

Anacortes Planning Commission Minutes - April 23, 2025

Roll Call

Chairperson Linda Martin called to order the Anacortes Planning Commission meeting of April 23, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. Commissioners Jim Stoneman, William McCombs, Frank Jeretzky, and Luke Currier were present. Commissioners Mills and Ryan were absent. Commissioner Stoneman moved to excuse Mike Mills and Paul Ryan. Will McCombs seconded. All Ayes.

Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes

Minutes of November 6, 2024 were submitted for approval.

Commissioner McCombs moved to accept the minutes as submitted. Jim Stoneman seconded. All Ayes.

Public Comment

No public comment received.

Public Hearings

2025 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update - Proposed amendments to the goals and policies of the Climate and the Environment & Conservation elements of the Comprehensive Plan

Libby Grage reviewed the Comprehensive Plan process to date. The Climate and Environment & Conversation elements were introduced to the Planning Commission on March 26th, then you had a discussion regarding the goals & policies on April 9th. Tonight is the public hearing for those elements. The next steps will include staff making updates to the goals and policies, completing updates to the background information and compiling the updated draft Comprehensive Plan for public review.

Katy Saunders, Makers, reviewed CE 1 stating the language was updated for clarity. The competing language was removed from CE 1.1. The repetitive language was taken out of CE 2.1. CE 3.1 was updated per the Planning Commission recommendation. We added clarifying language to CE 4.1 for future climate change impacts. In CE 4.4, the language regarding wildfires was removed and moved to section 5.4. The repetitive language in CE 6 and CE 7 was removed. We updated the minimum requirements column to be less confusing.

Linda Martin suggested the Commissioners review section 8 of the Climate element since that was not completed at the last meeting. This will be after the public hearing.

Public hearing opened.

Suzanne Roner, Anacortes, said she opposes changes to this plan. She read her letter into the record. She expressed concern that battery storage facilities could be detrimental to Anacortes. She recommends staff contact the Sedro Woolley City Council regarding these battery storage systems. She feels these are being forced into communities without regard to safety and environmental concerns. She expressed concern about fires related to BESS facilities. She expressed concern that many BESS projects rely on governmental incentives or favorable energy policies that can change.

Mark Nyhard, Anacortes, wonders if the Comprehensive Plan adequately takes care of water supply. The projections could be inadequate or excessive because the Skagit River currently flows at a different rate than it has historically. He suggests rain catching and rain gardens. He asked if there is a plan for the water treatment plant on the Skagit River for the next time it floods. If that were to happen, Anacortes could be without water for quite some time. He pointed out that although we share the bay and air with the refineries, they are not in our Comprehensive Plan. He commented that the "white stuff" blowing above the refineries is water that they should be recycling. They use 50% of Anacortes' water. They need to reduce their reliance on our water. He also expressed concern about the cargo ships that may not be burning clean diesel, which

affects the air quality.

Bud Anderson, Anacortes, said he appreciates the work the Commissioners are doing. He feels Washington state and the City of Anacortes finally stepped up to the plate to address these issues. He likes the reports from Makers as they are easy to read. He expressed concern that the refineries need to change as the city has. He would like the refineries included in the Anacortes Comprehensive Plan. He referenced 2 reports that he feels data could be extracted and included in the plan. He is unsure what the answer is, but suggests there are hundreds of acres at March's Point that could be replanted as forest.

Andrea Dalton, Anacortes, said she is concerned about the refineries. She pointed out that other Washington jurisdictions enacted landmark legislation prohibiting fossil fuels, but March's Point has no restrictions. The time is now to do that. We need to look at the impacts of the future of March's Point.

Public hearing closed.

Libby Grage pointed out that there were many comments received after the 3:00 p.m. cut-off. Those will be forwarded to the Commissioners and added to the website.

Linda Martin said the Planning Commission hasn't had time to digest all of the input and review all the sections. She suggested another meeting to have that discussion.

The Commissioners agreed.

Libby Grage said this could be added to the May 14th agenda. She reviewed the upcoming agenda items and topics. We hope to have the draft plan out to the community in June.

Other Business

Planning Department Update

John Coleman thanked everyone for their participation tonight.

Linda Martin referenced City Council meeting, stating the number of permits is still down significantly.

John Coleman said the housing market stats throughout the County have been down, largely due to interest rates.

Linda Martin commented it's good to know that it's not just here.

Adjournment

Chairperson Martin adjourned the meeting at 6:38 p.m.