

## **Anacortes Planning Commission Minutes - September 25, 2024**

### **Roll Call**

Chairperson Linda Martin called to order the Anacortes Planning Commission meeting of September 25, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. Commissioners Jim Stoneman, Frank Jeretzky, Paul Ryan, and Mike Mills were present. Commissioners William McCombs and Luke Currier were absent.

### **Minutes**

There were no minutes submitted for approval.

### **Public Comment**

Ron Pederson, Fidalgo Pool representative, asked for the Planning Commission to support of their proposed land use change.

Kathleen Lawrence Flanagan, Anacortes, asked for staff to review tonight's process.

Mr. Coleman said he will address that soon.

### **Public Hearings**

### **Other Business**

#### **2025 Comprehensive Plan Update - Preliminary amendment proposals for the Land Use and Housing Elements**

John Coleman clarified that tonight's presentation is for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Land Use and Housing elements. He reviewed the Comprehensive Plan process. Staff is going to bring digestible sections of the Comprehensive Plan to the Planning Commission. This will include background information and proposed changes to the various elements. We aren't yet at the public hearing phase, although the public can comment along the entire process. We intend to update the policies and goals for each element, which is different from updating the development regulations. He pointed out that these work together but are not contained in the same document. First we intend to have the Planning Commission review the changes to the elements, then come back later to review the development regulations and make updates at that time. Staff will try to differentiate them during the presentations. When we get to the public hearings, we will not be asking for final recommendations from the Planning Commission. Instead, since they all work together, staff will bring it back as one document for your comprehensive review and make a recommendation to Council. Public comments will be accepted throughout the process.

Mr. Coleman clarified that tonight's meeting will include a presentation on the Land Use and Housing elements along with the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). Part of the FLUM changes are the requests from public to change zoning on their property. The applicants will not be presenting tonight as this is an introduction. The goal is to provide information and give the Commissioners the opportunity to ask questions. He reviewed the updated schedule and staff suggestions for special meetings.

Linda Martin said she really appreciated the background and all the information in the packet. There's specific language and recommendations in the packet. She asked if the Planning Commission is supposed to comment on that.

John Coleman stated this is for information gathering. Recommendations should be made when this is brought back to the Planning Commission for a public hearing.

Markus Johnson, Makers. said this is the first review of the Land Use element. There will be more opportunities for public comment. There may be additional updates to the Land Use element as it is influenced by other elements. He reviewed the proposed land use map changes. FLUM update #1 is proposed to support HAP 1.7, to provide for development of multi-family housing in areas close to the neighborhood grocery/commercial concept. The goal is walkability to small commercial uses. The eastern

portion of this area is close to a stream, which will be taken into account.

John Coleman clarified that RLD (residential low density) in the FLUM corresponds to R1, R2 and R2A on our zoning map.

Markus Johnson moved on to FLUM update #2 references the neighborhood commercial options. This is trying to implement HAP 6.5 and there are 2 options proposed. Option 1 correlates to the map and adds commercial overlays. In option 2, the changes would happen in the zoning code, not the map. The rest of the FLUM updates were requested by property owners. Update #3 is the Port of Anacortes asking for change from aeronautical to light manufacturing; update #4 is Fidalgo Pool's request; update #5 is a request from industrial to RMD (residential medium density); update #6 is the Port of Anacortes change from light manufacturing to manufacturing & shipping to maintain continuity for this area; update #7 is Port of Anacortes request from commercial and MMU to Commercial Marine to match the zoning in that area; update #8 is to add all unincorporated ACFL parcels to the UGA; and update #9 is to expand the UGA to include the Signal Hill properties.

John Coleman pointed out that updates 8 & 9 are UGA expansion requests. We cannot just change the FLUM to expand the UGA. We have to go through a process with Skagit County to incorporate these areas. We need to accelerate the process for these to coordinate with Skagit County. Staff needs a formal recommendation from the Planning Commission and City Council to submit to Skagit County so that they can work on the UGA map and changes. We anticipate the Commission completing review in November and then it will go to Council.

Mike Mills wondered who the applicant is for update #8.

John Coleman stated the City of Anacortes is the applicant. These parcels are city-owned properties that we want included in the City limits. Most of this area was acquired to be added to the ACFL.

Mr. Johnson moved on to the Land Use updated goals & policies. The general themes include: minor verbiage updates to goals and policies language to use "maintain" since many of the goals have been met; policies that are suggested to be removed; addition of new policies; and policies that might be too similar to one another (highlighted as a possible duplicate that needs to be combined). He reviewed some examples of all of these general themes. He moved on to the general themes in the Housing element goals and policies: language revisions to reference HAP work; updates responding to racially disparate impacts analysis and other HB1220 requirements; and addition of new policies. He gave examples of these housing general themes. These look at providing more options in housing.

