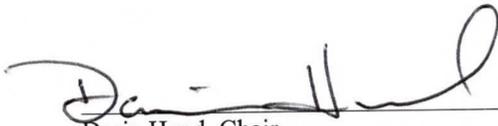


PLANNING COMMISSION

SUMMARY MINUTES

December 14, 2020

APPROVED AS WRITTEN



Darin Hand, Chair

APPROVED WITH NOTED
CORRECTIONS

Chair

**ISLAND COUNTY
SUMMARY MINUTES
COMMISSIONER'S HEARING ROOM, COUPEVILLE, WA
DECEMBER 14, 2020**

Meeting was called to order at 2:05 p.m. by Darin Hand, Chair.
(Recording timestamp: 00:0:03/1:38:20)

Prior to Roll Call, Chair Hand introduced a new Commissioner to the Planning Commission – Commissioner Steve Schwalbe - District 3, Position 3. (Recording timestamp: 00:0:40/1:38:20)

ROLL CALL:

(Recording timestamp: 00:43/1:38:20)

District 1 - Margaret Andersen (Vice Chair), William Criswell, Kristen Stavros

District 2 - Darin Hand (Chair), Joseph Busig

District 3 - Beth Munson, Steve Schwalbe

Planning & Community Development Staff Present:

Mary Engle, Planning Director, Meredith Penny, Long Range Planner; Grant Johnson, Associate Planner, Jonathan Lange, Planning Manager, Keith Higman, Public Health Director

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: None.

(Recording timestamp: 2:51/1:38:20)

ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC (not on the agenda) - None.

(Recording timestamp: 4:03/1:38:20)

WORKSHOP (Recording timestamp: 4:37/1:38:20)

Chair Hand initiated the workshop by handing the meeting over to Penny.

Penny briefed the Commission and the public on the proposed amendments, (Chapters 17.03, 17.04A, and 17.06 of Island County Code addressing standards for Accessory Dwelling Units) and the discussions had by the Planning Commission during previous meetings. She readdressed the original proposal, and a series of remaining and frequently asked questions on Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) from the November 23, 2020 Planning Commission Hearing relating to: health requirements for septic and water, certain building requirements, short-term rentals, storm water, and the Growth Management Act and its thirteen goals.

Chairman Hand addressed the Commission for input or comments.

Public Comments made by: (Recording timestamp: 30:26/1:38:20)

Vice Chair Andersen asked questions regarding the amount of attached and detached ADUs, if the specific code changes in ADUs will have any motivation to develop property differently than the way they are currently being developed, and if there is any requirement for the owner of the property to occupy the primary residence.

Commissioner Criswell asked if the language for ADU setbacks be adjusted to: “front-yard setback”. He also asked if independent water-system districts will be allowed to determine and define their own standards for ERUs (Equivalent Residential Units).

Higman, Public Health Director expanded the explanation given by Penny, indicating that one of the reasons Health Departments defer back to the water system, is to determine whether the system has the capacity to provide the service. He stated it would be beneficial for the some of the larger systems to compare notes on their decision process for ADU applications, and possibly find some common ground when making decisions. This could benefit the general public going through the permitting process. (Recording timestamp: 42:57/1:38:20)

Commissioner Busig read an excerpt from a memo written by Jill Wood, Environmental Health Director stating “due to the wide variety of situations for development, there is not a one-size fits all solution to increasing the opportunity for affordable housing in rural areas in Island County. Affordable housing is truly optimal in urban areas with existing water and sewer infrastructure in place” and commented that there hasn’t been any formal plan done regarding getting affordable housing in Island County, and was wondering if ADUs was a solution.

Penny explained that getting affordable housing in rural areas is a lot harder under the Growth Management Act. The Growth Management Act really wants to push higher density housing into urban areas, higher density development is less expensive per unit because of shared land costs. She noted that the County Commissioners are aware that ADUs will not be the ultimate solution, but will render more options in the rural areas.

