

City of Mount Vernon
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes from May 19, 2009

Chairperson **Denny Legro** called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Present were Commission members **Donnie Keltz, Al Lyon, Warren Cheney, Mark Hulst**; Senior Planner **Elizabeth Higgins** and consultant **Don Largen. Bob Fritzen** with Department of Ecology and **Daryl Hamburg**, Dike District 17 was also in attendance. Commission members Gary Molenaar and Tom Twedt were absent.

Minutes:

Mr. Hulst moved, second by **Mr. Cheney**, to approve the minutes of April 7, 2009. Motion carried.

Mr. Legro stated City Council adopted Planning Commission's recommendation which amended municipal code 17.48 requiring Recreational Vehicle parks have a 15 acre minimum.

Study Session for Draft Shoreline Management, Master Plan LU09-004:

Ms. Higgins stated the State has mandated municipalities revise their Shoreline Management Master Plans (SMMP), by the year 2012, and staff has been directed to begin the process. The City currently relies on Skagit County's Shoreline Management Master Plan adopted in 1977. **Don Largen**, consultant for the City prepared a power point presentation to outline the process that will create a plan for the City. This is the first of two parts. The first part includes shoreline Inventory, Characterization and Restoration Planning.

The City's shoreline jurisdiction extends from the northerly city limits downstream to approximately 1,200 feet west of the I-5 bridge; both sides of the Skagit River within the city limits adjacent to downtown and Edgewater Park; 200 feet inland from the line of ordinary high water mark; and wetlands in the adjacent floodplain.

The Shoreline Inventory includes summary of existing shoreline information and studies, and the City's shorelines are divided into four inventory units, with 12 separate features. The inventory includes those adjacent areas upland since they have potential for impact on shoreline use and functions. The summaries include descriptions of land use, physical conditions and significant features.

The Characterization of Ecosystem Functions includes processes associated with the flow and movement of water, sediment and organic materials; the presence and movement of fish and wildlife; and maintenance of water quality. Localized individual components and processes associated with shoreline vegetation, soils, and water movement through the soil and across the land surface; composition and configuration of the beds and banks of water bodies are also included in the characterization.

Restoration Planning:

The Skagit River Big Bend Reach Habitat Restoration Feasibility Study, December 2004 identifies several restoration sites. Mr. Largen has taken four of those within the city limits. These are Goodrich Bar, Youngs Bar, 10 Dollar Bar, and Kulshan Confluence.

Part Two of the SMMP will include:

- Public access issues and opportunities,
- Flood control issues and plans,
- Develop shorelines designations and criteria,
- Develop shoreline goals and policies,
- Develop shoreline land use standards and regulations, and
- Analyze cumulative impacts and adjust as necessary

Once adopted the SMMP will become part of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Following the presentation several questions were asked of staff and **Mr. Largen**. **Mr. Legro** asked how often the SMMP be revisited. **Mr. Largen** stated every 5 years or sooner, if the City finds it necessary. **Mr. Cheney** asked about the timeline. **Ms. Higgins** stated we are in the process of obtaining funding. The grant funds will pay for future consultant fees, not past, so the process will be delayed for a short time. Adoption of the plan is expected in 2010. **Mr. Hulst** asked if there are projects this will affect. **Ms. Higgins** stated the redevelopment of downtown will be affected. Under the County's SMP buildings heights are restricted to 35 feet; the City is seeking to increase the height of new development. **Mr. Cheney** asked if the design standards for downtown will progress during the SMMP process. **Mr. Largen** stated both the SMMP and the design standards for the downtown-waterfront can run concurrently. **Mr. Cheney** asked if the City has any latitude in the formulation of its plan for trade-offs between the SMMP and the downtown-waterfront design guidelines. **Mr. Largen** stated yes, but there would be limits; it would depend on the kind of trade-off. **Ms. Higgins** stated the downtown-waterfront design could include trails and wildlife habitat south of downtown it would be an added benefit. There are opportunities that have not yet been explored. **Mr. Largen** stated these can be included in the SMMP as a restoration component. **Mr. Legro** asked who determines if the enhancements would offset the improvements. **Mr. Largen** stated the City would have to demonstrate a net lift. **Mr. Legro** asked if the State has a set guideline. **Mr. Largen** stated no, the City would develop guidelines; the guidelines are relatively broad. They are intended to provide latitude so you can operate within whatever your resources are. If you are dealing with a wetland in the shoreline, it cannot be any less restrictive than the City's Critical Area Ordinance. Department of Ecology will review prior to adoption. We will be looking at restoration potential. Trade-offs should be based on Best Available Science. **Mr. Keltz** asked if the new flood maps will have any effect on the SMMP. **Mr. Largen** stated in terms of the shoreline it should not have a substantive effect on this process.

Daryl Hamburg, Dike District No. 17 stated the concern he has is very little of the shoreline is controlled by the City; most of the shoreline in the City is controlled by the Dike District. He was unaware until recently receiving a letter of the SMMP process. The Dike District maintains and controls the majority of the dike system...(not audible on tape).

Mr. Largen acknowledged input from the Dike District is needed. **Mr. Hamburg** stated a study titled the Three Bridge Corridor Levee Set-back Program needs to be addressed in this process.

Bob Fritzen, Department of Ecology, stated the mantra with the State is 'No net loss'. Restoration is a great tool; it will get you compensatory mitigation for things you may do downtown that might impact the shoreline. Funding may be available as soon as July 1st. Updates to the SMMP are required every seven years, but can be revised sooner. Another plus **Mr. Fritzen** spoke of is there is no residential within the City's shoreline. **Ms. Higgins** noted that a notice of the meeting was published in the local paper, and mailed to 24 stakeholders and agencies, but the only two that attended were **Bob Fritzen** and **Daryl Hamburg**.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned.