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CLARK COUNTY
WASHINGTON

COMMUNITY PLANNING SUMMARY MINUTES

Rural Lands Task Force Meeting #15 – February 9, 2010

Members Present: Ginger Burr, Sharon Bussler, Ingrid Dankmeyer, Dan Dupuis, Russ Grattan, David Halme, Rocque Merritt, Monty Multanen, Danny Walsh, Bill Zimmerman, and Bob Zumstein

Staff Present: Oliver, Orjiako, Jose Alvarez, and Gordy Euler; Joel Rupley, Fred Abraham and Jeroen Kok

The meeting began at 6:05 pm.

Joel Rupley, the county's Endangered Species Act Program Coordinator (360-397-2022; joel.rupley@clark.wa.gov) made a presentation on water rights in the county. Joel talked about watershed planning, which is done by water resource inventory areas (WRIAs). There are 66 WRIAs in the state; Clark County is in WRIAs 27 and 28. Watershed planning looks at water quality and quantity, fish habitat needs, and instream flows. New domestic water wells on existing parcels are generally okay; an increase in the number of rural lots could be problematic. Joel mentioned that CPU is planning to begin pumping from an aquifer deep under Vancouver Lake to help make up for low summer stream flows in the county. Salmon recovery is also part of the planning effort with the East Fork and the Washougal River getting the most attention. Joel also touched on an issue with ag water rights. Watershed plans state that Ecology will develop a rule to allow the transfer of water rights between ag users, but that has not happened. Task force discussion resulted in the following:

Recommendation:

- Support county efforts to get Ecology to complete the rulemaking allowing the transfer of water rights between ag users.
- Conduct an inventory of ag water rights in the county.
- Explore ways to replenish/restore ag water rights that are taken because of low flows, when lowland supplies are brought on line.

Fred Abraham, the county's Railroad Coordinator, gave a presentation on what is happening with the railroad. The county has a long-term lease with the Portland-Vancouver Junction Railroad to operate the railroad. With state and federal grants, work is being done to refurbish the rail and railbed, starting at the lower end of the line (Fruit Valley). There was one shipper when the lease was granted in 2004; there are now 11 shippers. The county begins to make money when there are 1000 railcar trips per year. Questions came up about using the right-of-way for utilities (such as fiber optics; this is being looked into), and whether or not there was enough industrial land along the line to site shippers. There is not much rural industrial land, and most land along the railroad in urban areas is zoned light industrial.

The county created a railroad industrial district on property owned by the Laglers as part of the 2007 comprehensive plan update, but a GMA challenge caused the Board to back away from the idea. There is still land designated as industrial urban reserve in the area (north of NE 119th St. and west of NE 117th Ave.). Task force discussion resulted in the following:

Recommendation: Consider designating additional industrial land in the Brush Prairie rural center or a small block adjacent to the rural center.

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Public comment was heard after the break. Ron Bertsch of Battle Ground handed out a letter to the task force advocating for rural planned unit developments, both in and out of rural centers.

Jeroen Kok, Senior Planner with Vancouver/Clark Parks, gave a Powerpoint presentation on what is happening with parks and park planning in the county. Vancouver/Clark Parks deals with park planning county-wide, but has recreation programs only in Vancouver. The current parks master plan was adopted in 2007 and covers 5000-6000 acres county-wide. In addition to parks, the plan covers trails, greenways and open space. Funding comes from the general fund, park impact fees and REET. There are also Conservation Futures funds and Clark Parks District funds as well as partnerships with school districts, non-profits and state and federal agencies. Camp Bonneville will add another 3800 acres to the park system. Future opportunities are to 1) expand and connect parks, trails and greenways; 2) create awareness of parks and open spaces; 3) increase environmental learning; and 4) work with partners to expand local and regional tourism. Task force discussion resulted in the following:

Recommendation:

- Develop a timber harvesting plan for the Camp Bonneville property;
- Emphasize ways to minimize parks maintenance costs (for example, removing or not planting grass that requires mowing).

Ginger shared her notes from the February 3rd Board work session on rural lands. The one thing to add to the task force recommendation re rural centers is graduated zoning radiating out from rural center boundaries. The Board wants to have a meeting with task force (which staff will work to arrange), probably in late March or early April.

Gordy talked about the agendas for the next two meetings. The biomass plant, small wind turbines, ecological services, and a wrap-up of the rural reserve discussion are on for February 23. David asked that siting of critical public facilities be included as well. If these can be covered on the 23rd, then the March 9 meeting can be a review of all task force recommendations with an idea to putting them in a cohesive package. The meeting room is scheduled for March 23 if we need it.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

NOTE: The next meeting of the task force will be February 23, 2010, 6:00 p.m. at the Dollars Corner Fire Station. A meeting is also scheduled for March 9, 2010. We are working on a date for a meeting of the task force with the Board of County Commissioners.