

Anacortes Planning Commission Minutes - April 24, 2024

Roll Call

Chairperson Linda Martin called to order the Anacortes Planning Commission meeting of April 24, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. Commissioners Frank Jeretzky, Paul Ryan, Luke Currier, and Linda Martin were present.

Commissioners Jim Stoneman and William McCombs participated in the meeting remotely via Zoom.

Commissioner Mike Mills was absent.

Minutes

Minutes of 02/28/2024 and 03/27/2024 were submitted for approval.

Frank Jeretzky moved to accept the minutes as presented, Luke Currier seconded. All ayes.

General Public Comment

No public comment received.

Public Hearings

SDP-2024-0001 - Shoreline substantial development permit application for the installation of fiber conduit at Cap Sante Marina (Port of Anacortes)

Libby Grage reviewed the power point presentation for the Cap Sante Marina North & West Basin Fiber Conduit installation. The Port has an increased need for additional bandwidth. She reviewed the project area and construction information. She clarified that this is a Type 3 Planning Commission review, which means that the Commissioners hold the public hearing and makes the decision. Ms. Grage reviewed the history of this proposal. The pre-application meeting and neighborhood meetings were held in Jan 2024. The application was submitted on January 8, 2024 and deemed complete on February 5th. The public comment period ended April 5th. This proposal is within the shoreline jurisdiction and requires this permitting process. This project has been classified as an "accessory utility". The project is consistent with applicable SMP policies and development regulations; there is no net loss of shoreline ecological functions projected and there are requirements to ensure this. Staff recommends approval of the application subject to the proposed conditions in the staff report.

Linda Martin referenced the last recommendation in the packet. She wondered why it calls out a 2 year and 5 year timeframe if this is supposed to happen this spring.

Libby clarified that the Shoreline Management Act has a requirement for these timing thresholds to ensure these types of projects are completed in a timely manner. Although this is projected to happen this spring, things can change.

Kevin Anderson, Port of Anacortes, commented that this provides service to the rest of the marina. These trenches are about 1 foot deep and this location was chosen to make this less impactful to the paved surfaces and public access.

Paul Ryan asked if the conduit is metal where it's surface mounted.

Mr. Anderson said there is UV stabilized PVC that is mounted with metal brackets in the corner at the bend. The Port proposed using anchors there instead of moving the riprap.

Mr. Ryan asked if maintenance will be an issue.

Kevin deferred to Jenkins, the project manager.

Jenkins Dawson, Port of Anacortes, clarified that the bracket is designed for longevity and the contour of the area.

Dr. Martin pointed out that there is a comment about the industry standard for fiber of 18 inches. This proposal

is for 12 inches.

Jenkins commented that they usually go 12 inches deep because this is low voltage fiber.

Frank Jeretzky referenced the map with the white dots. He asked if this project services the entire marina.

Jenkins clarified that this is just from the Harbormasters office around to J-L docks. We upgraded the southern portion a few years ago.

Mr. Jeretzky wondered if the intent is to have service throughout the entire marina.

Mr. Dawson clarified the marina has service throughout, but this project fills in the gaps.

Ashlan Chidester, Anacortes, owner Mega Corp Telecommunications, said he is a certified fiber optics engineer. He recommends avoiding surfacing. He did a survey and feels that they could bypass this by drilling through and mounting it will be unsightly. He feels that the depth should be 18 inches due to substrate and riprap. In his opinion, 12 inches is a subpar recommendation. He has concerns about the connections proposed. He is concerned that this has not been thought out.

Frank Jeretzky asked how the Commissioners determine if the concerns raised need to be addressed.

John Coleman clarified that the Planning Commission is reviewing the permitting in the shoreline, not the project details. The Commissioners need to determine if this is in compliance with the Shoreline Master Program and should be approved. We don't expect you to know the specifics of the installation. We appreciate the comments from the public. He pointed out that if this were happening outside the shoreline jurisdiction, there would be no public comment or Planning Commission hearing.

Public Hearing closed.

Luke Currier moved to approve the application as submitted with the 9 conditions in the staff report. Frank Jeretzky seconded. All ayes.

2025 Comprehensive Plan Update Public Participation Plan

John Coleman reviewed the power point presentation on the Public Participation Plan (PPP) for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update. Staff is floating the idea of branding it as "Planacortes 2025". The City needs to update the Comprehensive Plan by the end of 2025. We've put together a public participation plan to guide how people participate in this process. He reviewed the topics that will be reviewed in the Comprehensive Plan update. The big change for this update is the requirement to include the Climate element and housing per AMI/income bands. We are projected to grow by approximately 5000 people during this planning period. We have a housing deficit in the lower income brackets. More affordable housing is provided with a variety of housing types, including middle housing (duplexes, triplexes, cottage housing, etc). We made code changes approximately 5 years ago to make development of those housing types easier and saw developers creating those types of homes based on the needs of the community. He pointed out that we are studying the available land within the City to better understand how much land we have in each zone. This land capacity analysis will tell us how much undeveloped or underdeveloped land we have. This will help us determine if the growth projections can be accommodated.

Mr. Coleman reviewed the PPP which encourages residents to participate early and often. There were some minor updates to the PPP, which were provided tonight. The significant change is that we now have a webpage, we have an email address for the Comprehensive Plan, and we added additional participants that are key members of our community. This is a living document that will be updated as we continue through the process. We are required to reach members of the community that may not normally attend Planning Commission meetings or may not have internet access, so we are working to go to where those individuals are. The Planning Commission is the main forum for participation. The Commission will make recommendations to City Council. The Planning Commission process is where the bulk of the public participation should happen.