Higman answered additional concern from Commissioner Busig regarding the building of ADUs on critical aquifer areas. Higman stated that there are two components included in Island County Code Title 8 which the Health Department implements, and one of them refers to Critical Aquifer Recharge Area protection which is primarily applied to areas that are non-residential in nature. The intent is to evaluate project proposals at the time of applications and their potential to contaminate ground water. Higman affirmatively indicated that there is county regulation in place to protect ground water from depletion, contamination by chemicals and other materials, and sea-water intrusion.

Commissioner Schwalbe asked how long a short-term rental is. (Recording timestamp: 55:46/1:38:20)

Penny stated that short-term rental is a vague term that is not defined currently in the Island County Code since they are not actively regulated.

Vice Chair Andersen asked if Penny can expand on allowing both attached and detached ADU in higher density areas like RAIDs or UGAs. Penny indicated that the Commission could limit

allowing both an attached and detached ADU on a single parcel to only the more dense areas. And that this may be advisable because those areas tend to be served by Group “A” Water Systems which have more capacity to handle the extra ADUs. Penny also showed her answer using a map as a visual, but stated it will be discussed in more depth at a later date.

Commissioner Stavros asked what type of discussions or research will be done on short-term rentals in the future.

Penny stated that there are concerns by the Board of County Commissioners about this topic, but the 2021 Work Plan was recently adopted and did not include this topic and there has been no indication as to when it will be up for formal, work-plan discussion.

Other questions and chats were presented by the Chair from the chat session of the Starleaf Application. (Recording timestamp: 1:03:56/1:38:20)

Chair opened up the meeting for public comment. (Recording timestamp: 1:05:17/1:38:20)

Dean Enell, Langley WA – spoke on growth in the rural areas and asked that the 35-ADU cap not be changed

Maria Strickland, Oak Harbor WA – spoke on the need for ADUs in different ways that benefit seniors as they get older, and or may need alternate income. She also asked about the 10-ft setback from the main house. Penny answered her question. Maria also asked if any Commissioners present had any comments on her perspective. Vice Chair Andersen asked Maria about her water capacity in building a detached ADU. Maria answered that she is on sewer and not septic. She also stressed she has ample setback for her situation.

Jerry Hill, Freeland WA – spoke on his experience with water systems, and the need to focus on higher-density affordable housing areas. He also asked about the County’s Aquifer requirements and ADU zoning standards.

Higman explained that Washington State Department of Health regulates the drilling of wells in the State of Washington, which requires all license and construction standards. He went on to explain the setback requirements, and processes involved in abandonment of wells.

Penny expanded on higher density housing concerns and that there were recent efforts in Freeland for multi-family apartments, duplexes, tri-plexes, cottage housing, live/work units, but because of lack of sewage system, it is a restricting factor in-terms of density. Next year there is a plan to look at the provisions for mixed use, and multi-family development, but need to ensure it is feasible, and that the standards match what can actually be developed.

Tracey M., Camano Island WA – spoke on the need for more higher-density housing, and keep rural areas rural

Chair Hand thanked everyone for their comments and reminded everyone of the next meeting on January 11, 2021, and entertained any other motions or comments prior to ending the meeting. (Recording timestamp: 1:31:22/1:38:20)

Vice Chair Andersen stated that she has asked the staff to look at amending the Findings of Fact by adding an additional finding to reflect all of the research and inclusion of the Health department and water system compliance and any development of ADUs, and asked the additional of Findings of Fact read: “The Planning Commission find the proposed amendments to be consistent with existing requirements for housing development under the public health and water system compliance.”

Chair Hand entertained a motion to adjourn. (Recording timestamp: 1:37:36/1:38:20)

Commissioner Schwalbe motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Andersen seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 3:41 p.m. (Recording timestamp: 1:38:08/1:38:20)

Respectfully submitted by: Lourdes Shuart