

**PLANNING COMMISSION
 COMMISSIONERS HEARING ROOM, COUPEVILLE, WA
 TUESDAY MAY 27, 2008**

	<i>Members Present</i>	<i>Members Absent</i>
<i>District 1</i>	<i>Val Hillers</i>	
	<i>Ray Gabelein</i>	
	<i>Mike Joselyn</i>	
<i>District 2</i>	<i>Terry Reynolds</i>	
	<i>Bill Massey</i>	
	<i>Alan Schell</i>	
<i>District 3</i>	<i>Wayne Havens</i>	
		<i>Deb Eidsness</i>
		<i>Scott Yonkman</i>

Meeting called to order at 9:02 a.m. by Chair Val Hillers

ROLL CALL

Ray Gabelein, Mike Joselyn, Val Hillers, Alan Schell, Terry Reynolds, Bill Massey, Wayne Havens

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Continuation of item from May 13, 2008

Chair Val Hillers stated there were two nominations: Alan Schell and Ray Gabelein. Chair Hillers called for further nominations; there were none.

Commissioner Ray Gabelein withdrew his name from the nomination as chair due to other commitments.

Chair Hillers called for a vote for Alan Schell as Chair. Motion carried unanimously

Commissioner Hillers called for nominations for Vice Chair.

Commissioner Wayne Havens nominated Commissioner Ray Gabelein, Commissioner Mike Joselyn seconded. There were no further nominations.

Commissioner Hillers called for a vote, the motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

May 13, 2008

Commissioner Hillers stated corrections had been made to the draft minutes emailed to the Planning Commission and asked if there were further corrections or additions.

Chair Alan Schell moved to accept minutes as corrected. Commissioner Mike Joselyn seconded, motion carried unanimously.

ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

Angie Homola 2362 Happy Lane, Oak Harbor stated that GayLynn Beighton who had been at the last meeting prepared some information; Ms. Homola read from the cover page of the report Ms. Beighton had written on affordable housing into the record.

- Good planning for affordable housing includes walk-able mixed used communities and multi mobile community transit oriented development strategies or TOD's. The Brookings Institute's latest research indicates that transportation costs must be recognized as an integral factor in housing cost to reflect true housing affordability. Affordable housing should be within walking distance to urban core areas and its' various amenities, e.g. in Oak Harbor a community college, library, marina, parks, various shopping venues, commercial business that provide jobs, Post Office, excellent fair free transit system, and existing utility infrastructures systems. Water, sewer, utility and roads.
- Automobile ownership should not be essential for residence in affordable housing. If owning an automobile is a requirement to owning or renting it will contribute significant cost to owners. The costs of owning and operating an automobile could be avoided if pedestrian friendly high density mixed use housing in the urban cores was built. The savings in transportation expenses will free up income for housing costs.
- Homes built further out from the urban core or away from major transit lines will create exclusionary housing limited to those financial able to drive to their every day activities.
- Strong mechanisms to induce production of affordable housing must be in place in conjunction with new development. Such mechanisms should be an integral part of obtaining a building permit. Such mechanisms include, but are not limited to: create coalitions of affordable housing advocates and smart growth advocates, implementing mutually workable policies on a countywide if not regional basis. Said coalitions must be an integral part of the development process from the beginning of each housing project and as such one of the requirements for development.
- Create developer incentives, e.g. density bonuses in return for funding or development fees or permit fees that promote funding of perpetual land trust funds to purchase, develop and maintain affordable housing for the poorest in our society.
- Mandate that urban areas increase the density and height allowed within existing urban multi-family residential zones and RO zones through the creation of density bonuses that inter-relate with affordable housing goals.
- Design goals and transportation goals.
- Mandate mechanisms to encourage RO zone properties located on arterial streets to be developed in mixed-used style and discourage RO zoned properties located on arterial streets to be developed into exclusively office use.

- Expand the geographical area of multi-family residential zones into adjacent single family residential zones or R1 zones that are within walking distance to the urban core.
- Create mechanisms that encourage accessory dwelling units and/or cottages on under developed parcels with low density zoning within walking distance to the urban cores through incentive programs.
- Reinstate a transfer of density credit program for Island County that takes advantage of the urban cores as the receiving entity. Said density created programs should be thoughtfully tied to new mechanisms that increase density and land use efficiency in the receiving area. Receiving areas to accommodate the underserved market demand for housing on south Whidbey Island and Camano Island must be identified and brought to reality to prevent those areas from further degradations by urban sprawl.

