



Approved as submitted at the February 16, 2024 Planning Commission Meeting.

**SAN JUAN COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 19, 2024 MEETING**

YH

The meeting of the San Juan County Planning Commission was called to order by Chair, Nick Knoellinger, at 8:33 a.m. in the County Council hearing room, Legislative Building, 55 Second Street, Friday Harbor, and San Juan Island.

Planning Commission

Members Present: By Microsoft Teams: Nick Knoellinger, Steve Smith, Rick Hoffman, Sheila Gaquin, and Gary Franklin.

Planning Commission

Member Absent: Peter Kilpatrick, Matt Ellingson, and Serina Adams.

**Department of Community
Development (DCD) Staff**

Present: Present in person: Lynda Guernsey, AS II.
By Microsoft Teams: Sophia Cassam, Planner III, and Mark Tompkins, DCD Interim Director.

**Department of Health and
Community Services Staff**

Present: Ryan Page, Affordable Housing Coordinator.

Administrative Items

Confirm Agenda

Lynda Guernsey brought forward that Election of Officers should have been on the agenda for this month and stated that it could be added to the agenda for today and put on February 16th's meeting. The Planning Commission decided to put it on the February 16th agenda.

Sophia Cassam stated that she would like to give the Planning Commission an update on the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission agreed to add that to the agenda for today after Public Access Time.

Nick Knoellinger, Chair, would need to be out by 11 a.m. today.

By Consensus, the Planning Commission confirmed the agenda.

Minutes of December 15, 2023

Moved by Gary Franklin, seconded by Nick Knoellinger, to approve the minutes as submitted.
Gary Franklin-yes, Sheila Gaquin-yes, Rick Hoffman-yes, Peter Kilpatrick-abstain, Steve Smith-yes, and Nick Knoellinger-yes. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Access Time

There were no speakers for public access time.

Update from Sophia Cassam on the Comprehensive Plan

Sophia Cassam informed the Planning Commission that the RFP for the Comprehensive Plan consultant had been sent out for publication and the deadline is February 7th. Also that a completed draft Commerce Periodic Update checklist and explanation of the next items to do on the checklist has been completed. The Comprehensive Plan consultant contract should be finalized by the end of February with the start of work on it in March.

The grant from Commerce ends on June 30, 2025. There will be an interdepartmental page to work on the different Comprehensive Plan items and a public interface page also.

The Planning Commission asked if there was any update on the search for a new DCD Director. Mark Tompkins, Interim Director, stated that the job had been posted and was in the beginning stages of the process. The Planning Commission asked Sophia Cassam, if she was the lead in taking the Comprehensive Plan Update process forward and she state that she is, in conjunction with the consultant group that will be hired. It was also mentioned that the Climate Element group will be part of the process and Ryan Page, Affordable Housing Coordinator, mentioned that the Housing Advisory Committee would be involved in working on the Housing Element.

Planning Commission Discussion

Planning Commission general discussion on planning for the future of housing in San Juan County – Sophia Cassam, Planner III

The Planning Commission discussion continued on housing with Ryan Page and Sophia Cassam. Ryan and Sophia responded to questions and comments from the Planning Commission.

Sophia Cassam's notes from the meeting:

January 19, 2024 PC Housing Conversation Notes

Questions for Ryan Page, Affordable Housing Coordinator, Health and Community Services:

1. Are there any affordable housing discussions happening where different groups or jurisdictions are coming together to work on housing issues in the region? Is San Juan County part of those conversations?
2. Do you know whether the County can provide housing development incentives for housing reserved for people who are employed in San Juan County?

Short answer—yes. However, this would be difficult administratively. The County would need to be able to monitor people's employment and enforce this.

In SJC, 95% of people who are working age and working *are* employed in the County.

3. Would you be interested in having a planning commission liaison to the HAC as we head into the Comp Plan update? If you think this is a good idea, maybe we could ask Council about it.

Gary Franklin volunteered to attend HAC meetings during the Comp Plan Update.

What are practical things the PC do to support housing?

- RP: Policies to streamline AH. Focus on land use policy/code. Consider how to make AH easier to develop.
- Main impediment to process seems to be permit turnaround times. HAC may consider advocating for the County prioritizing AH in the permitting process.
- See comp plan housing element and see what needs implementation. HAC can take a look and identify a 3-4 items that they would like the County to focus on.

What flexibility would the county consider allowing for mobile home parks? We are already seeing these units pop up. There is not existing infrastructure for them.

What are the barriers for cluster developments? Land availability: it's difficult to find the right type of land that can support cluster developments in rural areas.

Land availability seems to be a key issue when considering development.

Collision between the ideas of housing as a human right and housing as a commodity.

Individual property rights are a basic limitation—people get to decide how they do or don't use their property. The County can establish a minimum density (i.e. Eastsound Village Residential Min 4 – Max 12) The long-term affordability restrictions on cluster developments seem to make this AH type infeasible to many developers, especially private developers. Rural residential cluster developments allow additional density in the rural areas. The trade-off/return is that the developer will provide long term affordable units. Does the state allow new mobile home parks allowed in rural areas?

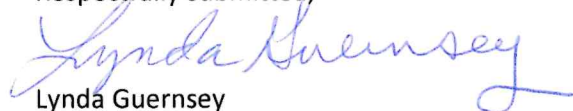
End of notes.

For the February 16th meeting of the Planning Commission: The Planning Commission will review the Housing and Land Use Elements. Also for that meeting there will be election of officers for 2024.

Adjournment

It was unanimously agreed upon by the Planning Commission to adjourn the meeting at 10:37 a.m. The next meeting of the Planning Commission will be Friday, February 16, 2024 at 8:30 a.m. in the County Council hearing room, Legislative Building, 55 Second Street, Friday Harbor, San Juan Island.

Respectfully submitted,


Lynda Guernsey