve the water quality in these park areas.

10. DEVELOP A INTEGRATED AND CONSISTENT STANDARD FOR PARK SIGNAGE

Certain park properties have sign pollution, there needs to be more focus sending the message of rules and providing outreach at park properties to standardize signs and reduce existing clutter.

11. INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY OF PARK PROPERTIES

Seek ways to make existing parks more accessible as well as looking at ways to expand accessibility in new park development in order for more segments of the population to be able to utilize park facilities.

12. INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF PARK PROPERTIES

Increase public awareness of park properties, making information more available to the community through the internet and other methods.

13. INCORPORATE PARK PLANNING WITH NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION GOALS AND STRATEGIES

There is a section of county government that is housed in Public Works that deals in trails and paths for non-motorized transportation. There is an obvious connection between park properties and those goals and the Department would like to enhance methods of communication to achieve common objectives that are shared under both plans.

14. RECLASSIFY THE ZONING OF ALL PARKS PROPERTIES TO PARK ZONE

There is a zoning designation for Park, but there are lots of parks that are not zoned as Park. These need to have the zoning and the use aligned correctly.

15. ARRANGE AN ANNUAL MEETING ALL AGENCIES THAT PROVIDE PARK SERVICE AND AMENITIES

There has never been a meeting between all fourteen agencies. An annual meeting would benefit all.

16. SEEK PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES WITH OTHER PARK AGENCIES

Seeking partnership opportunities with other agencies would also be beneficial. Parks are expensive to run; a pallet of trash bags for a half year is \$2,500, fertilizing for ball fields is also \$2,000, a riding lawn mower can run up to \$60,000.

Sharing resources, using each others property for storage or combining buying force through an interlocal agreement for cost sharing and other opportunities should be explored.

Mr. Tate stated the implementation strategies are the main piece, providing a lot of direction. He asked the Commission to please continue to provide feedback to continue to explore other areas and thoughts.

Commissioner Massey stated the statistic for the recommended number of acres per thousand residents recognized as reasonable, but since Island County is more of a destination doesn't the park services need to be looked at differently.

Mr. Tate stated some of the State Parks in this County are major destinations. He stated he assumed there were also residents that use some of those properties. When it is narrowed down into County Parks, he stated he was unsure how many could be classified as major destinations. He said a lot of it is opportunistic; people come here, learn there is a park and then go there. The flip side many Snohomish County residents utilize Camano Island boat launches. It does need to be accounted for.

Commissioner Havens stated the Maple Grove boat launch is a good example of the impact of out of county folks overwhelming the area. They will throw the no parking signs into the bushes in order to find space to park their boat trailers in the summer.

Mr. Tate replied that the Department has had the same observation of this location.

Commissioner Gabelein commented on the 14 agencies managing parks, and suggested the first step should be getting the agencies to be better coordinated. He further stated that parking at some of these areas is a big issue and by coordinating with the other agencies the parking wouldn't need to be duplicated and could possibly be connected by trails.

Mr. Tate stated the County has acquired a lot of property over the last decade and it has been in the best interest to acquire those properties. How to manage and utilize the property in the past has not been addressed as well as it could be. He stated there was some catching up that needed to be done.

Commissioner Gabelein stated the need to be sensitive to tax dollars combined with volunteer efforts will need to be done.

Mr. Tate stated past experience shows volunteers who are excited about a property and willing to invest effort have not been well utilized because there isn't a plan.

Commissioner Hillers asked about the Kettles.

Mr. Tate stated there are several properties owned by the County that are not under the Parks system. They are managed by Public Works. Mr. Tate stated there needs to be a better coordination in-house as well.

Commissioner Gabelein stated he felt this was a good first step as far as inventorying the parks. He stated he felt it was important for the Planning Commission and the public to see how many acres and areas are park lands.

Education: Rules for clearing, grading & working your bluff

Presentation by John Bertrand and Bill Poss from Public Works

Hand-out – DIB #511 – Development in Geologically Hazardous Areas

Mr. Poss stated they were assigned the responsibility to review development activities within Geologically Hazardous Areas. Geologically Hazardous Areas are defined not only in the Critical Areas Ordinance but also in the Clearing and Grading Ordinance. The basic definition starts with Department of Ecology's Coastal Zone Atlas, which identifies the Landslide Hazard Areas around the perimeter of the counties and those maps have been incorporated into Island County Code as one of the elements of a Geologically Hazardous Area. In addition to that there are slopes which are within the interior areas that exceed 40% in gradient and are also regulated under this Ordinance.

