

**Community
Development**



**501 Delta Ave
Marysville, WA 98270**

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

May 14, 2024

Call to Order

Chair Leifer called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. noting the excused absence of Commissioner Michal.

Present: Chair Steve Leifer, Commissioner Kemp, Commissioner Zhu, Commissioner Andes, Vice Chair Whitaker, Commissioner Jordan

Excused: Commissioner Michal

Staff: Principal Planner Angela Gemmer, Community Development Director Haylie Miller

Approval of 4/9 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the April 9 minutes as presented moved by Commissioner Andes seconded by Commissioner Jordan.

AYES: ALL

Audience Participation

None

Old Business

Utilities Element with Public Utility District (PUD) and Puget Sound Energy (PSE) Presentations

Principal Planner Gemmer summarized changes to the Utilities Element noting that it would be coming back to the Planning Commission next month with three main changes:

- PUD's Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) Key Findings and Strategies has been removed and replaced with a very brief summary of future projects

- A new proposed policy related to small wireless facilities has been added
- Some infographics have been removed

Rob McManis, Sr. Exec. Account Manager, Snohomish County PUD, made a presentation giving an overview of PUD's planning process and how they plan for the future. He reviewed load forecasting; the 5-year Electric System Capital Plan, and the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP). He summarized that economy and population growth is a key driver of load growth. AI and data centers could be a significant new load. Legislation and government policies play a substantial role. New technologies are expected to emerge, and the PUD is positive about the future.

Questions and Answers:

Chair Leifer commented that electric cars look like the biggest area of growth for demand. How does the PUD feel about meeting that demand? Mr. McManis explained that this will be a big part of their load growth, but they are focusing on power delivery and not necessarily services. He noted that Walmart is targeting the creation of charging stations on a massive scale, and several of these are in our area. He thinks this will fill the majority of the need. New apartments and condos are required to put in charging facilities.

Commissioner Kemp asked if there are any plans for new power generation plants to feed the new substations going in. Mr. McManis replied that there are not. Wind and solar are the two sources they see growing the most in the area.

Commissioner Zhu asked why they aren't looking at creating more power rather than buying from Bonneville Power Administration (BPA). Mr. McManis replied that it is a better deal for the PUD, and there is plenty of capacity. Commissioner Zhu asked if they also get power from Canada. Mr. McManis replied that they do. They are all tied together and can share power. Commissioner Zhu referred to offset factors. Mr. McManis provided more detail on the Driving Factors slide.

Vice Chair Whitaker asked if there is any concern that there won't be property available for substation needs. Mr. McManis explained that one of the first things they do in the planning process is to look for property. Sometimes they work with developers on larger projects to save space for them.

Jacquelyn Styrna and Amy Tousley, Puget Sound Energy, presented a PowerPoint on Clean Energy Transformation. Ms. Styrna reviewed background on PSE, ambitious state climate policies, progress they are making, and challenges they face. PSE is supporting all available strategies to address the critical reliability gap. They continue to expand and modernize the electric grid to support the transition to clean energy. She reviewed the role of natural gas in the transition to safe and clean energy initiatives they have underway.

Chair Leifer asked if it is true that the ratio of gas to electric during cold snaps is 2:1. Ms. Styrna affirmed that it is. When it is cold, they rely more on natural gas. When it is warmer they rely less on natural gas. As long as there are customers who are using natural gas, PSE will continue to supply it and to honor that service for them. Chair Leifer asked about the push to get rid of gas altogether. Ms. Styrna discussed trends and state regulations. PSE is looking at gas decarbonization and other creative ways of using their infrastructure to make the most of the resources they have. Chair Leifer asked how she would compare hydrogen versus nuclear energy. She replied that these are still emerging technologies. The first small modular reactor pilot project in the United States will be built in Wyoming and is expected to be operable in 2030. It is very different from nuclear power in the past. Hydrogen is still in the R&D phase, but federal funding may incentivize a lot of breakthroughs at a fairly fast pace. Chair Leifer asked about renewable diesel. Ms. Styrna explained it is a cleaner form of diesel.

Vice Chair Whitaker asked if residential homeowners would have to pay for an upgrade on natural gas connections in ten years. Ms. Styrna was not able to say what the rate structure or regulatory environment would look like in the long term, but reiterated that PSE is committed to providing natural gas service to the communities they serve. Ms. Tousley stated it is important for PSE to work with the Snohomish County PUD on how to work on decarbonization strategies. They are looking forward to that partnership. Mr. McManis commented on the great working relationship they enjoy with PSE.

Chair Leifer commented that the PUD is the largest public customer of BPA. How secure is the PUD's position on that power allocation based on water shortages in other areas? Mr. McManis stated that they have had a long, strong relationship with BPA, and they expect that to continue. He noted that the federal government is negotiating with Canada about water flows, but they haven't seen the reductions in rain fall or snowpack that had been predicted.

New Business

Development Update

Director Miller provided a development update highlighting the following projects: SAIA Trucking; Beach Avenue Multi-Family; Grove Street Dental Clinic; DTG Recycling; Sunnyside Co-Housing; Grove Church Expansion; 1933 Bar & Kitchen; Daiso at Marysville Mall; the K BBQ; and the Bluffs at Whiskey Ridge.

Director's Comments

Director Miller reported that the City has partnered with a class at Western Washington University to help Marysville propose a code for middle housing. Staff will share that with the Planning Commission when it is done. The Planning Commission was interested in having a presentation from the students if they are available.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. moved by Vice Chair Whitaker seconded by Commissioner Jordan.

AYES: ALL

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.