



# Transcript of Work Session

## Planning Commission Work Session

### Open Space Applications

Thursday, March 5, 2026, 5:30 P.M.

6<sup>th</sup> Floor Hearing Room, Public Service Center, 1300 Franklin Street, Vancouver, WA

### CALL TO ORDER

JOHNSON: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to call this Planning Commission Work Session to order for Thursday March 5, 2006 (sic). My name is Karl Johnson, and I'm the Chairman of the Clark County Planning Commission. Before we begin tonight, I would like to announce that our Planning Commission Work Sessions are hybrid, both in-person and via Webex.

For the virtual and in-person members of the Planning Commission and Staff, please ensure that your microphones are off and muted unless you're speaking. There will not be any public comment during the Work Session, but members of the public can watch or listen. Written testimony related to this evening's agenda items and other topics considered by the Planning Commission is encouraged and is accepted.

This evening agenda is as follows, Call to Order of course, and then we're gonna have our Open Space Applications and then after that we'll have Comments from the Planning Commission and Adjournment. Are there any questions so far?

Commissioners Present: Ron Barca, Mark Bergthold (Virtual), Kyle Fadness (Virtual), Bryan Halbert, Karl Johnson.

Staff Present: Kevin Tyler, Public Works Division Manager; Hunter Decker, County Forester; Jeffrey Delapena, Program Assistant; Larisa Sidorov, Office Assistant II.

### WORK SESSION ITEM

#### **Open Space Applications**

Staff Contact: Hunter Decker, County Forester

JOHNSON: If not, we will pull up on the first and only which is Open Space Application. Hunter Decker is presenting tonight.

DECKER: Thank you. So, I'm Hunter Decker, the County Forester for Department of Public Works who have reviewed the Current Use assessment requests that were accepted during this last 2025 year. The approved request will be effective this year if approved for 2026 and then be reflected on the 2027 tax statements.

So, we'll go ahead and kind of get into the PowerPoint. What is Open Space? So, the state legislature created a piece of law that maintains and preserves and conserves open space lands for natural

resources, scenic beauty for the economic and social well-being of the state and its residents. The Open Space Tax is governed by RCW 84.34 and WAC 458-30 and our Clark County Code 3.08. And so, the law has three classifications. There's Open Space land, which is what we will be reviewing tonight. Also within the law is farm and ag land, which we will not be reviewing. And in the past, we did review Timberland, but the Assessor's office merged that in 2024 with the other designated Forest Land program, so Timberland is no longer part of the review. Next slide please.

So, we coordinate with the Assessor's office at the end of the year for the preceding year of the applications for the tax assessment for Current Use, and they've recently updated their form, so there's a screenshot of what that first page would look like. And this is a requirement that's through, it's a change in the Comprehensive Plan and so we require the Planning Commission's review and approved by Clark County Council. And this is the 35th year that we've reviewed these applications since it was established. Next slide, please.

So, I added some values here, we enacted it in 1970. I would like to have more data, but this is just what I had on hand. I, we asked for this data in 2019 where we had 8,000 acres and 582 owners and I'm assuming and I'm not, I haven't confirmed, but the reduction of acres and owners for 2026 is because of the Timberland Merge program and so those owners and acres are not counted in the Open Space program anymore. And in the past slides I've had it separated where instead of just yellow, you would see yellow and green for Open Space and Timberland. And so, I had kept the historical value that I had and the current one for 2026 of so you can see the Market value versus the Current Use value. Next slide, please.

So, the Open Space Categories, here's kind of a comparison between what our Clark County Code has four categories versus the State. I highlighted obviously color-coded what is similar and versus the state that's say like not highlighted like wetlands and aquifers, those things are, in the State Code but not in Clark County Code. So, sometimes people get a little confused when they're applying and think that, you know, we cover all that and I have kind of explained to them that, no, we don't do that, so. Next slide please.

So, requests, we got three requests for the Open Space Assessment. We conclude that two of them do meet the Historical Preservation under Chapter 3.08.060 of our Clark County Code. And then we also have one request that is, meets the Stream Protection under our Clark County code 3.08.040. We've recently updated the fees. The processing fee has through the Assessor's office has gone up, and so I kept the historical value there just so you guys could see. Next slide please.

So were there's some basic approval criteria for all the applications, the parcel size must be ten contiguous acres exclusive of home site except for the Historical tracts. Those tracts can be less than five acres. And they all need to have a Weed control program, and our Clark County Vegetation Management program is responsible for that, and I have more information there and links so you could read more about that. And I may have to update the employees. I'm not sure if it's still eleven.

TYLER: Yeah, we have a few more than that.

DECKER: We have a few more than that now. So, I'll make sure that's updated for the Hearing. Next slide, please. So, we'll get into Historical sites, those classifications are based on, so that they're listed on a local state and national historical register, and these tracts can be less than five acres. Next slide please.

