

SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA
JOINT MEETING WITH CITY OF SHELTON & PORT OF SHELTON
Mason County Commissioners' Chambers
March 2, 2005
9:00 A.M.

Present:

City of Shelton – Mayor Tarrant, Commissioner Taylor, and Commissioner Pannell

Staff: Administrator O’Leary and Interim Planner Davolio

Port of Shelton – Commissioner Taylor, Commissioner Faughender, and Commissioner Byrd

Mason County – Commissioner Kamin, Commissioner Sheldon, Commissioner Ring-Erickson (absent) and Staff: Planner Fink, Planner Goins

Economic Development Council (EDC) – Matt Matayoshi, Director

1. Call to Order - The meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m. by Chairperson Jayni Kamin.
2. Comprehensive Plan Updates –

Mr. Bob Fink, Planner updated the Commissioners of the Mason County Comprehensive Plan updates. The Board of County Commissioners adopted a Public Participation Plan for the 2005 mandated Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) review. The review and any amendments to the comprehensive plan regulations must be completed by December 1, 2005. The input and suggestions from the public will be completed by May 1, 2005. Following the public input the Planning Advisory Commission (PAC) will review the public suggestions and specifically address only the necessary updates that are required by GMA by December 1st in the balance of the year. The PAC schedule will be submitted to the Board in June or July, which will set the work program for the remainder of the year. Action will be taken on required components in November to meet the December 1, 2005 deadline. A new component to be included is the economic development element. Mr. Steve Goins, Planner will be leading that effort for the county. The economic development element will be a major component done in 2005, the other changes will be just refining and updating the information that already exists in the plan. Another component that will be of interest to both the City and Port Commissioners is the land uses around the airport.

3. Economic Component –

Cmmr. Taylor commented to Mr. Fink that the port needs to be actively involved in the airport component to ensure the comprehensive plan is in compliance with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) or the port would risk loosing the airport. If certain types of development occur in proximity of the airport, the FAA and State Aviation could shut down the airport. There have been 3000 or more airports lost in the United States because of development near airports.

Cmmr. Kamin asked if the port’s comprehensive plan was incorporated into the mason county comprehensive plan.

Cmmr. Byrd stated the port has an airport plan and a comprehensive plan. The ports comprehensive plan is not incorporated into the county’s plan. The ports comprehensive plan is due to be updated in 2006.

Mr. Fink stated that coordination for the airport component is necessary for the update of the county’s comprehensive plan.

Cmmr. Taylor stated they could only plan for the port’s property, but the changes made around their property will effect the status of the airport.

Cmmr. Byrd stated that at a recent Department of Transportation Aviation (DOT) meeting they were adamant about the port closely monitoring the activities in the city and county near the airport.

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Cmmr. Sheldon stated at the Legislature he is working very hard on the regional water & sewer project and it appears that it will be moved up on the priority list. The Washington State Department of Corrections (WSDOC) would like to place 250 more inmates at the Washington Correction Center (WCC). It would be a great opportunity for the community because growth depends on infrastructure.

Cmmr. Sheldon also stated that the Governor would be attending a meeting held at Alderbrook on Saturday March 6, 2005 in regards to Hood Canal issues. The meeting would be a potential opportunity to secure capital budget funding for the Belfair sewer system.

Cmmr. Kamin asked if the WCC would be adding on to their facility to house the additional 250 inmates and if more jobs would be created by the addition.

Cmmr. Sheldon replied, yes the WCC intended to add on to their facility and that the additional inmates would create possibly 100 new jobs.

Mayor Tarrant said that there are multiple impacts to the regional sewer plan that would be impacted by the additional inmates at WCC, such as housing, roads, and traffic.

Cmmr. Byrd stated that the Department of Transportation (DOT) would need to address the traffic and activity on State Route 102.

Cmmr. Sheldon stated it's a good opportunity but coordination would still need to be done. He would like to see the county, port, and city support the project moving forward.

Cmmr. Faughender said he thinks it is exciting that all of the elements of the regional water & sewer plan are becoming a priority. He commented that the WCC was currently doing their ten-year plan.