Ms. Homola stated Ms. Beighton included a study called “Urban Markets Initiative” by the Brookings Institute. Ms. Homola stated she would provide a copy of this document.

Ms. Homola stated her concern in all of this relates to impact fees which are a hardship to this type of incentive for affordable housing. She stated she felt there was an exemption in the RCW’s for affordable housing. She stated if we don’t start sharing the load for all of the new development with the developers we are really burdening the existing taxpayers. A perfect example is what is going on in Oak Harbor right now with their utility rate hikes, due to the need for a three to five million dollar water tank that must go in on Fort Nugent. The expense is directly related to all of the new development to the west of the city, as we continue to expand draw down on our water system resulting in inadequate water pressure for emergency services. All of the existing residence will now be paying for that new water tank. Until we start to really think about impact fees it is going to continue to come down on the shoulders of the existing residents.

Mr. Tate requested a copy of the letter read by Ms. Homola to be submitted for the record.

PLANNING DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Director Jeff Tate started with an update on the Critical Area Ordinance Wetland Regulation: two appeals to the wetland ordinance have been filed, one by W.E.A.N. and one by C.A.R.E.

Affordable Housing Follow Up:

Mr. Tate provided an update regarding the numeric information related to median income, stating the Department is working on how to better reflect the reality in the market. He added that Ms. Beighton had suggested a couple of ideas and leads as where to find more information. He further stated he has also added Ms. Beighton to the list of people interested in the Affordable Housing Seminar.

By the end of June he expected to provide a staff report to begin the Mr. Massey's Affordable Housing proposal.

Parks Plan Update:

Mr. Tate began by introducing Kirsten Dahl, the Intern dedicated to parks for the summer.

At the beginning of the year the Board of Commissioners transferred the County Parks Department to the Planning Department. One of the first things done was to look at the Countywide Parks Plan. The Plan is ten years old and considered out of date. Being this old jeopardizes and in some cases eliminates parks from being able to qualify for grant monies for park projects, so updating the Countywide Parks Plan is a high priority. A draft parks plan will be presented in the first part of September. The Parks Plan that exists today is essentially an outdated inventory of properties. It doesn't provide strategic direction on how to manage and improve the parks system.

Mr. Tate stated he wanted to make the plan something that is useful and provides guidance to staff as well as to the public, so everyone understands how parks are moving forward. The system contains 54 properties throughout Whidbey and Camano Island with about 1,400 acres of property. There is a wide range of services provided within those parks; a cemetery on Camano Island, a marina at Cornet Bay, ball fields, passive recreation such as trail use and it also includes a campground. There are a lot of different types of services that the county is providing in the parks system.

When looking at advancing the system and providing better service over time, one of the first items will be to update the inventory of lands and services. When this update is done all of the fourteen park managers in Island County will be looked at; between Federal, State Parks, County Parks, two cities, a town, two park and recreation districts, two port authorities and the school districts. There are a lot of different management structures within the County on park services. The Department only has control over the County Parks System, but one of the things that will help guide action in the future is to understand the services in total that the residents in the county and visitors use.

Once we know what we have countywide by all park managers then understanding it on a regional level will be next; north Whidbey, central Whidbey, south Whidbey and Camano. If you look at the countywide system you may find that you have enough acres or boat launches or whichever service you're looking at countywide; then you would look to see how accessible the different services are to people. In terms of developing a direction, we may find out in north Whidbey there are plenty of one service, maybe not provided by the county but by some other park manager. We may look at our own county system and determine there is not enough of a particular service on north Whidbey, but if someone else is providing it, it may not be a high priority to enhance the County system.

Ultimately the methodology the Department plans to use will lead us to develop a needs assessment.

Funding for County Parks comes from a variety of different sources which the Department would like to enhance by making ourselves eligible for grant funding. Mr. Tate stated one of the goals of this process is to become more strategic and have better direction when budgeting.

One of the implementation strategies is development of site specific park plans for 2009. Right now the parks are in an operation and management mode and not so much a visionary mode looking to the future. He stated he would like to change that.

Commissioner Massey asked about transportation connections, walking trails, biking trails, public transportation and whether it would be part of the package.

Mr. Tate replied linking up into the other public lands and public managers is another piece as well as looking to the groups that provide and have an interest in open space and recreation, such as the Nature Conservancy and the Whidbey /Camano Land Trust. These groups are providing for some properties an open space or outdoor recreation component and we need to involve them in some way as well.