Mr. Bertrand began with the handout DIB # 511, explaining the definition of a Geologically Hazardous Area has changed and the DIB he would be discussing was new and not actually been released to the public prior to today.

- What is a geologically hazardous area?
 - Erosion Hazard Area**
 - Landslide Hazard Area or Steep Slopes
 - Coal Mine Hazard Area (not an issue in this county)
 - Seismic Hazard Areas**
 - Tsunami Hazard Area**
 - Volcanic Hazard Area (again not an issue in this county)

Mr. Bertrand stated the main ones that come into play in Island County were Erosion Hazard Areas, Seismic Hazard Areas and Tsunami Hazard Areas. They are originally defined through the Coastal Zone Atlas published in 1976. Anything in a Geologically Hazardous Area, whether for a Septic Permit, a Building Permit, a Clearing & Grading Permit or any other kind of development actions the review for that Geologically Hazardous Area will come through Mr. Poss or Mr. Bertrand at some point.

Mr. Poss stated that in the Clearing & Grading Ordinance there is a detailed description of what elements are needed for a complete Geotechnical Report, which is the type of analysis that is required when someone is proposing to do some type of development activity within these hazard areas.

The applicant must hire a private consultant to do this type of analysis to evaluate the site, the potential impacts of their development and to demonstrate their development activity will not aggravate or destabilize these areas; they are not required to improve the situation but they cannot aggravate an existing hazard and they have to develop their property in a manner that is safe. They must have an adequate setback from these slopes, they must look at the drainage implications of their development activity, vegetation management and that the project is sited appropriately in order to be safe for that type of development. Most often it is residential development and addresses how close it should be to the top or bottom of the bluff and how that activity should be carried out to avoid erosion, storm water runoff over the bluff and these types of issues.

One of the issues addressed is tree clearing and view improvement. The development of these high value coastal bluff properties typically includes the desire to maximize the view, vegetation removal and tree removal comes into play as a significant question. The review is often coordinated with Fish & Wildlife because they are often within Bald Eagle habitat and that has separate issues that effect the vegetation management.

Mr. Bertrand discussed how a property owner determines whether they have a Geologically Hazardous Area on their property. He stated most people know, the Coastal Zone Atlas originally identified all the areas and gave them a designation of unstable, intermediate stability or human altered. There is a wealth of information in this Atlas. In house they use this document to figure out if someone is in a Geologically Hazardous Area. If they are going to do work on the site, a site visit will be performed at some point and identify the Geological Hazardous Area or let them know if there is such a feature on their property. Sometime is shows in the book and it is not that way in the field and some time the reverse is true, but the document is pretty correlative.

If there is a Geologically Hazardous Area on their property then they will fall under the more stringent development regulations. To remove any vegetation other than just the clearing of sod they will need a Clearing and Grading Permit and Geotechnical Report for any work that occurs within 100' of the top of the bluff. If they are removing trees they will typically need a DNR Forest Practice Permit as well.

The basic definition of a Geologically Hazardous Area per County Code was originally the bluff face itself and 100' from the top and the toe thereof. That definition is still used predominantly for field work, but as mentioned it has been further defined by the State Agencies and includes other things that don't come into play here, like the Coal Mine Hazard Areas.

Mr. Poss discussed interior slopes that are sometimes steep, such as ravines and gullies that exceed 40% in gradient. Those areas are regulated under this Ordinance as well but

don't have the prescribed 100' on either side of the top or bottom that extend out from the interior slope, basically it is just the slope itself. If someone is proposing to harvest trees on a steep slope or grade a road down a slope or do something that will impact the slope itself, the provisions in the Code require a Geotechnical Report. It is not as extensive as a Coastal Bluff Report and is called a General Geotechnical Report.

Something added in the last couple of years is Peer Review, if the Public Work's Director determines the site has specific sensitive issues or the nature of the development proposed raises some concerns the Director can ask for an independent third party Peer Review to be performed. The expense is shared equally by the applicant and Public Works. It is rare, but is available when necessary.

