

**MEETING MINUTES
OF THE
PIERCE COUNTY REGIONAL COUNCIL
OCTOBER 16, 2008 – 6:30 P.M.**

MEMBERS PRESENT

**Mike Lonergan, Chair
Larry Wilcox
Tom Smallwood
Kathy McVay
Pad Finnigan
Helen McGovern
Bob Whalen
Joe Pestinger
Gary Hulsey
John Knutsen
Rick Hansen
Ray Bourne
Ron Lucas
Matthew Richardson
Bill Baarsma
Linda Bird**

**City of Tacoma
City of DuPont
Town of Eatonville
City of Fircrest
City of Lakewood
City of Lakewood
City of Milton
City of Orting
City of Pacific
City of Puyallup
City of Puyallup
City of Roy
Town of Steilacoom
City of Sumner
City of Tacoma
City of University Place**

MEMBERS ABSENT

Gene Cerino
James Rackley
Sandra Ramsey
Richie Morgan
Derek Young
Scott Malkuch
Richard Godwin
Roger Bush
Barbara Gelman
John Ladenburg
Tim Farrell
Clare Petrich
Peggy Levesque
Marilyn Strickland
Vacant
Jean Brooks
Becky Gilbert

City of Auburn
City of Bonney Lake
City of Buckley
Town of Carbonado
City of Gig Harbor
City of Edgewood
City of Fife
Pierce County Council
Pierce County Council
Pierce County Executive
Pierce County Council
Port of Tacoma
Town of South Prairie
City of Tacoma
Town of Ruston
City of University Place
Town of Wilkeson

Non-members present:

Dan Cardwell, GMCC Member
Michael Mirra, HATF Member
Jane Hunt, Town of Ruston

Ike Nwankwo, CTED
Rob White, Town of Ruston
Kelly Hayden, Pierce Transit

Mike Lonergan, Chair of the PCRC, called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m. A quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: (Rick Hansen, Kathy McVay, second) - To approve the meeting minutes from 09/18/08. The motion passed unanimously.

GMCC Report

Dan Cardwell provided the GMCC report. He stated an in-depth overview of the Pierce County's Shoreline Master Program update was provided by Mike Erkinen. Ike Nwankwo provided an update on the WAC proposals that are currently being reviewed. There was a presentation by PSRC staff on VISION 2040 GMA growth updates. A GMCC Population / Housing Allocation Subcommittee was formed and an update on the Buildable Lands program was provided.

Mike Lonergan asked the group to discuss VISION 2040 and questioned the possibility of changing the numbers that are included in the adopted policies.

Norman Abbott stated if the numbers were to be changed; it would require an action by the PSRC General Assembly. The message from PSRC is to do everything you can to stay the course of the VISION 2040 plan. PSRC is not looking for a linear path by cities to reach the targets. A challenge is that significant growth occurred in the urban growth areas in the last seven years. A technical amendment is also being forwarded for those cities that have passed the threshold of becoming a large city. The subcommittee will provide the Growth Management Policy Board an update once they are finished with their review/work.

Dan Cardwell indicated he is serving on the subcommittee and has been involved in the discussions.

Countywide Planning Policies, Affordable Housing

Dan Cardwell, GMCC Member

Michael Mirra, Housing Affordability Task Force Member

Michael Mirra explained his role on the Pierce County Housing Affordability Task Force (HATF) and reviewed the HATF recommendations on the Countywide Planning Policies. He announced that Lyle Fox was in the audience and was also a member of the Task Force. The HATF offered four comments on the draft policies.

1. The HATF favors benchmarks. Jurisdictions need to be able to look back and see if they have met any of the benchmarks and felt it is a requirement of GMA.
2. The HATF felt the policies are only advisory recommendations and need to be policy requirements. This was evident with the word choice "should" vs. "shall." The HATF felt the present draft leaves jurisdictions with having to do nothing.
3. The HATF felt the income tier needed to be defined by providing income levels: \$0-30,000, \$30,000-50,000, and \$50,000-80,000. This would account for all economic segments of communities.

