

Anacortes Planning Commission Minutes - August 14, 2024

Roll Call

Chairperson Linda Martin called to order the Anacortes Planning Commission meeting of August 14, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. Commissioners Frank Jeretzky, Paul Ryan, William McCombs, Luke Currier, and Mike Mills were present.

Commissioners James Stoneman was absent.

Minutes

There were no minutes submitted for approval.

No minutes.

Public Comment

Ron Wortham, Realtor Association member representative, said he attended a meeting a few months ago regarding STR's. The Planning Commission made a recommendation to the City Council. He wondered if there is any follow-up to that.

Linda Martin confirmed that recommendation went to City Council with the unanimous Planning Commission vote. She asked John if there was an update.

John Coleman asked Mr. Wortham to check in with staff during business hours.

Ron Wortham said he will do that.

Public Hearings

Other Business

Planning Commission Procedures

Linda Martin pointed out that this has been reviewed by the Commission at several meetings, so the goal is to get this done and vote on it. She understands that the clean copy has some mistakes and redundancies in it, which will be taken care of. There's also been comments from the public. She referenced Mr. Turner's recommendations.

Mr. Coleman addressed the comments from Mr. Turner. In RCW Chapter 35 cities and towns are discussed. The City of Anacortes used 35.63 in the appointment of the Planning Commission. There's also Chapter 35A which addresses optional municipal code cities. He clarified that most of the cities in Washington, including Anacortes, are "code cities" which follow RCW 35 and 35A. They are separate sections but they work together. Chapter 35A has more specific standards that were reviewed with the City attorney. Our Municipal Code only refers to RCW 35, not 35A.

Luke Currier referred to item #2, stating he likes the idea of giving the public more time to review meeting materials. He wonders if that is an undue hardship for staff.

John Coleman said it could be, but staff is doing their best to be close to that 5 day deadline. Our minimum goal is the Friday before the Planning Commission meeting.

Frank Jeretzky wonders about the 100% attendance requirement to make changes. He suggested changing it to 80%, which is just one Commissioner not attending the meeting. The language could read: super majority of a quorum, 6 out of 7 members must be present to amend the rules of procedure.

Paul Ryan agreed. He commented that over the past several months there's been at least one or 2 Commissioners unable to attend the meeting.

Mike Mills moved to approve the Planning Commission rules of procedure as submitted in the final packet with the exception of deleting the redundancies in section 3; and to amend section 10 paragraph B to read "a super quorum of 6 of the 7 Commissioners must be present to amend the rules of procedure". Paul Ryan seconded.

No additional discussion.

Vote: all ayes.

2025 Comprehensive Plan Update - Tentative Planning Commission Review Schedule

Libby Grage said she will be reviewing the Comprehensive Plan update process. Topics include current project status, community engagement update and next steps. She reviewed the preliminary timeline and where we're at. A lot of the work going on now is public engagement, analysis, drafting proposed updates, etc. She reviewed the milestones that have happened so far, such as the open house in June. That was well attended by the public. All the information from that open house is available on the website. Then there was the council work session and the resolution establishing the 2025 Comprehensive Plan docket. Finally, the Council will be discussing the Housing Action Plan (HAP) measures that they want included in the process at their next meeting. Staff and the consultants have been collecting data and performing analysis for all the Comprehensive Plan elements; preparing draft land use & housing element goals and policies; and attending public engagement opportunities. She reminded people that they can submit comments at any time via www.planacortes.org. She reviewed the upcoming public engagement opportunities. The climate action policy advisory team is being established and will start meeting in September. She moved on to the next steps which include a draft proposed amendment that will be brought to the Planning Commission and the public. She also reviewed the general process steps for each element.

John Coleman clarified that we are in the data gathering and analysis section of this process. All of this will be reviewed by the public and Planning Commission.

Mr. Grage reviewed the draft Planning Commission schedule. The next meeting will be August 28th to begin a review of the land use element. Then, in September, the draft will be published so that the public can review it. We have special meetings listed in the schedule as a placeholder if needed. After that, Transportation will be reviewed in October; Economic Development, Capital Facilities & Utilities will be reviewed in November. John Coleman pointed out that the Economic Development committee is working on an economic strategic plan. There will be a survey for businesses to help update the economic development portion.

Libby Grage stated that due to the holidays, there are 2 meeting dates that are not available. She reviewed the schedule for 2025.

Mike Mills asked if the Transportation element includes multi-modal / non-motorized transportation.

Ms. Grage agreed it includes multi-modal forms of transportation.

Commissioner Mills asked for copies of the consultants' presentations prior to the meeting.

Luke Currier wanted clarification on the docketing via council. He asked if it's typical for them to docket an item prior to reviewing the public comment.

Libby Grage clarified that the Anacortes Municipal Code has a section for docketing. For proposals that come from the public, they get reviewed by Council first to determine if they want to docket that item. There will be many opportunities for public review and comment.

Commissioner Currier asked if there will be Planning Commission representation on the Climate Action committee.

John Coleman agreed. The Climate Policy Advisory Team is tasked with making sure that members of the affected communities weigh in on the goals & policies of the new climate element. These would be citizens in neighborhoods that are impacted by climate change. They are also looking at how to reduce carbon emissions. We are trying to get members of those impacted communities to the table to review this. The idea is to get more people to understand the process and all the work that's being done. We are trying to keep this group smaller and hoping they can get started on the review in September.

Linda Martin asked how the information for the Land Use introduction at the August 28th Planning Commission meeting will be different from what we reviewed a few months ago.

Ms. Grage commented that is a refresher and recap of the capacity for accommodating the growth projections. They will also present information from the open house and talk about the general list of land use changes that are being developed by the consultant.

Chairperson Martin wonders if STR's could be added to the housing element.

John Coleman clarified that amendments to STR's will be reviewed in the land use element. He will have staff confirm that language is included. He pointed out that what's not in the timeline are development regulation

changes that enact the policies that are discussed in the various elements. The docketed items will be brought forward in the most appropriate element of the Comprehensive Plan, likely land use. We are trying to figure out the best time to bring forward development regulation change requests. Many are dependent on the various elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Staff may bring them forward with each element or at the end of the Comprehensive Plan update. He reminded the Commissioners that there is a lot of information coming forward. Staff is trying to bring it forward in manageable sections.

Planning Department Update

John Coleman said the planning committee of Council reviewed all the HAP items. The committee is making a recommendation to Council on Monday on which items from the HAP will be worked on and brought forward. It's not possible to carry all of them forward. They are looking at which proposals make the most impact and bringing those forward. He pointed out that the Planning Commission had approved a shoreline permit for the Port's utility wiring. That was appealed to Council and then the Shorelines Hearings Board, which has unofficially decided to reject the appeal.

Adjournment

The meeting is adjourned at 7:05 p.m.