Mr. Bertrand discussed permits required when working in Geologically Hazardous Areas. If no vegetation is being removed, a Geotechnical Report would be reviewed through a Building Permit Application provided that only 500 cumulative yards of cut and fill is required for the proposal. Anything over that would trigger a Clearing & Grading Permit.

If there is vegetation on the site a Clearing and Grading Permit, a Geotechnical Report and in some instances if the size of the site is greater than two acres a DNR Forest Practice Application Permit would also be required. He further stated that drainage mitigation for the development proposal is one of the primary things they look at.

Mr. Poss stated one of the things that come up often is people wanting to do view improvement, tree removal, pruning and limbing in Geologically Hazardous Area. The Clearing & Grading Ordinance says that any clearing or grading within a Geologically Hazardous area requires a permit. The Code allows for review of minor activities and encourages pruning and limbing of trees rather than cutting trees down or topping trees.

Commissioner Gabelein asked if it would be possible to use infiltration systems on the publicly owned properties. He said it would need to be a coordinated effort between Public Works and Planning. He further stated that in the winter months there is a lot of water carried by the road ditches that goes out to bluffs in some cases and it would be better to infiltrate that inland where possible.

Mr. Poss stated it was something that could be looked at. As far as the hazard area is concerned, one the things looked at closely is the water management issue and infiltration is not appropriate near a bluff. The most common strategy is to capture the water in a pipe and discharge it at a shoreline. The Geotechnical Report must address the question when reviewing their drainage of whether or not it is possible to manage the water on the site rather than discharging it on the beach.

Commissioner Gabelein stated larger County parcels that are not on the shoreline might be areas that could be looked at.

Mr. Bertrand stated that had been done on the West Beach Road corridor improvement from Libby Road to Van Dam Road, where they have trenches specifically designed to

take the excess water and actually infiltrate it into the ground. Where it is feasible it is certainly being looked at and considered.

Commissioner Schell thanked the gentleman for the information and the presentation.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Public Meeting: deliberations on CPA 400/07 Camp Casey

Mr. Tate explained the public process; at least 4 meetings are held by the Planning Commission, an introduction meeting (transmittal of draft documents) two public hearings and the final deliberation at a public meeting.

Today is a public meeting for the purpose of that deliberation. The first public hearing on Camp Casey was May 27th, 2008 and the second was June 10th, 2008. The SEPA process is a parallel process that occurs for these amendments.

When considering a legislative update there are two things happening procedurally.

1. The Planning Commission process; the legislative process for updating the Code and policy.
2. The environmental review component; the parallel process at the administrative level in the Department.

Once the Planning Commission makes a recommendation and the SEPA process is complete the two processes merge and it then goes on to the Board of Island County Commissioners. The Planning Commission process has a public comment period, public testimony is taken at hearings and in writing.

The SEPA process also has a public comment period and at the end a Final SEPA Threshold Determination is issued and published in the paper. The issuance of that determination triggers an appeal period for that determination of twenty-one days.

The SEPA determination can come in one of three forms.

1. A Determination of Non-Significance (DNS), meaning the proposal has no significant adverse impacts that aren't mitigated through the existing Code. It doesn't mean there aren't any impacts; it merely means the Codes that exist today adequately address the adverse environmental impacts.
2. A Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance (MDNS), meaning that the Code doesn't adequately mitigate the adverse environmental impacts but with conditions added to the proposal it is then adequately mitigated and therefore there is no probable significant adverse environmental impacts.
3. Determination of Significance (DS), this means there are going to be significant adverse environmental impacts from the proposal and it pushes the applicant or the County (if it's a Code Amendment) into performing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

In the case of Camp Casey, the threshold determination issued in late March or early April was a MDNS. The conditions were published in the newspaper, which begins the Public Comment period. Public comments were received and are then considered during this environmental review period. In the case of this proposal the MDNS was revised after public comment. A Revised Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance was then issued which added additional conditions. The conditions are binding. If the Planning Commission forwards the Master Plan to the Board this document would then go with it.

When the final MDNS was issued April 23rd it was appealed to the Island County Hearing Examiner by Whidbey Environmental Action Network. This then puts the Department in the mode of defending the decision and going through the hearing process with the Hearing Examiner.

