

Anacortes Planning Commission Minutes - June 26, 2024

Roll Call

Chairperson Linda Martin called to order the Anacortes Planning Commission meeting of June 26, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. Commissioners Jim Stoneman, Frank Jeretzky, Paul Ryan, Luke Currier, and Mike Mills were present. Commissioner William McCombs was absent.

Minutes

There were no minutes submitted for review.

Public Comment

Patrick Galligar, Anacortes, referenced the Shoreline Master Plan stating that the report talks about development effects on the shoreline, but there's more that needs to be considered. He gave examples of people cutting down trees, building temporary docks, etc. The State documents point out that procedural violations can occur when people don't get permits. He wants that language included in our SMP. He asked if the Planning Department deals with other activities within the shoreline.

Libby Grage clarified that any use, activity or development that occurs within shoreline jurisdiction is required to comply with the SMP whether or not a permit is required. We do have a permit process for tree removal in those areas to make sure it's compliant with the SMP. We track and monitor all activity in the shoreline areas whenever possible.

Public Hearings

Other Business

Anacortes Shoreline Permit Monitoring Project

Libby Grage said in 2022 the City of Anacortes received a grant for a shoreline permit monitoring project to make sure that development was consistent with the Shoreline Master Plan (SMP). The City contracted with Facet to complete this work. City staff and Facet coordinated with Carolyn Chase, project manager with Department of Ecology. She introduced Alex Capron with Facet.

Alex Capron commented that the SMP regulates Shorelines of the State. The City completed the SMP update in 2010 and the periodic update is ongoing. The purpose of the monitoring database is to allow the City to better document no-net loss of shoreline ecological function. As development comes in, there's mitigation for the impacts. Restoration plans allow for a "lift" in ecological function. We took a sampling of shoreline permits to review and analyze. We looked for mitigation sequencing and whether a mitigation plan was provided. The database is not required by Department of Ecology, but the City is doing this to better track projects. Staff inputs the project data into the database, which includes the monitoring requirements. If the applicant doesn't submit the as-builts then the monitoring tracking can be difficult. As projects trigger mitigation, they will trigger the need for the as-built and, in-turn, the monitoring. Reminders can be automatically sent to staff to do the monitoring.

Mr. Capron reviewed the recommendations: clearly define no-net loss; refine the shoreline permit submittal requirements; consider establishing a clear nonconforming definition to degraded vegetation conservation areas; and consider requiring mitigation performance bonds, as needed, which can help ensure that the applicant submits the as-builts. There are aspects where the City of Anacortes code can be strengthened. They also recommend clarifying when a critical areas report is required.

Jim Stoneman asked how staff will use the recommendations.

Libby Grage stated staff is super excited. There are quite a few recommendations that can be implemented right now; such as the submittal checklist and updating the permit software to capture some of the

information we need to track. Other items are more long term goals.

Mike Mills asked if staff has to time to manage this.

Ms. Grage clarified this will help make sure each and every project that needs monitoring will get monitored, even when there is staff turnover.

Paul Ryan asked if the applicants are the homeowners or contractors. He wondered what the follow-up process is and if staff will be going out to the site.

Libby Grage said when resources allow, staff will go out to sites. This will help us to plan what is needed. Things fall through the cracks with our current system.

Mr. Ryan wondered if there's enough staff to handle implementing this program.

Libby Grage said we are doing the best we can with what we have right now. She pointed out that they are conducting interviews.

Frank Jeretzky asked what the process is when someone doesn't self-report or is doing work without a permit.

Libby Grage stated the code enforcement officer would determine if there was a violation. The person doing the work and/or homeowner would be contacted and instructed on how to be in compliance. The City can assess fines.

Linda Martin said she's pleased to see that the city is willing to say we can do better and seeking input on how to do this.

Carolyn Chase, Department of Ecology project manager, said she's happy to see this report. They're thrilled with Libby's leadership to do something that is not required just because they want to do the right thing for the shorelines. This is by far the best for project management that she's seen. There are recommendations that are actionable and others that will need more work in the future.

Planning Commission Procedures

Linda Martin stated this is the 3rd review of the procedures. Last time the Commissioners wanted to discuss the mission statement and roles of the Planning Commission. Commissioner Mills added comments that can be found in the report in red. She clarified that the roles were compiled from 3 different documents.

Jim Stoneman said he likes the roles outlined in the packet.

Mike Mills commented he likes the rewrite in this draft.

Linda Martin pointed out that in the procedures, it says we need every member in attendance, so we cannot vote on this tonight. She suggests they review a clean version of the procedures at the next meeting and vote then.

Planning Department Update

John Coleman referenced the City Council meeting last Monday. They discussed and decided to hold a July 15th work session to discuss the Comprehensive Plan and docketing process. The work session will start at 5pm. Staff would like the Commissioners to attend, but not as a joint meeting. The docket items are requests for zoning map changes, specific changes to the comp plan, etc. Makers will be there to answer questions if needed. The intent is to make sure the Commissioners understand the goals for the Comprehensive Plan update. Since this is a work session, there will be no decision made. They will hold a regular City Council meeting the next week because there is a deadline of June 30th for people who want to suggest specific changes to the Comprehensive Plan.

Mike Mills asked for clarification on the July 15th meeting.

John Coleman stated that the Council will be reviewing projects to determine which will be put on the docket in the future. They will discuss how they want to see the Comprehensive Plan process go.

Linda Martin asked if the Commissioners could review the possible docket items prior to the meeting.

John Coleman pointed out that staff is working to get that out to Council and Commissioners earlier than normal. It will also be posted on the City website, so the public will have access as well.

Adjournment

Chairperson Martin adjourned the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

