

Special Meeting – Workshop for Public Input on the State’s GMA

January 8, 2019

6:03 p.m.

Present: Commissioner Stamper, Commissioner Fund, County Manager Erik Martin, Community Development Director Lee Napier, Long-range Planner Fred Evander, Public Works Director Josh Metcalf

Guests: Robert Kramer, Jake Morgan, Martha Hunt, Arny Davis, Ron Averill, Elijah White

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Commissioner Stamper called the meeting to order.

Participants introduced themselves.

Commissioner Stamper said he would meet with the Ruckelshaus Center the morning of Jan. 11 and Commissioner Fund would attend the afternoon workshop.

Community Development Director Lee Napier discussed the state’s request of the Ruckelshaus Center to work on the Road Map to Washington’s Future, which includes workshops and other outreach to help review and reshape the state’s Growth Management Act (GMA).

Lee said the public can submit questions or comments via email to the BOCC at BOCC@lewiscountywa.gov. She said the Ruckelshaus Center also has indicated the public can participate in a questionnaire.

Ron Averill said he was involved in the original planning process. He said a problem with the GMA is that it’s a one-size-fits-all method for a state that varies greatly. Ron expressed concerns with the 5, 10 and 20 acre breakdowns. He also expressed concern that farms don’t make enough to be self-sustaining but that additional income-generating opportunities may not be allowed.

Treasurer Arny Davis said the criteria for ag land doesn’t always make sense. He said the same rings true for zoning. Arny suggested reaching out to Mike Mahoney to have him weigh in on the topic.

Arny left at 6:25 p.m.

Martha Hunt asked if the Ruckelshaus Center will accept comment after Jan. 11. She said it might be best to start over in regards to the GMA. Martha noted that skyrocketing housing prices can be linked to the lack of development. She said the county needs to say yes more often.

Lee said Jan. 11 is the date the Ruckelshaus Center will meet with electeds from the area. She noted that she would connect Martha and Ron with Joe Tovar so they can submit the questionnaire.

Erik clarified that the Ruckelshaus Center is merely collecting data to share with state legislators.

Ron noted that only 15 percent of the county is developable. He also noted that not all of the state’s counties are in the GMA. He noted that Cowlitz County doesn’t fall under the GMA.

Fred Evander said those counties that aren't in the GMA still have to do critical areas and resource lands. He said the 13 goals of growth management seems to focus on environmental protection. He discussed the complications involved with urban growth areas transitioning from rural to urban.

Commissioner Fund left at 6:42 p.m.

Ron said cities are under the population threshold to operate as cities.

The group discussed the need to be able to expand LAMIRDs when appropriate.

Jake Morgan asked if Lewis County can ask to be removed. Ron said the Legislature has been asked to do so but has not.

Ron Averill left at 6:47 p.m.

Commissioner Stamper said one discussion at the state level was to increase the population threshold.

Lee said House Bill 1051 would revisit the criteria that sets the population criteria.

Meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.