The Hearing Examiner held a hearing on August 22nd, 2008 which upheld the determination and conditions. The Planning Commission can now move forward with its' deliberations knowing that the SEPA process thus far has been satisfied.

SEPA will get joined with the legislative decision of the Planning Commission and both can be appealed to the Growth Management Hearings Board after the Board takes action.

The majority of the debate centered on the forest and the adequacy of the conditions to protect the forest. The County's position was that the Forest Management Plan adequately addressed the issues along with the conditions in the MNDS.

The Hearing Examiner offered guidance regarding the wording removal and cutting. The issue is not whether or not the tree is removed, but rather whether or not it is cut. Mr. Tate stated he would be asking the Planning Commission to consider the word cut rather than remove.

Commissioner Massey asked about a State Park practice used for utilities; boring or pruning and whether or not that was an option considered.

Mr. Tate replied by directing the Commission to the Forest Management Plan on page 11, where there is a mitigation plan. It states:

2. "Avoid excavation or substantial grading of areas over the root zones of trees that are designated to be retained;
3. Design building and road locations to avoid as many large trees as practical within the scope of the proposed layout. If construction within the root zone of a designated leave tree becomes necessary then enlist the aid of a qualified arborist who can oversee "root pruning" or other accepted method for safely removing some root while maintaining overall rooting integrity;"

Commissioner Massey stated the State Parks use different criteria and they require boring or tunneling as opposed to pruning the roots.

Mr. Tate discussed that in the Heritage Forest, no activity will be allowed within the Heritage Forest. A trail would be allowed, but no development, no utilities, no boring or grading of any type in the Heritage Forest. Structures are set back from the forest. There is a setback from the Heritage Forest where some activity would be allowed. It places limits on the percentage of trees and the size of trees that can be removed; if you look at the conceptual Site Plan that is in the Master Plan it shows an undisturbed setback between the forest and where any structure would be.

Commissioner Massey stated he was thinking of preserving trees directly outside of the Heritage Forest Looking at Figure 5 of the Master Plan. When walking the area he wasn't he couldn't tell exactly where he was on the site, but there seemed to be some significant trees in the area of both retreat buildings.

Mr. Tate stated Rolphe Keller and Darrell Hines from SPU are present if there are specific questions the Commission wishes to direct to them.

Commissioner Gabelein stated the picture shows parking and a driveway going to those retreat buildings, typically the major utility work could be done in that area, running straight into the building rather than through the trees.

Commissioner Massey stated the representation made by the representative of Camp Casey said that some of those major trees adjacent to the parking would be preserved. He asked for clarification from the representative.

Rolph Keller from Seattle Pacific University responded saying the intent is clearly to retain most of the large trees, in fact there is prohibition in removing any trees with a trunk diameter of over 36 inches. There is also a limitation of 40% for removing other large trees with trunk diameters of 24 inches or larger. The illustrative plan was developed using an overlay of the trees and it was discovered they would be able to avoid cutting many trees, in fact fewer than 40%. Obviously this issue needs to be addressed in the various phases and there has been a conceptual utility plan developed that would place most of the utility lines in the roadway areas including the existing campground roads.

The intent is to save as many trees as possible and to engage an arborist in the design of the facility to make sure their assumptions about the impacts to the trees are realistic. An arborist would be called when disturbing the roots of these trees to determine what is recommended, there is a technique sometimes used where there is root pruning done several years prior to excavation so the roots have a chance to spread out at the cut areas. The intent is to have these buildings in a forested area and to retain as many of the trees as possible and will be addressed specifically in the various phases.

Chair Schell moved forward with the deliberations; outlining the options available:

- ✓ Pass the Master Plan as is
- ✓ Pass with amendments
- ✓ Table for further clarification

Mr. Tate stated that was correct, regarding amendments that might be considered the issues were as follows:

1. Terminology used: removal vs. cutting
2. SPU submitted a request for two amendments in late May:
 - a. The alternative to expand Mess Hall A rather than Mess Hall B, to provide restrooms and additional seating for approximately 80 – 120 persons, that will not require a Conditional Use Permit or an amendment to the Master Plan, but will require County permits and must comply with all applicable development regulations.
 - b. The ability to allow equipment involved in teaching and research programs at Camp Casey that is moveable or housed in a free standing storage structure that has a gross floor area of 1,000 sq. ft. or less. To not require a Conditional Use Permit for that, but require County permits.