John Coleman said these will have an impact when we review the land use and zoning changes. We are trying to reassure the community that large scale changes to neighborhoods are not what we want; rather incremental changes are preferred. In the past, the zoning regulations were not specific enough to guide development, so often owners would have to go through the conditional use process for each and every proposal that is not outright allowed. This change is to make development easier to understand what is allowed. The City Council stated they want development to be clear.

Linda Martin said she understands that we have been doing this on a case-by-case basis, so having more procedures for development is a positive change. She expressed concern that one minus is things that are allowed by right have less public input. She also sees taking away planned unit development as a negative. This may also limit creativity in development. She moved on to policy H-2, but wonders how it will be operationalized.

John Coleman stated that as the zoning code is developed and changed, we would not allow for large apartment buildings in single-family neighborhoods. We prefer to look at incremental changes to neighborhoods. He reminded the Commissioners that conditions would be specified in code. Regarding PUD, our subdivision standards were designed with flexibility to act similarly to a PUD. That is the feedback we received from Council when they removed that in 2017. For larger projects, conditions are still a possibility. This is intended to make smaller middle housing easier to build by removing the conditional use process.

Mike Mills commented that we need to be careful as we put more into "by right". If we open this too wide, we lose control of the review.

Frank Jeretzky said these could create dispute. He gave the example of "allow changes over time", stating that his idea of "over time" may be different from other people's. There's a degree of vagueness that could be disputed.

John Coleman reminded the Commissioners that they can recommend changes to any and all of these suggested policies.

Markus Johnson read the proposed new policy for short-term rentals.

### **Planning Commission Discussion**

Linda Martin asked if the Planning Commission needs to discuss each of the docketed proposals.

John Coleman clarified that the applicants will present those at a future Planning Commission meeting, so hold off for now.

Mike Mills recommends using firm definitions. He gave the example of "bicycling" stating that we need to understand the definition of a bicycle. He asked if e-bikes are considered to be a bicycle for allowed uses. Others that need definitions include "over time" and "affordable housing", but there may be others.

Markus Johnson said the Comprehensive Plan is a 20-year range, so "over time" could be halfway through that.

John Coleman said affordable housing is defined in the GMA, so we could use that language. He's not sure "bicycle" needs to be defined in this broader document. This is not talking about the uses, rather this talks about where land could be set aside for areas that "could be used for" bicycling.

### **Planning Department Update**

John Coleman said staff would like to add a special meeting on October 2nd to review the updated population projections from Skagit County. The county was unable to handle the 0-50 AMI so they made changes to the numbers and distributed the lower AMI's across the cities in Skagit County. Skagit Council of Governments (SCOG) steering committee reviewed these figures too. We'd also like you discuss the land use and housing elements at that meeting. This will not include the annexation petitions. You should also have time to discuss the housing action plan committee reports. The October 9th meeting will be about the transportation element. The second Open House is scheduled for October 23rd where the consultant will give presentations and opportunities for public participation.

Linda Martin recommended a charrette type of process so the public can feel heard in this process.

John Coleman commented that staff would like to add another Planning Commission meeting in late October to talk about land use and housing unless the PC completes that at an earlier meeting. We would still like to have an additional meeting because we have a shoreline permit that needs to be reviewed and a hearing held. The Commissioner's determined that October 30th works best. We will see if the annexation petitions can be included in that meeting as well. Then November 6th, the Transportation element will be continued. November 13th is a regular meeting and we anticipate a public hearing on land use, housing, and transportation. There may be an additional shoreline permit to review.

John Coleman moved on to department updates stating the Transportation survey is available for people to take. There's also information online for the Climate Team meeting. These meetings are open to the public to view, but no public comment will be taken. Mike Mills is the Planning Commission representative.

Mike Mills provided the mission statement of the Climate Team. He likes the cross-section of members on the team as it's very diverse! We reviewed the asset inventory, and the potential impacts and hazards that the climate projections say we need to prepare for. We also got a high level review of greenhouse gasses and closed with next steps. We discussed additional meetings so that we could provide more feedback.

John Coleman said the City was awarded a \$197K grant to improve the online permit software (SmartGov); to work with consultants to create SOP's for development review; and for digitization of older paper files.

Mike Mills pointed out that the Anacortes Senior Center is holding sessions on the GMA. He wondered if the Commissioners need to "excuse" the Commissioners that could not make tonight's meeting. John Coleman reviewed the new procedures and determined they should.

Jim Stoneman moved to move to excuse the absences of Luke Currier and William McCombs. Mike Mills

seconded.

Vote: All Ayes.

Linda Martin reminded everyone that the Short Course on Planning is free and occurring tomorrow night.

**Adjournment**

Linda Martin adjourned the meeting at 7:47 p.m.