4. The HATF felt section four needed clarification. It is an important section because it lists important policy tools. This section of the policies do not seem to follow the format of Countywide Planning Policies and as readers of the policies, they were unclear what it meant.

Lyle Fox commented on how important it was to include work force incomes in the policies.

Rick Hansen stated he was extremely supportive with the language change of should vs. shall.

Matt Richardson questioned the comments regarding GMA. As a councilmember, he has always been advised by his staff to be in compliance with GMA. He felt the “shoulds” in the policies needed to be left as is. He felt it is the right language for this body to use to promote affordable housing. He felt cities will address the “shalls” at their level because it is their responsibility to meet GMA standards. He also felt annexation reform needs to be encouraged to help with the affordable housing allocations. Land costs are causing the difficulties of providing affordable housing and the reform of annexations may alleviate the problem. He also commented the City of Sumner was trying to provide another source of affordable housing units that are not multi-family rental units. They would like to go in the direction of small lot design single-family developments.

Michael Mirra commented they are not recommending a mandate where an entity would come to your jurisdiction and make sure you are in compliance. He stated he would take Matt Richardson’s comments on annexations back to the task force for future discussion.

Ron Lucas questioned the overall goal of the allocations and its intent. He felt the allocations are too difficult to achieve for the Town of Steilacoom. He described how the Town is surrounded by water and the military base and was not sure how they would be able to achieve the numbers.

Michael Mirra commented it was not the goal of the HATF to have all jurisdictions appear the same. Every jurisdiction should be different and will need to work hard in order to provide affordable housing. He stated some of the most innovative and environmentally friendly designed affordable housing projects are provided by non-profit groups which could be a resource for jurisdictions.

Linda Bird commented she viewed this as social engineering and felt it was an unfunded mandate for her community. She doesn’t have confidence in the base data because she wants to know where they are currently in order to help address the future needs of affordable housing. She felt the base data was inaccurate and it concerned her. She felt annexing does not help solve the affordable housing issue. She stated when you annex acres into your city, you add the density that comes with the land that is annexed. She was worried the built-out cities only have the option of building closer together or building higher and felt her community was not in favor of that.

Joe Pestinger questioned a statistic that no more than 30 percent of a homeowner/renter’s income should be spent on housing in order for it to be considered affordable. He felt there should be an adjustment made for all those individuals that are paying more now and questioned if it would change the numbers.

The Salishan project in Tacoma was discussed as being an example of a very well planned affordable housing development of an existing area that was renovated from 4-6 units per acre to a higher density.

John Knutsen commented he grew up on a North Puyallup housing project similar to the old Salishan. He was concerned that it will eventually become the old Salishan 15 years from now and questioned if the problems that occurred with the old Salishan might return. He questioned the numbers and wanted to know what happens if a jurisdiction doesn't reach the numbers.

Norman Abbott stated this was only an allocation and jurisdictions are only required to plan for affordable housing.

Tom Smallwood stated the policies are to encourage jurisdictions to plan for affordable housing. He doesn't feel that anyone was stating you would be penalized if the numbers allocated were not met. He felt the whole region needed to plan for affordable housing.

Mike Lonergan thanked Michael Mirra and Lyle Fox for providing the comment letter and attending the meeting. He stated the PCRC made a commitment to update the Countywide Planning Policies when a CTED grant was received to address the affordable housing policies.

Dan Cardwell stated the prior PCRC meeting only provided a general overview of the recommendations from the GMCC and at this meeting he would review the affordable housing policies. He stated there was nothing in the policies that indicate jurisdictions have to provide affordable housing; the policies are there to encourage affordable housing. The policies make it clear the numbers are allocations only and that this is a self-monitoring process. He reviewed all the proposed policy amendments to the group prior to any group discussion.

Mike Lonergan felt on page 3, item 3, the policies state "shall encourage affordable housing." He questioned what elected official would not want to provide affordable housing. He reminded the group that the policies are already in place and it was the PCRC that requested the update to the policies.