Chair Schell opened the floor to the Commission for comments.

Commissioner Hillers stated she had a list of items regarding comments that she felt should be discussed. The statements regarding SPU making profits, she asked if her understanding of the non-profit status was correct and asked for clarification regarding rentals only being to non-profit organizations.

Discussion ensued regarding the fact that they would be limited according to the rules for a non-profit organization.

Darrell Hines replied to the question, at the present time and in the past it has been SPU's practice to rent only to non-profits, but this proposal would allow rentals to profit making organizations, but that would not change SPU's status. The distinction relates to the fact they do not have proceeds that are returned to stockholders or are making a profit for investors. Whether the University makes more than it takes to initially keep up the facilities is their hope as was indicated because they hope over time they will be able to maintain what they have and provide some revenue to develop further (within the confines of the Master Plan).

Commissioner Hillers stated another comment she would like to discuss was SPU selling to a Marriott (the example used in the comment). She wanted to clarify that even if the property was sold, it would still be bound by what is in the Master Plan

Mr. Tate stated that Existing Master Planned Resorts are allowed. The RCW that allows for Existing Master Planned Resorts is GMA. The County can place those in their Comprehensive Plan. The RCW says Master Planned Resorts may even have some urban characteristics. The Statute does not say anything about who can run an Existing Master Planned Resort, anyone can. Locally the County has adopted an Ordinance that imposes designation criteria for an Existing Master Planned Resort. They require a certain amount of acreage; certain characteristics and that it existed prior to a certain date.

Someone that is a profit venture could buy that facility, but they would be limited to this Master Plan; it would be binding for any future owner. The Master Plan is the gem here. Staff has evaluated the proposal and thinks it is good for this community. The Department wants SPU to stay forever but that is not something that is contemplated by Code or staff as part of this process. Any change a future owner would want to make to this Plan would require them to go through this same process.

Commissioner Schell stated future Code changes would also need to be adhered to.

Mr. Tate confirmed the Master Plan does not trump every other regulation of Code; there are lots of regulations that will have to be adhered to when specific development proposals are submitted to the County. It is important to note, this Master Plan does not approve any development activity. Permits would be required and would need to be consistent with this Plan.

Commissioner Massey stated public comments were generally directed at the forest and he feels confident that the process and SPU have covered the publics' concerns and they have been addressed thoroughly in the Master Plan and in the MDNS.

Commissioner Reynolds asked if there were any time limits for the process.

Mr. Tate replied this was a phased review and what is being reviewed now is a concept. More specific proposals will be submitted in the future to carry out this Plan, but there are no time lines set by this Plan.

Commissioner Gabelein stated in looking at the Master Plan and figure 5, lead him to think about the fact that if this property was to be sold for different residential uses. The first thing that would be done would be clearing of the most fragile areas of the property, the bluff area, to provide views of Admiralty Inlet. This Plan does just the opposite; it protects the forested area along the bluff. This Master Plan protects the Heritage Forest and it also protects the bluff areas. He further stated the fears of this being sold and envisioning a large hotel chain wanting to operate with this type of configuration would stretch the imagination. The process they would have to go through to make any changes would be extensive and would be better addressed if and when that happens.

Commissioner Schell asked for a motion with the amendments.

Mr. Tate stated for clarification and for the benefit of the public, the motion would include the Master Plan, the technical memoranda attached to the SEPA checklist, the Forest Management Plan and the amendments being considered. He noted the SEPA materials would also be forwarded to the Board of Island County Commissioners. The amendments suggested by SPU is to include the ability of the applicant to expand Mess Hall A rather than Mess Hall B (but not both) without a Conditional Use Permit and the ability to establish a free standing storage structure that has a gross square footage not to exceed 1,000 sq. ft.

Chair Schell stated the motion being considered would be to recommend to the Board of Island County Commissioners that the that Seattle Pacific Master Plan be incorporated into the Island County Comprehensive Plan and Camp Casey be designated as an Existing Master Planned Resort with the amendments as proposed by SPU and the one amendment suggested by staff, subject to the revised MDNS.