Cmmr. Byrd said he thought Commissioner Sheldon would be seeing more on the movement of the regionalization as the rate structures have been gone over and the contract finance committee has finalized their thoughts on the treatment plants.

Cmmr. Faughender said an environmental report has been submitted for review and the agency is waiting for feedback. After the feedback is reviewed the designing and building of phase one would begin.

Cmmr. Byrd commented that the regionalization program has not had much participation by the county, most of the participation has come from the state, city, and port. He stated he would like to see more participation from the county in the urban growth plan as the regionalization program develops and expands.

Cmmr. Kamin stated the county hadn't been as involved because they weren't major stakeholders in the initial process of the plan.

Cmmr. Byrd stated that the county wasn't a major stakeholder in the beginning process of the plan but as it is developing the county, city and port need to work together as major stakeholders to obtain more money in the process.

Cmmr. Kamin stated everyone is getting a better understanding and appreciation for the infrastructure and urban amenities with a better education of what the comprehensive plan entails and what it means to try and encourage growth within urban growth areas.

Cmmr. Kamin asked what the time line for the WCC project was.

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Cmmr. Sheldon stated from his understanding the state would put more money in the capital budget this year for improvements. It may move the project up to another year or even sooner. He doesn't know all the timelines for the eventual build outs, in Shelton he can see it becoming a higher priority for the Department of Corrections. The WCC is the keyhole to all inmates processed. Each inmate processed is in Shelton for six months before they are assigned to another prison.

Cmmr. Byrd commented the Correction Center is a top priority for both the sewer and water system.

Mr. Davolio, Interim City Planner, stated he would be working on the population counts for the city.

Cmmr. Faughender said the port and the Economic Development Council (EDC) have discussed how the economic component needed to be added to the comprehensive plan. He suggested that the EDC could put together a work group to develop and submit suggestions through one entity. The job growth and economic development issues are silent in the comprehensive plan as it is now, so the addition of the economic component would address the needs of the future for all entities involved.

Mayor Tarrant stated the city, county and port all need to be included in the plan update to create universal planning regulations to prevent conflicts after the fact.

Mr. Oleary said the neighbors to mason county are running out of land for residential development. He believes in the coming years there will be more pressure to put residential development in Mason County. As the economic development plan is written it is important to remember and reserve places for business activities. If there is not a reserve for industrial and commercial businesses it would be very tough to come back and retro fit it later if ever and it would also undermine the capacity to provide services as well. It is necessary to expanded broad tax base to make the unit of government work best

Cmmr. Faughender said mason county is fortunate now to have sites that are larger than forty acres in size to accommodate industrial growth but only if it is preserved for economic growth will it be available later as the county continues to grow and expand.

Cmmr. Byrd said that two years ago people thought the lumber industry was dying and gone, but the new mill out at Johns Prairie are showing signs of expansion to keep up with the of the demands. The Port is currently discussing how much land they have to accommodate the expansion needed. He believes this is a sign of success for the county.

Cmmr. Faughender stated the mills current employment is already past one hundred and it will continue to grow with the expansion.

Cmmr. Sheldon stated the rail system is an important part of the economic future and making sure it operates smoothly to accommodate the lumber mills is very important.

Cmmr. Byrd is working with the foreign trade zone because they are bringing raw material in from Canada and wish to increase the amount they are bringing in. If the economic structure is in place for them it will benefit the company and Mason County.

Cmmr. Sheldon stated the fact is that the population base is and will continue to grow in Mason County and his hopes are the jobs are here to support the residents and that they are not just commuter residents.

Cmmr. Sheldon excused himself at 9:30 a.m. from the meeting.

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Cmmr. Kamin stated a challenge that exists is most of the population moving to mason county is moving to the rural areas. The economic development planning efforts need to be focused on encouraging industry growth to support the increase. She would like to organize a group through the EDC and encourage common ground statements to be made so performance measurements could be developed. The county has received a grant from National Association of Counties (NACO) to look at economic impact of the health industry in Mason County. Over the few months there will be focus group meetings to explore the health industry needs. Mason County is a great place to live, and as more people are attracted to move here there needs to be jobs to support them here. The current population is aging and they will require more medical facilities and health care accommodations. Currently forty-four percent of the workforce is traveling out of town for medical and health care needs. The county would like to assist and encourage the local economy with a new health care industry to promote people to use the local health care providers. Many of the employees of the county have Group Health insurance and most of the services are offered in Olympia, which encourages people to travel out of county for their health care needs.