Commissioner Gabelein asked if there will be round table meetings with all of those organizations, such as the Port Districts and Park & Recreation Districts so these different agencies can look at where we're short on different services and where we may be duplicating services.

Mr. Tate replied this will be done on each of the two islands.

Chair Schell asked if the Department could provide an inventory of the current parks so the Commission can take a look at these parks while the weather is nice this summer.

Mr. Tate stated he liked the idea. He further stated he felt his department brings a lot of resources to the table in terms of mapping and web page development which will show pictures and locations etc. Staff has already started working on this and he will provide the Commissioners an early release of the park names and a map that shows where they are located.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Public Hearing on Designation of Camp Casey Conference Center as an Existing Master Planned Resort CPA 400/07.

Mr. Tate provided information on the process, stating there was a public meeting on May 13th, an introduction of the issue to the Planning Commission. Today there is a public hearing; an opportunity for members of the community to provide feedback on what they

have seen or read, ask questions, ask that the Commission consider certain ideas or state their concerns.

At this point there are two public hearings scheduled, today and tentatively on June 10th; and a July 8th public meeting where the Planning Commission would deliberate on everything you've heard from the community, everything you've read from staff and have an open conversation amongst each other, asking questions and thinking about what recommendation will be forwarded to the Board of Commissioners.

It is important to understand the legal difference between public hearings and public meetings. Public meeting is time where the Commission gets to talk, there isn't public testimony provided, there is not an opportunity for people speak, but it is an opportunity for people to come, watch and listen to the Commission's conversation.

A public comment period deadline is usually selected some time after the last public hearing in order for people who attend the last public hearing, to still have an opportunity to submit some of their thoughts and send in a letter in written form. A notice will need to be made, advertising the deadline.

Staff is conducting a parallel process, which is the SEPA review. Comments were received as well as a Statement of Appeal filed by WEAN, which in this case stated they were leaving town before the end of the appeal period, so an appeal was filed to preserve their right to appeal. Whether or not the appeal is fully formalized will be determined by whether or not a Comprehensive Statement of Appeal, outlining the issue on appeal is filed by the deadline of May 30th. That will have an effect on the Planning Commission's work. Until the appeal is resolved, it doesn't make sense to forward a recommendation to the Board until the administrative appeal heard by the Hearing Examiner is complete.

Anthony Boscolo provided information on CPA 400/07 SPU. He directed the Commission to the Master Plan, the guiding document for the development of the site. That future development is outlined best on page 27, table 4; showing the new buildings on the site, their sizes, the number of beds and more details on each those buildings follow on the next pages. It talks about the look and feel of those buildings as well as their expected uses for those buildings.

Page 43 discusses the standards that speak to the architectural look and feel and how it will be set up; tree retention standards, parking standards and things of that nature. The tree retention standards are brought into the Revised MDNS. There are setbacks and height limitations, site coverage and open space in the standards as well.

Under the SEPA checklist information, at the back of that document there are a couple analysis'; attachment A-4, The Transportation Element and Technical Report discusses the traffic impacts.

The existing master plan designation provides for preserving and allowing for the use of these environmentally and historically significant lands. The visions and goals of SPU

complement the Island County Code. The visions and goals are located on page 4 of the Master Plan. It discusses environmental aspects that are required within the Master Plan; the uses, both short term and long term and retreat uses. It talks about the significance of being in the Ebey's Landing Historical Reserve and all the elements needed to become an Existing Master Plan Resort.

Chair Schell opened the floor to public comment.

Rolph Keller, lead master planning consultant on this project, stated he wanted to introduce the members that worked on the Master Plan. Gary Hess, an engineer with Davido Consultant; Dan Brewner is the forestry consultant; David Johnson is the transportation planner with Transportation Solutions Inc. All are here to answer questions. The technical appendices located in the SEPA document were prepared by David and Gary; also here is Darrel Jacobson, the new site manager at Camp Casey. The people are here to respond to any questions they might have.

Steve Erickson, speaking on behalf of Whidbey Environmental Action Network. He stated he is concerned about the boundary of the Heritage Forest; hopefully it will be ironed out soon. He further stated it had a great deal of bearing in terms of how the development proceeds, if it does. Related to that is their concern about windrow created by clearing in the areas adjacent to the Heritage Forest. That area has compacted till, the trees are very shallow rooted and are quite vulnerable to windthrow, they also tend to support each other in that way creating a problem that taking out some trees can start an unraveling process because the roots are interwoven.