Commissioner Gabelein so moved, Commissioner Massey seconded, the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Gabelein moved to authorize the Chair to sign Findings after being reviewed electronically by the Commission, Commissioner Joselyn seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Deliberations on CPA 210/08 Affordable Housing Amendments

Jeff Tate reviewed the process to date on the Affordable Housing Amendments. The Planning Commission held public hearings on July 22nd, 2008 on Camano Island and August 12th, 2008 in Coupeville. These amendments are root amendments, a series of amendments proposed by Commissioner Massey. It has the effect of changing the implementation strategies of the Housing Element Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

This proposal amends a couple of those implementation strategies and adds a couple more. When staff reviewed the proposal advanced by Commissioner Massey there were a few additional strategies suggested by staff as indicated in the Staff Report transmittal. There is an addition of an implementation strategy No. 2, which is a staff proposal and a couple bolded items in No. 5 and 9 - 17 that staff recommended.

There have been public comments made.

Mr. Tate stated he would like to address comments made by GayLynn Beighton. Staff is not recommending any further changes be made based on these comments and wanted to state why. It is not that comments Ms. Beighton raised are not legitimate issues to be considered; additional work must be done.

The Council of Governments is advancing a new strategy for affordable housing. Commissioner Massey's proposal stimulated that conversation. Earlier this year there was the Affordable Housing Summit. There has been momentum as a result. He stated he has met with the Council of Governments, briefing them on how to move forward, presenting a basic strategy outlining the steps that are needed to become proactive about affordability and low income issues.

That strategy has three pieces:

1. Conduct an inventory of housing issues and income issues in Island County in order to get concrete data.
2. Start moving forward on an affordability strategy. Something proactive that includes staff; that includes perhaps COG as the group that this staff person would

report to and writing out a plan – trying to solve these issues. (Today’s implementation strategies under consideration by the Planning Commission are great guidance for that program as it gets off the ground)

3. Plan implementation. The schedule proposed to COG would have implementation hopefully during 2009.

It is important to understand that all of that is happening on the side. Ms. Beighton’s comments are going to be very instrumental in that process. He stated he didn’t want to minimize her contribution by not suggesting amendments to this proposal, but felt the appropriate place to utilize her comments would be in this other process. He stated he felt the proposed strategies before the Planning Commission were a good step forward in making some things happen immediately, whereas the strategy going on through COG was going to take more time to put together.

Several of these strategies will give the Planning Commission and staff some work in the 2009 docket. One or two of these strategies should lead to preparing some policy or Code changes for the 2009 docket.

During the Coupeville hearing Steve Erickson made comments regarding concern about density, that there are some GMA limitations. Staff recognized these limitations and that is why staff included the fact that some of these may require seeking legislative change. It doesn’t mean opportunities to look at density in certain areas or looking at TDR’s as a program, especially now with Freeland’s NMUGA designation shouldn’t be considered. There are ways to look at the Code and see if there are changes that could be made.

Commissioner Massey stated one of the primary issues out of the symposium was to lift the lid on guest houses.

Mr. Tate stated it was not recommended by staff because the lid had come out of litigation through the Growth Board Hearing process, while it is still something he would anticipate would be up for discussion, it wasn’t added at this time.

It could be stated that staff would be evaluating the policies and regulations for guest cottages and accessory dwelling units. At this point it needs further review.

Commissioner Hillers suggested reviewing comments to determine if any changes were warranted. First she wanted to know if No. 17 needed to be changed from Island County Affordable Housing Trust to Saratoga Community Housing.

Commissioner Massey suggested changing it to Non-Profit Organizations.

Commissioner Gabelein stated he agreed you wouldn’t want it to be limiting.

Commissioner Hillers stated there were comments from several people saying development needed to be in urban areas instead of the rural areas. She asked where would affordable housing be on Camano, how does it happen anyplace other than Oak

Harbor, understanding growth is supposed to happen in urban areas, but Island County is rather unique and the urban areas are very limited.

Mr. Tate stated that there was no question that strategies needed to be developed; rules, policies and actions need to focus in urban areas, but there are opportunities in rural areas.

Commissioner Gabelein stated there is confusion when discussing RAIDs, some people think of RAIDs as rural, some think of it as urban and it is actually somewhere in between. He said the goals were admirable, but stated he would have a problem separating them out without being more specific about what is going to happen in the RAID versus rural.