Mayor Tarrant said the economics of the federal funding for health care in Mason County is a serious issue when it comes to keeping the services here. The funding issues are centered on the pay rate for the aging population and others in Mason County. It is important to continue lobbying not just the state level but also the federal level for changes in the federal funding for health care. There are phenomenal medical providers already here that do a great job but they to are having a tough time dealing with the funding side of it.

Cmmr. Pannell said recently ten doctors have left the area, and at that rate it won't be long until the whole system starts to suffer. She doesn't believe that it has been identified all of the reasons why that is happening, but it might be really worth looking into. Investigating the reasons doctors are leaving the area may assist in developing changes in regulations and funding issues for the retention of the doctors in the future.

Cmmr. Faughender said the community needs a regional care unit to be able to get treatment here.

Mayor Tarrant said the permitting is done for the regional care unit. There were permitting difficulties with the private property portions but it's been resolved.

Mr. Oleary said it was a challenge obtaining the easement right away across the neighbor's private property.

Cmmr. Byrd would like to see the doctors that have part time practices here turn them into full time practices.

Cmmr. Kamin questioned how the other Commissioners would like the county to share their information.

Cmmr. Taylor stated that she would like to have more communication than just the quarterly meetings for cohesive strategic planning.

Cmmr. Taylor stated the city and county has great staff for support where the port doesn't have the administrative support to keep them informed on the information.

Cmmr. Taylor commented that not only do they not have administrative staff support but also they are only part time Commissioners and they all work regular jobs.

Cmmr. Byrd stated a major function of the port is to bring the industry here and provide the property for development of their business. He also said he would like to see the airport grow into a commercial entity at some point.

4. Urban Growth Boundary –

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Cmmr. Faughender said he would like the urban growth boundaries expanded to include more industrial areas. He said there is land just outside of the urban growth boundaries and recognizes the problems of bringing it into the boundaries, but feels that in the future there would be the need to include them inside the boundary.

Mr. Oleary said the GMA requires that the urban growth boundary accommodate the projected growth for twenty years, which is why the population allocation is so important. In Lewis County several years ago the economic study that was done documented the need for industrial land. On the basis of that study the City of Chehalis was able to establish an urban growth boundary that was virtually double the size of the city, that had almost no population allocated to it. With the proper documentation the pieces of land that are just outside the UGA could be looked at to determine if from an economic development standpoint it would be better to expand and bring them into the boundaries now. The city has been looking into extending utilities to those areas. He said that looking at the UGA expansion in terms of economic growth rather than population growth would be more beneficial.

Mr. Matayoshi stated Lewis County used a firm from Spokane for their economic study to determine issues such as the UGA boundary expansion, population and economic growth. He said the study worked very effectively as a tool for Lewis County. He thought Mason County would benefit from the same kind of study if there was a funding source to support the study.

Mr. Matayoshi said he had talked with the growth management division of Community Trade & Economic Development (CTED) and they recommended using the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) guidelines for the economic element. The CEDS document is produced by EDC and it would be a great place to start and add to it for the economic element. He suggested adopting the elements or the entire Port of Shelton comprehensive plan to the economic development element. An issue that was raised recently was a concern for the HWY 101 corridor as related to the Port of Shelton and coming up with a plan to consider that aspect. The Port of Shelton has already carefully considered that and recognizes they are either the first or last thing people would see as they arrive or go from the community. He felt that the Port of Shelton's comprehensive plan would fit very well into Mason County's plan.

Mr. Oleary said data is the foundation on which everything is built upon and the other is policy that may or may not be effective when using another entities document.

Cmmr. Taylor stated the CEDS document is the document that the State uses to base their decisions on.

Mr. Oleary stated the CEDS data comes from the census and other information that has been analyzed. He said the county could hire a consultant to reinvent the data or have a staff member decide what information would be useful to include in the plan. He felt there was a lot of useful data in document but the County had not embraced it.