John reviewed the PPP goals (see slide 12). The climate element will have a lot of focus for gathering public input. Land use changes will be significant too. He reviewed the communication tools that we are using. Examples include: surveys, news releases, social media, open houses, etc. We are planning outreach meetings to increase engagement. He reviewed the schedule, pointing out that most of 2024 will be outreach and workshops; Then in 2025, we will compile the information received during the PPP to create the draft Comprehensive Plan elements. Those elements will come forward for Planning Commission review and public hearings. We hope to have a recommendation regarding changes to the UGA (if needed) by March 2025. This allows the County to do the work necessary for any possible changes to our UGA.

Public Hearing opened

Sandi Phinney, Anacortes resident, commented that she works for Community Action of Skagit County and their mission is to help people exit poverty. We appreciate how much staff has put into the plan to include those that would not otherwise be engaging in the planning process. We look forward to supporting this process.

Crystle Stidham, Anacortes resident, CEO of Skagit Transit, said they are also working on their long range plan. We are familiar with the GMA requirements. We want to encourage decision makers to incorporate public transportation in all the plans. We work with Community Action and other non profit agencies too, so we understand those needs.

Brenda Tredwell, Anacortes resident, Port of Anacortes Director of Planning, thanked staff for this planning process. We understand how important it is to bring all community members into this process. We want to invite all to the Wednesday night summer concert series because it's a great way to each community members.

Paul Ryan asked if there will be GIS maps for the different land types that may be proposed.

Mr. Coleman agreed. We will have plenty of maps for review, especially for the land capacity analysis and UGA expansion. He clarified that all of the Planacortes 2025 documents will be on the webpage!

Paul Ryan wondered if the wastewater plan will be included, especially if we are thinking about annexing.

John Coleman pointed out that if there is a need to annex, we will definitely look at what it will take to serve that area with infrastructure. We will look to see if a new pump station will be needed to serve each area.

Mr. Ryan asked if there is enough Planning staff for this process.

John Coleman said that there are grants to help pay for staff, but a large percentage of the funds will go to the consultants.

Linda Martin asked if there is historical data regarding the housing deficit at the lower AMI. She's also interested in the data for the employment projections. She asked for clarification as to how we arrived at those projections.

Mr. Coleman reminded the Commissioners that staff brought some of that to the Planning Commission a few months ago. He pointed out that Skagit Council of Governments (SKOG) is working with us on that information. SKOG provided a methodology document. We will make sure it's on the new website.

Dr. Martin stated that she reviewed the Department of Commerce website for population projections, but was unable to find historical documentation that Anacortes will have the employment and population growth figures that have been presented.

John Coleman clarified that information is in the methodology. It explains how we arrived at the figures that were approved by the SKOG steering committee. He reminded the Commissioners that some of the projections are making up for the deficit that is already in Anacortes. For example, individuals with lower wage jobs are expected to live in the city because cities have a variety of housing types and supported housing through other agencies. It is not feasible to house those individuals in the county as the services they need are not there. The 0-30% AMI may include individuals that are unemployed; such as, disabled, retired, etc; so there is not a clear correlation between the housing and employment figures. The City does not need to provide that type of housing, rather we need to make sure that we have the policies in place to support the different types of housing that are projected.

Linda Martin said she likes to see the trend lines - where we have been and where we are projected to go.

Mr. Coleman stated that we used the OFM population projections. We just sent those figures off for evaluation,

so we expect that data to come back in the next few months. The Department of Commerce provided their HAP tool. We put population projections in and it tells you the figures for the housing bands.

Linda Martin asked if the Comprehensive Plan update process can be advertised in the City's utility bills.

John Coleman said we are planning on that.

Public Hearing closed.

Luke Currier moved to accept Public Participation Plan as presented. Paul Ryan seconded. All ayes.

Other Business

Planning Commission Procedures

John Coleman said the Planning Commission procedures were a mismatch of things, so we wanted to bring forward new procedures, so everyone understands how these meetings shall proceed. He presented the Planning Commission procedures. This is a total rewrite, so there is no previous information to review and contrast. He reminded them that all Planning Commission members need to be present to vote on these. Tonight we do not have all the members, so we will not have a motion to approve tonight. This will come back to the Planning Commission when all members are present.

Linda Martin asked how John would like suggestions for changes brought forward.

Mr. Coleman clarified that you can discuss them now or send staff an email, and we will update the document.

Linda Martin stated she would prefer to have all members review until the next meeting, at which time we can discuss it.

Planning Department Update

Mr. Coleman addressed the current staffing in the Planning Department. We have 3 full-time planners plus himself that do planning work. Libby, Grace and the assistant planner position that has been vacant since February. Then, since March 28th, we've only had one staff person in the office due to an unforeseen staff issue. We are getting by, but it's been tough. Also, City Council has been working with the Port to come up with an Events Center for the Cap Sante area & 9th Street. The City and Port hired an architect to come up with a basic design, layout and cost for the Event Center. The architect firm was hired about 1 week ago. They are starting the planning of this project. Once that is ready, it will be brought forward and there will be public participation.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m.