The Ordinance requires that the County consult with Natural Heritage Program, before issuing any approvals and he stated he was still waiting for that to happen; particularly consultation regarding the actual boundary which tends to be generally drawn by Natural Heritage from aerial photos. He stated that until that happens a lot of this is up in the air from their standpoint.

There are problems within the Master Plan. The hazard tree program and the tree retention standards on page 45 are a recipe for clearing those larger trees. As soon as you say you are going to clear trees of dead limbs or that standing and dead are essentially saying they are going to be cleared. He further stated any tree within 150 feet of these structures is going to be considered a hazard tree, for that reason the development needs to be 150 away from the boundary of the Heritage Forest.

Chair Schell asked for clarification of the reference to page 45, stating he could not find the 150 foot reference.

Mr. Erickson stated it wasn't there. He explained what he is saying is that the actual location of the structures and parking areas to the boundary that is shown of the Heritage Forest comes within about 50 feet and basically almost by definition for instance, DNR in their logging division considers any tree within 150 feet of a structure by definition a hazard tree and can be removed with no permit.

Chair Schell asked where that figure comes from.

Mr. Erickson stated it comes from two sources; in this part of the world it is considered a general tree height, which means that the distance a tree's going reach when it falls. DNR uses that as their working definition of what constitutes a hazard tree. He summed up by stating that structures and cars should be kept about 150 feet away from Heritage Forest. Putting this kind of development that close is assuring there will be a conflict between conserving the forest and protecting the development property.

He went on to make a general comment regarding scale. He stated he had a problem with the traffic during peak operating, when conferences overlap. The pressure this puts to upgrade that road, even upgrading the road has negative impacts on the character as well as direct loss of farm land.

Commissioner Massey asked if there was a question regarding the boundary of the Heritage Forest.

Mr. Tate replied the Code requires that DNR Heritage Program be consulted. There is a map in the office that shows a location where the forest is situated in the landscape. SPU has submitted an application and has provided a Forest Management Plan that shows the boundary larger than what is on the DNR map, with greater detail delineating the forest boundary. There is still a requirement to consult with the Heritage Program to talk about the proposal.

DNR is not excited to engage in this conversation because most county's don't regulate these heritage lands. Most county's do not have a Critical Areas Ordinance that calls these out as regulated Critical Areas. In conversations with DNR staff they have indicated it is not the intention of the program to result in specific Critical Area standards, so they are not eager to enter the realm of the regulatory world, none the less our County Code says we will do a consultation with DNR. We have begun that process to get a more definitive answer.

Commissioner Gabelein asked when and how that Heritage Forest was designated.

Mr. Tate replied in 1999 as part of updating the Critical Areas Ordinance in 1998. There were challenges to the Critical Areas Ordinance to the Growth Board and a number of adjustments were made, one of which was the addition of the Heritage Lands into the ordinance.

There are approximately 50 heritage sites throughout the county that DNR has mapped. When DNR has been asked what the criteria was for the forest and who makes the designation within the agency there is a range of different answers. There are general criteria regarding uniqueness of forest or aquatic or terrestrial ecosystems and our understanding is that DNR received a request to designate this area, DNR did so. There is

not a solid written record indicating the steps gone through to designate that area. SPU wasn't aware that the designation was occurring when it happened.

The County has requested but has not received documentation showing exactly who went out on what date and what criteria was applied. It is still an unknown from our end.

Commissioner Gabelein stated he would like to see the criteria used by DNR in designating these Heritage Forests.

Commissioner Havens asked the forester for information regarding the problem with the windfall, he wondered what the existing problems were within the Heritage Forest.

Dan Brewner, Brewner Forestry. There is an existing windfall within the forest that is ongoing. Chris Chapell from DNR made a visit to Camp Casey in 1994 stated he wasn't sure if that had some bearing of when it was designated. He mentions that windthrow has played an important natural role in the development of the multi-stage stand that comprises the Heritage Forest and he goes on to talk about pit mound, topography and canopy gaps that have caused by this. The forest itself has a lot of decadent trees in it, a lot of defect and natural ongoing windfall is going to continue whether this program goes through or not. He stated the only major one he has seen was not even in the forest but was closer to the road on the east side and has reforested itself to some extent and it did not go into the Heritage Forest, it stopped. Windthrow will continue, when the bunkers went in back in the 30's or 40's that opened up a big hole, but you don't see a lot of windthrow in there. The existing campground has some large significant trees within it and none of those have blown over, as far as DNR and the blow down information goes, it is a guideline, not a requirement, the county certainly has a right to say how you're going to remove any trees. It is spelled out in the Master Plan and the Forest Plan both, you involve an arborist – you will not automatically cut down every tree within a 150 feet of a building, it just doesn't happen.