Commissioner Hillers stated that it is very difficult when trying to find ways to do affordable housing in Island County; there is no magical solution.

Chair Schell stated getting back to guidelines of directing the Planning Department to come back to the Commission in 2009 with particular developments on these, stating it wasn't up to the Planning Commission to come up with the answers, but rather directing the Department to look at specific areas.

Commissioner Eidsness pointed out that Camano does not have any cities and without including looking at rural options most of Camano Island would be excluded.

Mr. Tate stated that affordability can come in many forms, when discussing increased density, which can really do a lot to help affordability, unfortunately density is limited to urban areas. If you get past that and start talking about rural areas there are affordable options within rural areas, whether it is within a RAID or outside of a RAID. In some cases a mobile home might be an affordable housing unit, a guest cottage or an accessory dwelling unit that is a rented unit may be an affordable unit. He further stated that he struggles with these same issues, but reminds himself that there are many pieces to this and every piece matters. The strategy needs to focus on urban and rural because there are potential answers in both areas.

Commissioner Gabelein asked if some of these could be combined as a common goal rather than separate ones to be all inclusive.

Chair Schell stated if they were combined it would be possible for the meaning to get lost. By having them as separate line items it raises the flag to think out of the box in different areas for affordable housing.

Commissioner Massey added that relative to No. 8, when his committee looked at that it was an existing part of the strategy in the Comp Plan and a very important part, there was no need to change or amplify it. It does the job it's meant to do.

Commissioner Hillers asked about transferring surplus public land, asking if there are sufficient cautions built into what is there and whether the Island County Housing Authority is the appropriate group for that transfer.

Mr. Tate stated that it would depend on how the land is acquired and who it is going to. A property may be donated, but it may have serious restrictions attached to it that would not allow it to be used for affordable housing. It really is a case by case issue.

Commissioner Hillers then asked about No. 13; **Pursue State legislation to allow for limited expansion** of non-municipal urban area (RAID's) for medium to high density affordable **and low-income** housing, asking if this needed to be changed in any way.

Mr. Tate stated that State legislation wouldn't be needed for a NMUGA, expansion of NMUGA's is allowed, it's regulated but allowed. RAID's on the other hand are precluded by State law. He stated the Commission could strike "pursue State legislation that would allow for limited expansion" or remove the word RAID's.

Chair Schell suggested striking the word RAID's, using the original proposal saying they would be looking at Non-Municipal Urban Areas just for low density housing or make it say pursue legislation to allow RAID's for low income housing.

Mr. Tate stated the original proposal was "Expand non-municipal urban area (RAID's) for medium to high density affordable housing."

Chair Schell stated that he liked that because it is something more realistic, something they can do. The idea of getting the State to change something was difficult.

Mr. Tate stated that's okay, but if they choose to go back to the original proposal the parenthesis with the word RAID inside needs to be stricken, the County can't expand RAID's without State legislation.

Commissioner Massey suggested they also have, a pursue State legislation statement, because that is something the County does on a regular basis, lobbying for changes. This is one area where change is needed.

Chair Schell suggested adding a No. 18, that would say pursue State legislation that will allow for the limited expansion of RAID's for medium to high density affordable and low income housing.

Commissioner Hillers questioned whether in the original No. 12, the word growth needed to be added to non-municipal urban area.

Mr. Tate stated that on the original No. 12, you would then remove the RAID's and add the word growth in between urban and area.

Commissioner Eidsness stated WEAN's comments dated 8/26, had some good ideas that would make housing affordable, such as # 3, leeway to meet health and safety standards by various means. They are referring to alternatives for drilling a well like catching roof waters, different types of septic systems, utilizing grey water. These would definitely make a difference in affordable housing.

4, sweat equity by owner/builder – re-instating the owner/builder alternative permitting process would make things affordable, stating she has done this herself.

She also advocated the suggestion of using home milled timber. She stated that she attempted to use her own home milled timber and was required to buy milled lumber that was much more inferior than what she had milled herself.

She also felt improving situations between landlords and tenants should be considered.

Commissioner Massey asked what had become of the owner/builder permit.

