

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA



City of Lake Stevens Vision Statement

We are a thriving community that promotes a vibrant economy, preserves natural beauty, and supports an exceptional quality of life for all.

January 8, 2025 - 6:00 PM

In Person at the Mill or Remote – VIA ZOOM

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://lakestevenswa.zoom.us/j/85462000235>

or call in at: 253-215-8782 Meeting ID: 854 6200 0235

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Guest Business**
- 4. Action Items**
 - A. Approve Minutes of Planning Commission Meeting of November 6, 2024
 - B. Election of Officers David Levitan
- 5. Discussion Items**
 - A. 2025 Priorities and Preparation for Joint Meeting with City Council David Levitan
- 6. Commissioner Report**
- 7. Planning Director's Report**
- 8. Adjourn**

THE PUBLIC IS INVITED TO ATTEND

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PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES



HYBRID/REMOTE AND IN PERSON AT THE MILL

November 6, 2024

CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 PM by Chair Connor Davis

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Community Development Director Russ Wright, Senior Planner David Levitan, Planning Manager Christi Schmidt, Administrative Assistant Dawn Erickson

OTHERS PRESENT: No others present

Chair Davis called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: All Commissioners and Council Liaison present.

Guest business: No guest business was noted.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the Public Hearing of October 2 and October 9, 2024, were approved as written. Commissioner Morton made the motion, and Vice-Chair Huxford seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion Items:

Jacquelyn Styrna and Amy Tonsley of Puget Sound Energy (PSE) gave a PowerPoint presentation on its Clean Energy Transformation. As a city natural gas purveyor, PSE has its own 20-year plan. This information can provide helpful context in the Environment and Natural Resources and Climate Change chapters of the Comprehensive Plan, to be incorporated in work plans in future years.

Planning Manager Christi Schmidt reviewed the 2025 Work Plan for the Planning & Community Development department, broken down by quarter. The presentation highlighted current projects and projects for the coming year, including fee updates, process code updates, and file migration, as well as the process for approving the Long-Range Work Program. The Work Program is broken down into four categories: Zoning Code and Comprehensive Plan Zoning Code Implementation Projects, Comprehensive Plan focused on Parks and Recreation, Subarea Plan and potential code updates needed to the Utilities section of the Municipal Code (Sewer District Merger), Annexations, and Miscellaneous. She then opened the floor for discussion.

There was some discussion about parks impact fees. Director Wright explained current park impact fees are based on old methodology no longer used. We now use a policy to implement our fees and are updating the method.

To avoid confusion and misunderstandings, transparency and communication in noticing to the public moving forward were stressed, including park impact fees and annexation.

Before the joint meeting with Council, an internal planning meeting was requested to plan the discussion.

It was suggested that for the coming year, one item per meeting be considered. The Commission decided to keep the current meeting plan, reviewing more than one topic per meeting.

It was also announced that the new Commissioner would be appointed by City Council next week and will begin attending meetings in December.

Commissioner Report:

No Commissioner reports.

Director Report:

City Council had a rigorous hearing on the Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted as recommended.

Adjourn:

Commissioner Morton moved to adjourn; seconded by Commissioner Packard. The meeting was adjourned at 6:56PM.

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT



Agenda Date: 1/8/2025

Subject: Election of Officers

Contact Person/Department: David Levitan, Community Development

Budget Impact:

Legal Review: No

RECOMMENDATION(S)/ACTION REQUESTED:

Elect officers (Chair and Vice Chair) for the 2025 calendar year.

SUMMARY/BACKGROUND:

Each year, the Planning Commission holds elections to appoint a Chair, who runs the meetings, and Vice Chair, who serves in that role when the Chair is absent.

Commissioners are asked to nominate and vote on the Chair and Vice Chair positions for the 2025 calendar year.

APPLICABLE CITY POLICIES:

ATTACHMENTS:

None

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT



Agenda Date: 1/8/2025

Subject: 2025 Priorities and Preparation for Joint Meeting with City Council

Contact Person/Department: David Levitan, Community Development

Budget Impact:

Legal Review: No

RECOMMENDATION(S)/ACTION REQUESTED:

No formal action is required. Commissioners are asked to identify what went well and could have been improved in their 2024 work program; weigh in on 2025 priorities and project/meeting schedules; and discuss topics and feedback that they would like to focus on during their January 21 joint meeting with City Council.

SUMMARY/BACKGROUND:

During the Planning Commission's [November 6, 2024 meeting](#), commissioners reviewed the [draft 2025 long-range planning work program](#), which highlights a number of code amendments and other long-range planning projects that commissioners will review in 2025. During that discussion, it was requested that staff work with commissioners to develop a set of substantive topics and priorities to help guide the discussion during their annual joint meeting with the City Council, which is scheduled for January 21, 2025. The City Council is tentatively scheduled to adopt the 2025 work program by consent at their January 28, 2025 meeting.