Commissioner Gabelein asked if when you have disease in a forest is it recommended by forest experts that you remove some of those diseased trees to keep the disease from spreading.

Mr. Brewner stated in the natural environment you wouldn't do that. It might be considered when you are in a timbered company environment where you are growing for maximum production of dollars, but in a natural forest it is just part of the natural thing that is happening, you would just let it go. If they fall down in the forest itself the only plan would be to cut out enough to get through the existing trails.

Mr. Tate added a point to the 150' rule for determining a tree is a threat to a structure is part of the conversation that is ongoing whenever the question comes up. When critical areas are involved the County Clearing and Grading Ordinance clearly states that the county has the authority and the responsibility to look at removal of one tree much less a number of trees if it is in a critical area. If it is within the accepted designated forest land, the county would always have a role in determining whether it could be removed or not.

Commissioner Gabelein asked Mr. Brewner about the boundary of the Heritage Forest and how it matched up with the DNR map.

Mr. Brewner stated he had walked the boundary of the Heritage Forest and then looked at the county boundary which is north of where the boundary is currently flagged as well as the map that SPU had done that measured and surveyed all the significant trees. He stated there wasn't any criterion that designates what is a heritage forest. He said he looked at tree size, tree species composition and tried to see where it seemed to change from the north as you move south.

Chair Schell stated there is an unknown regarding the boundary. The County map shows one boundary and Mr. Brewner has drawn a conservative one. He asked what the difference was between SPU's drawn boundary and what the County says it might be.

On the west end, by the water it is the same. On the east end it varies 50-100 feet. Marianne Edain, speaking on behalf Whidbey Environmental Action Network Stated it is time for a fair amount of clarification starting with what makes it's a Heritage Forest. Part of what makes it special is that there aren't a whole lot of old trees left. This is not just a few old trees, it is a community of trees that live and work together. Not all are large trees; in fact one of her biggest concerns with this proposal is the statement that we won't cut anything greater than 36 inches diameter at breast height. There are not a whole lot of trees that are that big, but there a whole lot of trees that are smaller that are still 300 – 350 years old. The trees are forming nurse logs and are terribly important.

Part of what is going on is there is a buffer. The roots are shallow and interwoven. When you cut holes into that forest you are cutting the woven matt that is holding the trees upright, it may not be a very big hole, but it weakens the trees around it.

The cabins are proposed within the buffer of the heritage forest. It is clearly foreseeable given a period of years the buffer will unravel until there is nothing to protect the core area, which is Heritage Forest and then it will begin to unravel. So over a period of 20 – 40 years the whole thing will slowly fall apart.

The question of what makes a hazard trees. DNR does not require any permit or notification if a tree is within a 150 of a structure frequented by people. She further stated an arborist is the wrong person to be looking at those trees. An arborist looks into individual trees for aesthetics or forestry. The issue is ecosystem function, a community of trees which form a forest.

The Master Plan does not recognize the buffer as being valuable or useful. The fear is that if that buffer goes, the Heritage Forest goes.

Between Officer's Row and what is now the NAS reserve, some years back an area of 7 acres blew down almost in a single night due to the wind coming in from a different

direction than normal. She stated they do not want to see the same thing happen to the Heritage Forest.

She stated they would like SPU to look at alternatives so they can have their conference center and the trees will remain standing.

Commissioner Massey questioned regarding the discussion of 36 inch diameter trees at breast height, but in the MDNS the County discusses 24 inch or greater located within 150 feet of the Heritage Forest. It is on page 3 of the Revised Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance. Then under mitigating conditions it says, “No buildings roads shall occur closer than 50 feet from trees in the Heritage Forest with a diameter at breast height of 25 inches or greater”. There are 3 different dimensions.