John Knutsen questioned how an allocation would be met. Dan Cardwell replied that on page 8, policy 7 it stated it was up to the jurisdiction and that the policies are in place as a benchmarking tool.

Mike Lonergan asked the group what new language in the policies would not receive support when brought back to their jurisdiction.

Matt Richardson questioned how he will preserve his current community as it exists today. He felt in section 3.2 and 3.2.1, by adding the density it was sacrificing the quality of life in their community. He wanted to add annexation language because he felt it was the only way Sumner could provide affordable housing without changing the character of its community.

Dan Cardwell questioned the addition of annexation language. He stated the policies allow for jurisdictions to expand into the UGAs. He doesn't see the value of adding annexation language in

the policies. Mike Lonergan also questioned the benefit of adding annexation language to the affordable housing policies.

Matt Richardson felt there needed to be an alternative. He acknowledged and appreciated that the fair share allocations gave credit. He expressed how he does not want all cities to become the same as everybody else.

Norman Abbott commented currently Sumner already has an existing target and the city's comprehensive plan prevails over these policies.

Larry Wilcox felt each jurisdiction is unique. The City of DuPont is almost built-out with very little room to build in the area. He was uneasy with the allocated numbers. He felt the city would not be able to provide 616 units of affordable housing in the future.

Ron Lucas asked for statistical information on how many homes were sold at the target rate. He expressed he did not favor the language "supporting resident lifestyle" and questioned how a city would address this particular policy.

Linda Bird would like statistical information as well. She questioned how many houses have been built; what was affordable housing rent; what was the average rent in Pierce County; how many does University Place have; and how many houses are assessed at \$160,000 or less? She questioned if the Assessor-Treasurer's office even has the data. She wanted to know how cities/towns figure out what was considered affordable. She doesn't feel a zoning tool is the way to provide affordable housing. She felt GMA was put in place to give cities/towns a way to establish its own identities and felt this won't occur if all the cities/towns have to change their character to meet the numbers. She felt the state has tasked cities with an unfunded mandate and thought there should be credit given to the cities/towns that already provide a percentage of affordable housing either by ownership or a rental. She would like to see more credit given to the existing rentals/apartments/etc. She felt her council will have a hard time with policy 4.4 because it was giving incentives to builders.

Matt Richardson provided some comments with regard to the incentives benefit to builders. He felt this was a good policy because it provides cities with the control of where they want the building to occur.

Helen McGovern commented this is a tool to use regionally and did not want to focus or get caught up with all the numbers because they are only targets for cities/towns to plan for in the future.

Ike Nwankwo stated there are several issues that will need to be resolved and felt there was not a rush to push these policies through the amendment process. He suggested reviewing other jurisdictions' successes and to have PCRC representatives discuss the issues with their jurisdictions before acting on it at this level. He suggested this body look at real life examples to achieve the passage of the policies.

Mike Lonergan reviewed a memo from Ryan Windish that was distributed to the group regarding the September PCRC meeting. He wrapped up the affordable housing discussion and asked the group to come back next month with comments/concerns from their jurisdictions.

Linda Bird commented jurisdictions need time to review the policies before placing the topic on a future agenda. She suggested the affordable housing discussion be placed on an agenda in 2009.

Mike Lonergan felt it would better serve the discussion if members discussed their issues with staff members and thought they should allow more time. He felt it would be better to have a presentation from ARCH at the next meeting and not discuss the policies. The group agreed. Dan Cardwell stated he will contact the representatives from ARCH and find out their availability.

Nominations for PCRC Chair and Vice Chair - Election to be held in November.
The group had very little discussion regarding nominations.

Motion: (Joe Pestinger, Matt Richardson, second) - To nominate Mike Lonergan as Chair. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion: (Pad Finnigan, Larry Wilcox, second) - To nominate Matt Richardson as Vice Chair. The motion passed unanimously.

Mike Lonergan announced anyone interested in nominating an individual should send their nomination to the clerk prior to the November meeting.

Committee Reports/Announcements

There were no reports due to the length of the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.