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# SKAMANIA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

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## AGENDA

**Tuesday, June 2, 2020 @ 6:15 PM**

BY ZOOM MEETING TELEPHONE AND VIDEO CONFERENCE

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**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**III. ROLL CALL**

**IV. AGENDA ITEMS**

1. Approval of minutes from the May 19, 2020, Planning Commission Meeting.
2. Workshop #2 to discuss Short-term Vacation Rental Survey results.

**V. PLANNING COMMISSION BUSINESS**

1. Discussion of potential Planning Commission projects.

**VI. ADJOURN**

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**Please note:** This meeting will be held by remote telephone and video conference only, in accordance with Governor Inslee's "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order. The public is invited to attend the meeting by calling-in or viewing the meeting online via Zoom.

To join the Zoom meeting online, visit <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6564597957>

To join by telephone, call (253) 215-8782, and enter the following meeting ID when prompted:  
**656 459 7957**



# Skamania County Planning Commission

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## PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

**Tuesday, May 19, 2020**  
**Remote Video and Telephone Conference**

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Planning Commission Members:  
Present: Ken Bajema, Sue Davis, Mathew  
Joy, Adam King, John Prescott

Community Development Department Staff  
Present:  
Andrew Lembrick, Alan Peters

Absent: Tony Coates, Cyndi Soliz

### AUDIENCE

None.

### PROCEEDINGS

Meeting was called to order at 6:15 P.M. by Chair, Mat Joy.

Quorum was met.

Chair, Mat Joy led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### AGENDA ITEMS

1. Approve Minutes from the March 3, 2020 Planning Commission meeting.
    - a. Motion was made by John Prescott and seconded by Adam King to approve the minutes of the March 3, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting.
    - b. Motion passed 5-0.
  
  2. Workshop to discuss Short-term Vacation Rental Survey results.
    - a. Alan Peters, Assistant Planning Director, provided an overview of the short-term vacation rental survey that was available to the public during the month of April. 159 results were received representing a variety of opinions from residents.
    - b. Staff and Planning Commissioners discussed results to the first half of the survey questions. John Prescott expressed a preference for a reasonable approach such as the program in place in the City of Stevenson. Sue Davis stated concerns about housing impacts. Ken Bajema and Alan Peters discussed applicability within the National Scenic Area. Mat Joy discussed what is driving this process if there are not complaints about vacation rentals. Planning Commissioners felt that regulations should not be driven by a desire for increased revenue. Adam King expressed agreement with the opinions shared.
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- c. Alan Peters suggested that the Planning Commission continue this discussion at their June 2, 2020, meeting, and informed the group that a workshop on the topic was planned with the Board of County Commissioners on that same date.
3. Planning Commission Business.
  - a. Mat Joy informed the Planning Commission that the County began requiring building permits for agricultural buildings, including barns, within the past year. Having spoken to other counties, he feels that this is something that should be changed.
  - b. John Prescott addressed a recent comment letter received by the Planning Commission from Sharon Kaplan. Alan Peters discussed the letter and the requirements for light home industries in Carson. Mat Joy said he would respond to Ms. Kaplan.
4. MEETING ADJOURNED at 7:06 after motion by Sue Davis, seconded by John Prescott.

**ATTEST**

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Planning Commission Chair

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Secretary



# Skamania County

## Community Development Department

Building/Fire Marshal • Environmental Health • Planning

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### MEMO

**TO:** Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Alan Peters, Assistant Planning Director  
**DATE:** June 2, 2020  
**RE:** Potential Planning Commission Projects

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#### Introduction

Staff presented the Planning Commission with a work plan at its January 7, 2020 meeting. This work plan included the following projects:

- Critical Areas Ordinance
- Short-term Vacation Rentals
- Home Valley Subarea Plan
- Recreational Facilities/Retreat Centers/Event Centers
- Unmapped Lands (High Lakes)
- Recreational Vehicle/Tiny Home Occupancy
- Small Scale Energy Facilities

The Planning Commission completed its work on the Critical Areas update in February. The Board of County Commissioners adopted this update by ordinance in February and the new code went into effect in March. The appeal deadline was passed in May. The COVID-19 pandemic paused Planning Commission meetings in March, April, and May, setting back some of the Planning Commission's work including a public hearing to consider adoption of overlay zoning in the High Lakes area.

#### New Considerations

The pause in meetings has set back some of the Planning Commission's work. Staff will continue to work on Short-term Vacation Rental regulations as directed by the Board of County Commissioners and will begin drafting an ordinance for Planning Commission and Board consideration in the coming weeks. This remains Staff's top priority.

Staff also anticipates that the Department of Ecology will be issuing its decision on the County's Comprehensive Shoreline Master Program Update very soon. The County completed its work on this in June 2017, but the Board of County Commissioners will likely need to adopt required changes by ordinance this summer. An upcoming periodic review to the Shoreline Master Program is due in 2021. Staff is hoping to complete this review early, in 2020, by making a finding of adequacy. This would require at least one Planning Commission hearing near the end of the year.

Still, there are new topics of interest that have arisen in the last several months. Recent citizen inquiries have brought attention to two areas of the County's land use regulations which are discussed below: land divisions and light home industry/cottage occupations. Staff has spent time recently reviewing the County's subdivision and short plat regulations. Chair Mat Joy has expressed interest in revisions to the zoning code. The Planning Commission may also want to address other topics.

Staff requests direction from the Planning Commission on what projects the Planning Commission would like to pursue during the remainder of the year, following completion of the adoption of Short-term Vacation Rental policies.

#### Exempt Land Divisions

Land divisions are governed in Washington State by RCW 58.17 and by city and county ordinances adopted under that chapter's authority. SCC Title 17 includes the requirements for subdivisions (divisions of land into five or more lots) and short plats (divisions of land into four or fewer lots). There are some exemptions to these requirements.

Per RCW 58.17.0404, divisions into lots of 5 acres or less can be created without the filing of a subdivision or short plat. SCC 17.04.010(B)(2) allows for divisions into lots of 20 acres or less. In Skamania County, new lots of 20 acres or more can be created by filing a deed only, no plat is required. The County's Comprehensive Plan recommends that the minimum lot size of exempt parcels be increased to 40 acres. All land divisions, whether exempt or not, must comply with the minimum lot sizes in the respective zone. Exempt land divisions are not reviewed for water availability, septic, critical areas, or legal access. There is no guarantee that they are buildable.

#### Lot Size Averaging

Each new lot created by plat or deed must satisfy the minimum lot size of the respective zoning designation. Cluster provisions in the Zoning and Critical Areas codes do allow for additional flexibility under certain circumstances and when at least some land is permanently restricted from future development. Minimum lot sizes cannot be reduced by a variance.

Some jurisdictions have allowed for lot size averaging in order to allow for more flexibility and for developing housing on unusually shaped parcels as well as for mixing housing types in larger developments. Lot size averaging is an approach to subdividing land that allows a parcel of land to be divided into unequally sized lots as long as the average of all the lot sizes remains equal to or above the minimum zoned lot size.

#### Light home industries/cottage occupations

Light home industries/cottage occupations are businesses operated within a dwelling or a separate building which principally employs persons who reside in the dwelling where the business is located. These uses must comply with the standards in SCC 21.70.040, but are allowed outright in all residential zones except for those in the Carson Subarea.

In Carson, light home industries/cottage occupations are considered administrative review uses. This review requires an application, public notice, and approval by Planning staff.