Mr. Tate stated in 2004 the owner/builder permit went away, stating he was not sure of the reason. When the new State adopted Building Code was coming online, the County made changes to the local Building Code and that section was removed.

Eidsness stated revisiting the owner/builder option would be one way to make housing affordable.

Chair Schell asked if she wanted to add a new No. 19

Mr. Tate suggested the following wording: The County should reconsider or reinstate the owner/builder permit process.

Commissioner Eidsness asked if adding and leeway to meet health and safety standards by various means.

Mr. Tate suggested that part of it could be considered under strategy No. 5, where it says "Relaxing restrictions on **infrastructure improvements**, minimum dwelling size, minimum number of rooms and house shape." He stated that water he considered part of infrastructure, but that maybe it should be expanded to be a little more clear.

Commissioner Reynolds stated that No. 3 already covered those items: "Lowering labor and material costs by supporting and encouraging alternative housing designs, financing, materials and construction such as self-help/sweat-equity housing and owner-built housing, including using alternative construction methods and materials."

Commissioner Massey stated that you could add taking a fresh look at the owner/builder alternative permit process.

Mr. Tate stated as a strategy, to re-visit and reconsider a program that offers an owner/builder permit process that is separate from the traditional permit process is a fair and appropriate strategy. He suggested it be its own strategy.

Commissioner Joselyn stated that he thought the owner/builder permit was abandoned when the new Code was adopted as the only advantage was that it was a lesser permit fee. You still had to meet all the Codes.

Mr. Tate suggested an implementation strategy that says reconsider implementing the owner/builder permit process and reconsider the standards for owner/builder construction.

Commissioner Gabelein stated he didn't feel it needed to say reconsider because he didn't feel it had been considered lately.

Commissioner Massey asked Mr. Tate to restate the general framework he had provided earlier for the possibility of accessory dwelling as a No. 20.

After discussion the following suggestion for amendment No. 20 was decided upon: Investigate the development regulations for guest cottages and accessory dwelling units to assess the possibility of increasing the affordable housing stock.

Commissioner Joselyn moved to recommend to the Board of Island County Commissioners that the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan be amended to include modification and additions to the Implementation Strategies contained within. Commissioner Eidsness seconded.

Discussion:

Commissioner Gabelein stated the TDR program is something that should be in effect today. If it is combined with Affordable housing goals, something that is very viable in our County it is doing two things: preserving Open Space and providing for affordable housing. He felt this is an opportunity to bring that back and should be for both affordable housing and other development as well. It is being used in other counties very successfully.

Looking at all of these different strategies he felt there is work yet to do. These strategies talk about affordable housing inside of RAID's, outside of RAID's, expanding the RAID's, affordable housing in UGA's, in NMUGA's, the whole County is covered. It is a good idea, but he stated he was concerned whether it would pass review by State and perhaps other groups that have concerns.

He would like to see it refined so that there are different strategies depending on where it is, such as an NMUGA such as Freeland it would be entirely different than the strategy used adjacent to a RAID or out in the Rural Zone. He stated he felt most of the affordable housing should be directed towards areas where the infrastructures are in place, including

transportation and water systems, it would then have a greater chance of passing review. There are a lot of good strategies here, but felt it needs a lot of refining. He further stated that overall he supports it.

Commissioner Hillers stated there are many good strategies that came from a number of the public comments and as implementation moves on she would like to make sure those comments do not get lost.

Commissioner Massey stated that his committee looked at the existing Comprehensive Plan to see what could be added that would lead to actual legislation, such as enacting ordinances, created a position to ensure there is work going on and that it is not just a static element of the Comp Plan. He stated they realize there are goals here that will never be met, but there will now be a tool that requires action.

Chair Schell called for a vote. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Schell stated they also needed to direct Mr. Tate to do a Findings of Fact and email it to the Planning Commission for review and response if there is an error and the final Finding of Fact will be presented to the Chair for signature.

Mr. Tate stated there was one important point to remember, not to communicate outside of an open meeting with each other they would only correspond directly to Mr. Tate should someone find an error. He would then make the correction and send it back out for review.

Commissioner Gabelein so moved, Commissioner Reynolds seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Chair Schell called for a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Massey so moved, Commissioner Joselyn seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Bradshaw
Administrative Assistant