5. Highway 101 Appearance –

Cmmr. Taylor stated the mess in front of the Port Offices on Highway 101 where the World War II housing was is terrible and she would like the county make the owner clean it up. The owner applied for a permit to demolish the houses along time ago, he started the project and has not been proceeding to clean up the mess. The owner has emailed the Port Commissioners with all kinds of excuses as to why it was taking him so long to clean up the site.

Cmmr. Faughender said they have written him a letter requesting he complete the clean up on his site and he wrote back stating he was having difficulty with his truck but that he had gotten it fixed and would be working on the clean up right away.

Cmmr. Taylor said perspective tenants have noticed and commented on the site and think the port owns the land. It does appear to be the port's property because of the location of it, so people assume it is.

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Mayor Tarrant said the Millcreek property near the first Shelton exit is also an eyesore. He said there is property in the city limits that are also an eyesore and they are working with and encouraging the owners to clean them up.

Cmmr. Byrd said that as the WCC expands its facilities the Port Commissioners feel there should be some improvements at the highway 101/102 intersection to accommodate the additional traffic. He would like to have a pedestrian overpass or a tunnel to tie into the tourism and trail systems that are being discussed. Commissioner Taylor has not received any assistance from the Department of Transportation (DOT) for the pedestrian dangers that are already existing. He suggested all of them join efforts to contact DOT and request they raise the priority of the Highway 101/102 intersection and pedestrian walk ways.

Mayor Tarrant suggested also contacting the State Legislators to request the first Shelton exit interchange improved for safety.

Cmmr. Faughender questioned what the staking was for on Johns Prairie Road and Batstone Cutoff Road.

Cmmr. Kamin said the county is working on updating and reconfiguring the trail system. She was not sure on the time frame for the project and offered to get back with Commissioner Faughender. There are plans to get the trail built and staff is working on a policy to use in conjunction with a countywide map.

Cmmr. Byrd questioned if the trail will come down to the marina and back into the city.

Cmmr. Kamin stated it was the ideal route and the trail committee is looking at all the different connections, but it probably won't be until next fall.

Mr. Fink said in the next couple of months it will be going through the public process. The detailed work as to all the routes will probably take a year or so.

Cmmr. Byrd asked if there is funding available after all the projects are tied into one master plan.

Mr. Fink stated it was not necessary for the entire network to be complete before funding could be applied for. It was the physical project that fits into a larger scheme that secures the funding.

Cmmr. Byrd said he would like to see a signal light at the Highway 101/102 intersection.

Cmmr. Kamin said she spoke with the TIPCAP committee about the access points onto the State Highways and emphasized the improvements that were needed for all of them.

Cmmr. Taylor said she had understood that all work or improvements made to the State Highways were done as results from numerous accidents and also as a result of huge public input. She suggested that huge public hearings would need to be held here in Mason County if any improvements are going to be made.

Cmmr. Kamin said that certainly with the planning efforts led by the county staff public hearings would be held for public input. She questioned the Port Commissioners, if they had a public participation planning process. She asked if they planned to hire someone to help update their comprehensive plan in 2006.

Cmmr. Faughender said a consulting firm did the ports original comprehensive plan five years ago, and since then only minor changes have been made yearly to keep it current. The plan is a key element to the ports business.

Cmmr. Taylor said the city, county and port comprehensive plans were all adapted at different times and have different deadlines. It has been difficult to coincide with one another's plan, but she would like to see all of them become cohesive to support each other.

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Cmmr. Byrd stated he wasn't sure how many have noticed the ports offices have been moved and are insight now of Highway 101. They are also now in the process and are waiting for permits to build the new meeting room inside of their new building.

Cmmr. Kamin questioned if the Port would like to host the next joint meeting.

Cmmr. Taylor stated they would love to host the next meeting in their new office.

The next joint meeting was set for June 1st or June 8th at the Port office. The date would be confirmed by phone.

Cmmr. Byrd stated there would be a Regional meeting on March 24, 2005, 6 p.m. at the Civic Center.

6. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 10:09 a.m. due to no further business.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MASON COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Jayni L. Kamin, Chairperson

ATTEST:

Lynda Ring Erickson, Commissioner

Rebecca S. Rogers, Clerk of the Board

Tim Sheldon, Commissioner