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CLARK COUNTY
WASHINGTON

COMMUNITY PLANNING SUMMARY MINUTES

Rural Lands Task Force Meeting #11 – October 27, 2009

Members Present: Doug Hagedorn, David Halme, Rocque Merritt, Monty Multanen, Mike Posey, Danny Walsh, Bill Zimmerman, and Bob Zumstein
Staff Present: Oliver Orjiako, Jose Alvarez , and Gordy Euler

The meeting began at 6:05 pm.

Gordy explained the meeting materials, which were the Metro report (from the last meeting) and the criteria in the Oregon Administrative Rules for designating urban and rural reserves.

Bill brought up a point of clarification for the recommendation from the last meeting regarding the ‘four-plus-one’ option: His notion was that this option would only be available to current five-acre parcels, and not to any that would be created in the future. The task force agreed with this clarification.

Recommendation: Provide incentives for owners of five-acre parcels to plant and manage forest land. One option is to use the provisions of the current use taxation open space provisions, requiring a forest management plan. This would apply only to existing five-acre parcels, not those created in the future.

Doug asked that the recommendation for clustering on ag land (August 25 and September 8 minutes) also apply to forest land:

Recommendation:

Allow clustering on forest land to provide an economic opportunity and to preserve open space and forest land. Allow two one-or two-acre lots plus a buildable remainder parcel. Consider a bonus lot as an incentive to keeping the land in forest production.

The discussion returned to the surface mining overlay (SMO). Gordy stated that Policy 3.5.14 was put in the comp plan to make it clear that mining operations in existence at the time the first comprehensive plan was adopted could continue. There was also no discernable reason for Policy 3.5.15 which seemingly does not allow new mining in rural zones. The task force recommendation is to keep the policy but add the phrase ‘without a surface mining overlay’ (October 13 meeting minutes). Mining doesn’t have to take place with an SMO, but an SMO allows for mining and related activities. The county does not have a ‘mineral’ zone like the ag or forest zones. David suggested that Clark County have a mineral zone for areas with high value aggregates.

The discussion turned to the topic of urban and rural reserves. Gordy talked about the meeting he and Jose had with Tim O'Brien of Metro, and went briefly through the Metro 'urban and rural reserves' report. In essence, Metro's urban reserves will contain a second 20-year land supply beyond what is in the Metro urban growth boundary (UGB). The concept of rural reserves is to identify lands adjacent to urban reserve areas that would not be considered for inclusion in the UGB for at least 40 years. One of the ideas behind it is to help preserve higher value farm and forest lands.

The question discussed by the task force was whether or not the concept of rural reserves could be applied in the county. The Growth Management Act requires periodic UGB expansions with no consideration of what is really happening on the rural side of the boundary. One aspect of the process will for the cities and the county to identify true urban reserve lands. A companion process similar to Metro's could be to identify true rural reserve lands. Both are consistent with the mission of the task force as set out by the Board. David suggested calling these areas 'rural holding' areas, and that they would be used also between cities as greenspaces and buffers. High-value ag land would be included as well as natural features where development would not likely ever occur.

There was public comment after a break. George Espinosa talked about the Williamson Act used to keep land in production in California. Ag land is even buffered from surrounding development to minimize conflicts. Aleta Beck talked about her experience with a next-door kennel, and hoped the task force would help resolve the issue.

Jose pulled up a soils map of the county. The discussion continued about how to identify rural reserve areas. The group settled on the idea of 'resource reserve' lands.

Recommendation:

Create resource reserve lands in rural areas and between cities based on natural barriers and buffers and taking into account viable soils for agriculture and forestry. Such lands would initially be designated outside of urban growth areas, south of the East Fork, and west of China Ditch.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

NOTE: An open house is planned for November 10 at 6:00 p.m. at the Dollars Corner fire station. There will be no meeting on November 24. The next regular meeting of the task force will be December 8, 2009.