Mr. Tate stated it is best to look at two different pages; page 45 in the Master Plan, where tree retention standards are written out. Item #1 states that no tree with a trunk diameter at chest height of 36 inches or larger should be removed unless it is dead diseased or hazardous, that applies to all forested areas. Item # 2 deals with the areas proposed for development, narrowing it down to a smaller geography within the site plan. A maximum of 40% of the trees with a trunk diameter of 25 inches or greater should be removed, establishing a maximum overall and lowers that tree size that may be removed. Item #3 prohibits anything in the Heritage Forest from being removed & # 4 states that nothing shall be located closer than 50 feet of a tree that has a diameter of 25 inches or greater. It shifts around the diameter inch on specific things. The mitigating condition # 6 is a reiteration of #4 on page 45.

Mr. Massey stated that # 18 uses 24 inches.

Mr. Boscolo replied it was derived after a comment was received on the initial threshold determination.

Mr. Tate stated perhaps synchronizing 24 and 25 makes some sense, but the Department wanted to make it clear that the Department has a responsibility in having a final say in what trees can be removed above that size. That is the intention of that condition, but sees the oddity it creates to have that one say 24 inches and elsewhere have it say 25 inches.

Mr. Massey asked about trees within the established buffer.

Mr. Tate stated he wouldn't call it a buffer; it is a setback with use restrictions of what occurs within the setback. A buffer implies it's no touch. A Setback has a management strategy of what can be done within that area.

Chair Schell asked who owns the property and when was it declared.

Mr. Tate stated SPU owns the forest and owned it before it was designated as a Heritage Forest. He stated he was unsure when DNR designated it as such. In October 11, 1999 was the date the ordinance was adopted and it was on the map then.

Buffer is a no touch area. The area adjacent to the Heritage Forest is a setback area that has a series of management strategies as to what can be done within that area.

County Code does not say Heritage Lands need to have a buffer. In Heritage Lands and other fish and wildlife types of designations; where you are designating habitat or resource similar to this, you're designating that, not adding a buffer to it.

Chair Schell asked if there are official setbacks.

Mr. Tate replied no, the Code doesn't require that, it doesn't mean that when a proposal is reviewed all of the issues are not on the table to talk about. That is primarily what SEPA is for. It is to start looking at areas where you might want to do something a little different, taking into account a site specific condition and try to come up with a management strategy to address that.

Commissioner Schell asked if this was sold to a private individual and the homeowner wanted to build right up to the established border that would be allowed.

Mr. Tate replied it is true, there are other proposals that would trigger SEPA and that would provide the authority to consider other factors, but most residential development doesn't require SEPA.

Chair Schell asked if this Master Plan would commit SPU or any future owner to live to that higher standard forever.

Mr. Tate confirmed it would establish a condition that does a lot more than what the Code requires. It is binding indefinitely.

Commissioner Gabelein asked for clarification regarding whether the County would be a lead agency if the plan was adopted and the landowner wanted to remove a tree.

Mr. Tate replied that technically that was correct, most clearing of trees would be done with a Clearing and Grading Permit, which would provide the County authority. There is one area where the applicant would be able to approach DNR that may not include the County. If it was not in conjunction with any development, it's outside the Heritage Forest and it's less than 24 inches in size.

David Johnson, Transportations Solutions Incorporated.

He stated he would like to provide information regarding the approach they took. SPU recognizes that anytime you put the term Master Plan together with the word resort people will have the perception there would be a significant change in traffic volumes and that there could traffic impacts. He stated their conclusions found that the changes are very minor and that there would not be any traffic impacts, but it is important to understand the process they went through to reach a common understanding of what the changes would be as the Master Plan develops.

The key factor they looked at in developing the transportation forecast was the program at the existing Camp Casey. The activity level for the camp is measured in camper days. A camper day is one person in one bed one night. On an annual basis the camper days peak in the summer months. 70% of all of the camping activity or stays occurs in the summer and the winter activity is very low. The forecasted number of trips that the camp is currently generating based on this high level of activity during the summer as well as the lower activity that would occur in the winter months.

First of all the arrival and departure pattern for the camp is important to understand. Most of the activity occurs over a weekend where you have peak levels of incoming campers or attendees arriving on a Friday afternoon and leaving on Sunday. Peak levels coming in on a Friday or leaving on a Sunday would approach 350 trips a day now. On an hourly basis that's 40 trips an hour. The Master Plan program looks at adding 312 new beds to bring the existing 670 beds to about 980 beds total.