In advance of this discussion, staff distributed a survey to commissioners that featured a series of questions aiming to evaluate their 2024 work program (most notably the Comprehensive Plan Update); identify priorities for code and other implementation work in 2025; and discuss ways to improve communication and coordination with the City Council. A copy of the survey and responses are included in **Attachment 1**. Overall, the survey results show that:

- Commissioners believe that staff did a good job in breaking the comprehensive plan into smaller pieces grouped by topic/chapter, but several noted that staff could have done a better job in presenting information to the public in a clear, concise and easy to understand manner. Multiple commissioners gave the example of the comprehensive plan public hearing, where dozens of residents did not understand the scope or purpose of the proposed rezones.
- Commissioners have a variety of opinions on how to improve and expand public engagement, including utilizing partner agencies and organizations (school district, non-profits, religious, etc.) to foster more direct communication and relying less on the website and social media.
- Housing implementation was the top code priority for a majority of commissioners (four), but commissioners have a diverse set of priorities on other topic areas. The 2025 work program currently shows housing implementation work occurring in the third and fourth quarters, but an earlier introduction/briefing may be warranted given the amount of interest from commissioners. For context, December 2025 statutory deadlines do apply to the process code work (when the [interim ordinance for SB 5290 compliance](#) expires) and the update to the city's Critical Areas Ordinance, which will influence the 2025 work program.
- Commissioners believe it would be helpful to their work program to clarify the City Council's goals and priorities, as well as to have a firm grasp on which amendments are statutory in nature, and which are elective. Commissioners noted some frustration when their recommendations are significantly modified, given the amount of time and thought they put into them. Several commissioners noted it may be helpful to get periodic updates from the Council liaison, which has occurred in the past.

At their November 6 meeting, commissioners suggested that staff work on developing an extended agenda that charts out the next several meetings. In response, staff has prepared a draft three-month lookahead agenda (dates provided are tentative and subject to change based on Commission feedback), which staff will continue to update and include in each meeting packet.

Commissioners are encouraged to provide additional feedback on their 2025 work program and priorities during their January 8 meeting in advance of the January 21 joint meeting with City Council. Recommended changes to the 2025 work program at the January 21 meeting will be made by staff and presented back to the council on January 28.

APPLICABLE CITY POLICIES:

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Attachment 1 - Survey Questions and Responses
2. Attachment 2 - Draft Extended Agenda

Planning Commission 2024 Review and 2025 Lookahead

1. The Comprehensive Plan Update dominated your 2024 work plan. How would you rate that process/project as a whole?

☐ Excellent

☐ Good

☐ Average

☐ Poor

☐ Very poor

2. What went well with the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update?

3. How could staff have improved the Comprehensive Plan Update process/product and better supported the Planning Commission?

4. It can be difficult to engage the public on plan/code amendments and other long-range planning projects. Do you have thoughts on how the city can solicit input from a broader range of stakeholders and community members?

5. The 2025 work plan includes a number of important code amendments. How would you rank these topic areas in terms of interest/importance?

Process Code (LSMC 14.16A and 14.16B)

Critical Areas Ordinance Update (including Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas)

Housing Action Plan Implementation (Infill, Mixed-Use, Emergency Housing, PSH, etc.)

Streets, Sidewalk and Parking (LSMC 14.56 and 14.72)

Industrial Center (New consolidated industrial zone and regulations)

Park Impact Fees

6. What types of topics would you like to discuss with the City Council during the annual joint meeting to make that meeting more productive?

7. Are there specific ways that communication/coordination with the City Council can be improved?

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 Microsoft Forms

Comp Plan Rating	What went well?	What could have been improved?	How to improve public engagement	Work plan priorities	Topics to discuss with Council	Improve Council coordination
Excellent	Breaking the larger plan into reasonably sized bites helped, as did Planning staff explaining the steps involved.	At the public hearings, it became evident that we needed to do a better job at communicating how the changes would and would not impact the public.	Direct connection via email or postcard to impacted areas.	1. Streets/Sidewalk/Parking 2. Industrial Center Zoning 3. Housing Implementation 4. Critical Areas Update 5. Process Code 6. Park Impact Fees	Goals for the year, and which are statutory in nature (ie: we have to get this done).	What are the goals of the Council? At times, it feels like the Planning Commission's view of the City and some Councilmember's views are in conflict. We only know this after the fact, when they amend PC recommendations at council.
Excellent	Breaking the update project into manageable segments by topic area made it possible to give each section adequate attention to detail. Also, Staff did a great job of incorporating Commission feedback in subsequent drafts.	I thought the Staff did an excellent job in this area - no notes.	The eternal question....always a challenge. The only thing I can think of that might be helpful in the future would perhaps be to offer a "Planning 101" opportunity to the public on an annual or bi-annual basis to so that stake holders have a better idea about what the work of the Planning Department / Commission is, and therefore a better opportunity to comment meaningfully to the correct body (e.g. Commission v. Council).	1. Housing Implementation 2. Streets/Sidewalk/Parking 3. Process Code 4. Critical Areas Update 5. Industrial Center Zoning 6. Park Impact Fees	The challenge of balancing housing density requirements and affordability with impacts to infrastructure and general issues of livability.	I always appreciate when Staff provides an update at our meetings about any action that Council takes regarding Commission recommendations.
Good	We had lots of time to go over each section as it was edited. We had opportunities for feedback and corrections.	Early in the process I specifically asked staff to make sure that affected homeowners received a notification that was worded in clear natural language which not only explained what the change means, but explains how this benefits the land owner. Unfortunately, the notifications were not clear and there was much confusion. Some were even worried that they would be forced out of their homes. Also, I was disappointed that the initially proposed zoning changes that were presented to the council, and approved. Were later changed as the last minute.	I think the city does an excellent job notifying the public about planning and code amendments. We had an event where a table was set up for each section of the document. Public feedback was received and we had good attendance. There were surveys, posted signs, etc. Anyone with any interest whatsoever has plenty of opportunity to give feedback.	1. Housing Implementation 2. Critical Areas Update 3. Streets/Sidewalk/Parking 4. Industrial Center Zoning 5. Process Code 6. Park Impact Fees	Expansion of the UGA boundary. The city applied for expansion last year and needs to continue those efforts with the county. We need to emphasize with them that we have met and exceeded our growth targets. Affordability in Lake Stevens is being severely affected by a lack of available land for development. Opening up more land for development is the most effective tool we have to help future generations afford to live here. Educating the public on the impact of recent zoning changes. The most drama we had as a planning commission this year was when landowners who received notice were worried they would be kicked out of their homes.	

