



**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

Regular Meeting and Work Session

1

1 **Call to Order**

2 The meeting was called to order by Whatcom County Planning Commission Chair,  
3 Kelvin Barton at 6:31p.m.

4 **Roll Call**

5 **Present:** Kelvin Barton, Atul Deshmane, Dominic Mocerri, Scott Van Dalen, Julie  
6 Jefferson

7 **Absent:** Jim Hansen, Stephen Jackson, Frank James

8 **Staff Present:** Steve Roberge, Aileen Kogut-Aguon and Cliff Strong

9 **Department Update**

10 There is no department update.

11 **Open Session Public Comment**

12 Dave Widner, Robert Koch, MaryLou Whiteford, Chris Secrist, Lisa Adam, Brian Sarni,  
13 Scott Jones, Nancy Bay, Jean-Luc Cornet, Scott Jones, Sarah Gardner, Sebastian  
14 Durbin and Julie Wilson-McNerney provided public comments.

15 **Commissioner Comments**

16 Commissioner Jefferson asked a clarifying question on when the notices went out.  
17 Steve Roberge, Assistant Planning Director PDS, responded that the notices to the  
18 business owners were sent out Friday June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

19 **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

20 **Timestamp: 7:03p**

21 **1Commissioner Van Dalen moved** to approve the meeting minutes from May 9<sup>th</sup>  
22 2024.

23 **Commissioner Mocerri seconded.**

24 **Roll Call Vote: Ayes - Scott Van Dalen, Dominic Mocerri, Kelvin Barton**

25 **Abstain - Atul Deshmane, Julie Jefferson**

26 **(Ayes-3; Nays-0; Abstain-2). The motion carried.**

27 **2Commissioner Van Dalen moved** to approve the meeting minutes from May 23<sup>rd</sup>,  
28 2024.

29 **Commissioner Mocerri seconded.**

30 **Roll Call Vote: Ayes - Scott Van Dalen, Dominic Mocerri, Kelvin Barton**

31 **Abstain - Atul Deshmane, Julie Jefferson (Ayes-3; Nays-0; Abstain-2). The**  
32 **motion carried.**

33 **Heavy Impact Industrial Work Session**

34 **Timestamp: 7:08p**

35 Cliff Strong, PDS Senior Planner, reviewed the Council's request to:



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1        *Amend Whatcom County Code Chapter 20.68 and other relevant sections of*  
2        *Title 20 to define appropriate industrial uses and conditions for industrial uses in*  
3        *Heavy Impact Industrial (HII) Districts within a city's designated urban growth*  
4        *area.*

5        In addition, Mr. Strong reiterated the potential solutions and concerns the  
6        Commissioners discussed at the prior meeting on May 23rd. These solutions  
7        included: prohibiting additional certain uses in the area via §20.68.203, prohibiting  
8        outdoor HII uses, allowing only light industrial uses in the heavy impact properties,  
9        applying the light industrial performance standards to the area and recommending  
10       Council impose a moratorium until the HII properties can be rezoned through the  
11       Comprehensive Plan update.

12       Concerns included: impacting existing business, some of which might do some of  
13       the things contemplated for exclusion; how creating stricter performance standards  
14       might affect existing uses; how creating nonconforming uses might affect existing  
15       uses; and notifying and hearing from the existing businesses in the area.

16       Mr. Strong pointed out the County attorney's response to the questions the  
17       Commission posed regarding legal issues, and corrected an error in staff's analysis  
18       of the differences between the LII and HII performance standards.

19       Lastly Mr. Strong reviewed staff's latest recommendation (#4 Combined Solution)  
20       from the June 13<sup>th</sup> memo.

21       The Commissioners resumed discussion from the last session regarding the uses in HII  
22       zone and how changes to the code might affect new and existing businesses.

23       Commissioner Mocerri suggested getting input from the City of Bellingham as these  
24       code amendments will affect them as well.

25       Commissioner Chair Barton requested a more elaborate packet from staff with codes  
26       for the HII for the Bellingham UGA to get a detailed picture of the zoning and the  
27       possible amendments being brought to the Commission. Mr. Strong stated that these  
28       have already been included in the memos provided.

29       The Commissioners would like more clear direction from County Council on this docket  
30       item and if a moratorium is an option before moving forward with a public hearing.

31       Commissioner Mocerri reiterated the idea of Council imposing a moratorium until the  
32       HII properties can be rezoned through the Comprehensive Plan update.

33       Commissioner Deshmane asked Council Member Mark Stremmer if he would like to  
34       speak on the discussion and provide some input.

35       Mark Stremmer, Whatcom County Council member, though speaking for himself and not  
36       the Council, stated that he would hate to be the one to tell existing businesses that  
37       they would have to change or be limited in the future.

38       PDS will present to Council the suggestions given and request a clearer direction for  
39       the Commission regarding the code amendments for the HII in the Bellingham UGA.



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1 **Adjournment**

2 **Timestamp: 7:53p**

3 The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

4 Minutes prepared by Aileen Kogut-Aguon.

5 WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION ATTEST:

6 

7 Kelvin Barton, Chair

  
Aileen Kogut-Aguon, Secretary