The forecast is based on that relative increase in the number of beds and assuming the utilization of the newer beds for the retreat portion would be at a much higher level. Looking at forecasting the number of trips the whole site would generate in the future on a daily basis shows 614 trips, an increase of 270 over existing levels on a peak hour the increase would be an increase of about 53 vehicles.

First looking at it from a motorist standpoint, you are looking at an increase of 53 vehicles in an hour, about 1 a minute, you won't notice it. If you're standing on the corner counting cars entering and leaving, you can measure it, but if you're driving through you aren't going to notice it.

Secondly, consistency with county standards, the County's Comprehensive Plan established concurrency thresholds for its' road segments and intersections. Currently for road segments that threshold is expressed as a level of service. Level of service is calculated by dividing the traffic volume by the capacity of the road. The level of service breaks the ratios down into categories A – F, the County's standard for road segments is level of service C. Engle road adjacent to Camp Casey currently carries around 1,400 trips a day. The Comprehensive Plan forecasts that it would carry 2,800 trips in the future and operate at level of service B. The new trips generated fit within the forecast that the County has developed and would not exceed the County's standard of level of service C.

Another factor that should be considered is as the Master Plan develops it is a conceptual Master Plan; there is not a specific project involved. When SPU decides to move forward and submits for a specific project, which could be a building or two, additional SEPA review would be required.

Angie Homola 2362 Happy Lane

Wanted to comment on the discussion of the 150 foot trees, the blowdown, stating we have Critical Areas Ordinances in Island County but they're not all done. She said there weren't ordinances in place for a lot of these other areas, stating she didn't think we

should look at this Master Plan or any plan as being locked in until all of our Critical Areas Ordinances are in place. She felt openings should be left to be sure all county residents in the future are protection and we consider those for all projects.

One of those concerns is the issue windthrow and blowdown. She stated there was a heavily forested area of property between West Beach Rd. and her property that was maybe a half acre of property and when those trees were removed to build a house, her property lost 4 trees. Shortly thereafter a land owner who owns property up the entire length of her street and across going east removed a 150 foot wide swath of trees. They didn't need a permit and came in and basically shoved over all the trees and pushed them back. The county got involved and there was a grey area about how that could be protected. The landowner decided it wasn't going to be economical for logging and walked away leaving a giant muddy mess that now has invasive weeds growing. There's not something in place to protect that and since that happened even more trees have blown down.

Just looking at the project she said it looks like it will cut off migration for wildlife getting down to Crocket Lake. She also said she is concerned about the nomenclature between buffer and setback. If something is to be protected it needs to have a buffer. She said we shouldn't call it a setback and hope people do a good job because leaving it up to people they tend to not do that.

Crockett Lake is an Estuary and needs to be protected. Said she would like to know how the runoff is going to be addressed. She can't see where the bio-swales would be for any filtration that might occur and how that would be handled.

She stated she would make a list of her concerns – bulleted

Darrel Hinds, Seattle Pacific University

Stated they feel the project the Planning Commission is considering is good for the county, good for the neighbors who live around Camp Casey, and also good for Seattle Pacific University so they can maintain the relationship that we've had over the years. SPU has been at Camp Casey for 50 plus years and has served as a good neighbor and has been a good steward of the resources that are there.

If that doesn't establish some credibility in terms of good will and intent it's hard to imagine what would do so. SPU intends to stay, they want this project to work, they want to be good neighbors in the future, they love the forest, do not agree with all the comments that are made; for example the University was never consulted by DNR when the designation of the Heritage Forest was made. He corrected himself saying it is not designated as a Heritage Forest but as an area of interest. A representative of that agency stated that under today's standards that probably that forest would not have been so designated because it didn't meet the criteria. The point is SPU was never contacted but has continued to work to maintain that area whatever it is and will continue to do so, but it has to be done within reason.

He further stated they have brought all of the consultants today because they want to be able to provide specific answers to questions. He encouraged the Commission to utilize their expertise to understand the studies and how they processed the work they've done and what the impacts will be rather than deal with fears and concerns and general responses of assurance.

Gary Hess with Davido Consultant Group in Freeland.

Stated he wanted to respond to Ms. Homola's question, specifically to utilities. In the Master Plan there is an infrastructure graphic, figure 6 showing what is envisioned in a conceptual basis for the utilities on the site, supporting the new development on the site and supporting the existing facilities.