Comp Plan Rating	What went well?	What could have been improved?	How to improve public engagement	Work plan priorities	Topics to discuss with Council	Improve Council coordination
Excellent	I appreciate that the material was broken up into manageable pieces. It was well organized and well executed.	Nothing. I think it was well done.	I think they city made a good effort to engage the community throughout the process. Not sure what else could have been done.	1. Housing Implementation 2. Streets/Sidewalk/Parking 3. Industrial Center Zoning 4. Critical Areas Update 5. Process Code 6. Park Impact Fees	I don't have anything in particular that I feel needs to be addressed in the annual joint meeting. I just feel that if we are going to have the meeting, that we need to have something substantive to do/say, and not just show up and look at each other for a few minutes. I'm eager to hear suggestions from the other PC members.	Overall, I think the communication/coordination with the CC is fine. We have the opportunity to engage as much or as little as we desire. I appreciate that a member of the CC is present at our meetings. Perhaps we could include a standing item on the agenda for CC member business. If desired, the attending CC member can share relevant information with the PC, keep us informed of things going on on the CC, etc.
Good	Breaking it down by category was helpful.	Allow extra time for review on some of the larger packets. Review and revisit prior questions posed by the commissioners and public. Bring back comments from Council for a more collaborative final outcome.	Don't rely on social media and open houses...perhaps use existing organizations i.e. civic, hoa,'s religious, etc. for outreach opportunities. Have staff available in office to answer specific questions rather than/in addition to email. Avoid language and acronyms unknown to the general public. Explain the process and any regulations or legislation mandating issues affecting the community. Be clear on the role of the Planning Commission.	1. Housing Implementation 2. Industrial Center Zoning 3. Streets/Sidewalk/Parking 4. Park Impact Fees 5. Critical Areas Update 6. Process Code	Communication between the commission and council is critical...I attend Council meetings often and hear items that should be related back to my colleagues to assist in future recommendations. As mentioned above, the interaction with the community can be helped by explaining the deliberation process, using language which is understandable (rather than code) and reaching people early and where they are rather than risking the spread of false information. The city website is cumbersome to find information regarding meetings, agendas and follow up. Perhaps focusing on ease of use would help in lessening frustration.	Better, any, communication between Council and the Commission would be beneficial. We used to be given short reports from Councilmember Petershagen which have stopped completely. There is a general lack of recognition surrounding our discussions and recommendations. In addition, not including a commissioner on the selection panel to appoint our newest member was completely flawed and disrespectful. To end on a positive note, our meeting minutes are vastly improved and helpful in reviewing past comments in preparation for upcoming meetings.
				1. Critical Areas Update 2. Streets/Sidewalk/Parking 3. Housing Implementation 4. Industrial Center Zoning 5. Park Impact Fees 6. Process Code		

PC Extended Agenda - January 8, 2025

	1/8/2025	1/21/2025	2/5/2025	2/19/2025	3/5/2025	3/19/2025	4/2/2025	4/16/2025
Code Updates								
Process Code Update (Interim ordinance expires December 9)			D		D		D	
Streets/Sidewalk/Parking				D		D		D
Industrial Center Zoning							I	
Housing Implementation						I		
Critical Areas Update (December 31 deadline)								I
Parks Impact Fees							I	
Long Range								
2025 Annual Docket Ratification				I	PH			
Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan (December 31 deadline)								
Administrative								
Election of Officers	I							
Annual Work Plan Discussion	D							
Joint Meeting with City Council		D						

KEY

I- Introduction & Discussion

D- Discussion

PH- Public Hearing

Joint Meeting