

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES



HYBRID/REMOTE AND IN PERSON AT THE MILL

May 21, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: 6:01 PM by Chair Janice Huxford

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Janice Huxford, Vice-Commissioner Jennifer Davis, Commissioner Nathan Packard, Commissioner Bruce Morton, Commissioner Mike Duerr, Council Liaison Ryan Donoghue

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioners Matz and Connor Davis were absent. Commissioner Jennifer Davis motioned to excuse the absences, and Commissioner Morton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

STAFF PRESENT: Principal Planner David Levitan, Planning Manager Christi Schmidt, Planning Director Russell Wright, Administrative Assistant Dawn Erickson

OTHERS PRESENT: No additional attendees

Chair Huxford called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: As noted above.

Guest business: None.

Approval of Minutes: The meeting minutes of May 7, 2025, were approved as written. Commissioner Morton made the motion, and Commissioner Jennifer Davis seconded; the motion was carried unanimously.

Discussion Items: Director Wright provided a housing update, providing insight into the County's Growth Monitoring report, which focused on changes in population, employment, and housing (noting an increase in multi-family housing in Lake Stevens). Decreases from 2019 through 2024 were reported, but it appears so far in 2025 that all are rebounding. He also discussed home prices across the county, with Lake Stevens' average cost in the middle of the range. Lake Stevens's rent is below the county average, while the median household income is higher than that of Snohomish County. Lake Stevens still needs to add over 160,000 housing units, with 80,000 for households under 80% of the county's average median income. He stated that the impact of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan update and HB 1110 is yet to be seen. He also shared updated demographics (available on the city website) with the Commissioners.

Senior Planner Levitan pointed out that although Lake Stevens has had a decline in permits in the past few years, we are still exceeding our 20-year growth targets.

Chair Huxford commented on the recent removal of the cap on property taxes and the implementation of a rent cap, stating she would expect owners of rental properties to sell their properties, making fewer rentals available.

Senior Planner Levitan discussed regulating STEP housing in Lake Stevens, comprised of emergency shelters, transitional housing, emergency housing, and permanent supportive housing. Regulations must be adopted by 12/31/25.

Emergency housing and shelters must be allowed in any zone where hotels are permitted, and transitional and permanent supportive housing must be allowed in any zone where hotels or residential units are permitted. He also reviewed potential code changes necessary to accommodate these types of housing, as well as Commerce guidance/best practices. He examined three examples of regulations related to other cities. He then reviewed the existing LSMC supplementary use regulations (LSMC 14.44).

Director Wright suggested that the city use the Short-Term Rental process as a model, at least for emergency and permanent supportive housing elements.

Feedback from Commissioners included:

- Community engagement
- Infrastructure needs for these types of housing vs. the obligation to provide
- Keeping the permitting process as simple as possible
- Level of prescription for regulations
- Buffers and barriers
- Recognizing the need to be prepared
- Providing and modeling examples of successful implementation in other communities
- Increasing responsibilities/limiting uncertainty for current residents regarding what is happening within their surroundings

Commissioner Reports:

No commissioner reports. Chair Huxford reminded everyone that the meetings are moving to Mondays effective June 2nd and asked that the absent commissioners be reminded of that.

Director's Report

Director Wright presented a matrix of eighteen land use bills recently passed in the state legislature. This will be emailed to the Commissioners.

Adjourn: Motion by Commissioner Duerr, with a second by Commissioner Packard, to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully,

Dawn Erickson, Administrative Assistant