Responding to the question about the onsite septic and sewage, the plan is to turn the existing system, some of which have been there since the inception of the camp, into what is known as a STEP system (Septic Tank Effluent Pumping). The tanks would remain in place but the drainfields wouldn't be used during the peak times. The liquid effluent will be pumped up to the white waste water reclamation and recycling plant. That plant would then tank the septic tank effluent treated to a class A reclaimed water standard, stored in the reclaimed water storage pond and used to irrigate the parade grounds or the play fields that are out there. Those play fields are not currently irrigated and as we have heard from Casey's staff they greatly benefit from having irrigated lawns for their sports activities in the summer time.

Regarding drainage; they would be looking towards using as much low impact development techniques as possible, including where appropriate impervious pavements, rain gardens for storm water infiltration and where peak storm flows are encountered there would be a series of grass line swales for treatment and peak flow attenuation. In the case of a 100 year storm there is an existing stormwater outfall that will continue to be used. Another point to consider, this site slopes fairly steeply down, naturally flowing away from the Heritage Forest and towards the low lands where the parade ground is.

The last item water service; the town of Coupeville water supply to support existing and future development are in their current amended water plan. They are developing new water sites out towards Patmore in addition to their Casey well sites and treatment plant and have anticipated and given assurances that they will be able to supply the water needed.

Chair Schell opens the floor to those wishing to speak a second time with a limit of two minutes.

Steve Erickson Whidbey Environmental Action Network

Stated he wanted to clarify what Natural Heritage Division is and what they do.

Washington Natural Heritage Program is a division in DNR that has nothing to do with DNR's regulatory or forest practices.

They are charged with inventorying Washington's natural heritage and bio-diversity. Based on that they have produced a list of what they consider to be the high quality wetlands and terrestrial ecosystems. These are the highest quality remaining examples of undisturbed or minimally disturbed native ecosystems in Washington. They are the recognized authority on that.

These areas are quite rare at this point. What we are calling the Heritage Forest is 1 of less than 50 remaining examples in Washington of that particular plant association, not just the big trees but the plant association. Of the subtype of that association it is 1 of 6 or 7 remaining examples.

Regarding clearing for hazard trees, the issue isn't the immediate clearing of trees. Over time these trees will be considered hazardous and they will be removed. The camp ground is a nice example but it doesn't have buildings and it doesn't have lots of cars in it. Once a tree has been considered hazardous, the property investment and safety consideration will always win and the tree will go.

If you look at the wording in the mitigating condition # 18 in the SEPA MDNS and the wording on page 45 of the Master Plan # 3 you will see that removal of trees within the Heritage Forest itself is allowed.

Angie Homola asked if Island County allowed white water to be used for irrigation. She stated she was delighted to see this being considered.

Mr. Tate stated the Health Department has reviewed and did not have an objection to this plan. The County's position is that it is a much more viable alternative for non-residential development.

Rolph Keller asked to respond to a couple of comments regarding the statement of a map of former building sites with former buildings with foundations that would equal the amount of proposed development and he states he does not believe this is true. This is not the first time they have heard this statement, and have asked for a copy of this map. The intent is to have the retreat areas in the forest, removing trees would be contrary to the intent. The project cannot go forward if there cannot be development in the forest.

Chair Schell stated he would allow one more comment, addressing the Commission.

Marianne Edain Whidbey Environmental Action Network
She stated they looked at the Ebey's Landings map, some of the footprints are of previous buildings, they looked at areas not necessarily built on previously and totaled up how much square footage SPU said they need. She stated there is enough space to do this without building in the forest.

Public hearing was closed.

Chair Schell discussed the tentative schedule.

Mr. Tate responded on the schedule, June 24 would be a normal deadline for public comment. If a SEPA appeal does occur, it may change the proposal, it may not change the appeal. A decision at that point would need to be addressed as to whether to change the public comment period.

Commissioner Gabelein moved to close written testimony on June 24th, Commissioner Reynolds seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Massey stated there were a lot of examples here in Washington of improvements made to forest lands and one in particular Deception Pass camp ground he suggested driving in there and look at how the forest has been maintained and held up regarding improvements made within the forest.

Commissioner Gabelein stated Lakeside Bible Camp also comes to mind as a successful example of improvements made in the forest.

Chair Schell asked to have staff take public comments and their concerns and then during the deliberations use them to make sure all public concerns are addressed.

Mr. Tate stated that between June 24th and the beginning of deliberation a staff response would be prepared.

Commissioner Gabelein moved to adjourn, Commissioner Reynolds seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Bradshaw
Administrative Assistant