We'll go ahead and get into the first Open Space application, the William Frederick Kauffman House.

This is a request for 0.52 acres located at 8104 Northeast 107<sup>th</sup> Ave. Next slide will, not yet next slide, but next slide will have a map, so you'll see. So, it, it is a historical building on site and it's registered, was built 1912 and registered with our Clark County Heritage Register. And so, this applications, we recommend approval for the 0.52 acres. There's a picture of the certificate. Next slide please.

There's a location just north of the property is Padden Parkway and then there's the cross street of Northeast 107<sup>th</sup> that goes over and then next slide please. Here's a picture of the current state that our Clark County GIS has online. Next slide please.

So, the second Open Space application is the Bakery Building. It's requesting 0.09 acres. Oh, I might have got the address incorrect right there, I think I just read that on the last one. Yeah, so this is at 506 Washington Street. So, the Staff Report's right but my slides are incorrect there. From the late 1800s, the early 1900s, this was the home to a well-regarded blacksmith and a machinist shop. And then in 1911, the Royal Bakery Company took over the Bakery Building after the blacksmith shop. So, out of our code with being on the Register, we recommend approval of the 0.09 acres. Next slide please.

So here it is, there outlined in blue, light blue. Next slide. What's that?

TYLER: It was Briz Loan. It was Briz Loan. I think it's up for lease now, the last time I drove by it.

HALBERT: Sorry, could I just ask another question again? Just trying to understand this process. So, you're saying 0.9 acres, but it's actually a building sitting on that property and, and so, trying to get the property to be tax exempt is that the idea of this? Of putting it on the Historic Register, or...?

TYLER: Yeah it's, it's not that it would be tax exempt. It's, it's taxed at a different rate. So, it's the Current Use versus the highest and best use. So, if you think about real estate market and downtown Vancouver's probably pretty high value. So, they're looking at getting a lower tax assessed value essentially because they would tax it at its sort of historic property value.

HALBERT: Great, thanks and, and does that same apply to the Kauffman House that we looked at?

TYLER: Same concept would apply to that as well, yes.

BARCA: Can, can we just take a moment then and go ahead and explore the idea that what responsibilities come with the aspect for the property owner if they get that Historic designation?

TYLER: You mean from a national, State or local Historic Register perspective?

BARCA: Or what does Clark County expect of them as a result of getting that designation?

TYLER: Yeah, I think the Count— from the County's perspective it needs to be maintained on one of those registers. So, the national state or the county has its own Historic Register, so the, the building needs to maintain that Historic quality in order to continue to be listed on the Register. Once it's listed on the Register, there are certain requirements that you can't, you know, modify the building without approval of the County has a, and I'm drawing a blank on the name, but there's a, a body that like, like the Planning Commission, but the it's like the Historic Commission that evaluates those for listing on the Register and so if you make modifications to the building, then you know you need the approval of that, that governing body, the advisory body over the Historic Preservation. So, it needs to stay on the Register if it, if it's no longer eligible for listing, then it's no longer essentially meeting the criteria in the County Code, so it would be then essentially delisted from the Current Use program.

JOHNSON: Have, have you excuse me, have you had one delisted before ever?

TYLER: So, so Hunter and I, our job is not to evaluate these after the approval process. That's the Assessor's office. So, the Assessor's office has some sort of model monitoring program where they look at the Farm and Agriculture, designated Forestland, I'm assuming they have one for Historical and for Stream Protection. Yeah. Hunter may have a little bit more experience with that than I do.

DECKER: Yeah, so every time a sale happens, and these are on any kind of tax deferral program, even the senior exemption ones the new buyer, it's a form that gets disclosed that says, are you gonna continue the Current Use of this? And it shows what that is and, new owner can opt in to do that or they can opt out.

And so, if they opt in usually that's when the Assessor's office will kind of look harder and make sure that they're gonna continue that use. And so yeah it's nothing I'm really involved in for Open Space just the review is what I'm involved in.

TYLER: And if, if it would help at the Hearing we can have some of that addressed.

JOHNSON: My only the de-designation of Agriculture land came up as a thorn in our side, and it wasn't that we did or didn't. It was just that the way it seemed to be presented in my mind was no, it's, it I'm sure there's a way, but it was very difficult to do. And so that's kind of this process now going forward, I kind of had the same question was well okay it makes sense. These are Historic buildings, but at the same time, if they ever didn't or if somebody wanted to de-designate. That's a very bad word in our lingo, and that's the only reason I brought it.

TYLER: And, and I think those are, those are sort of two different things that are occurring. So, the de-designation of Agriculture is, is a zoning question, right? This is more of a tax assessment, and so property owners, there's this program to, and this falls into the line of we want to protect the agricultural activities that are happening in the County. And so, maintaining Agriculture is a good thing.

So, this is a benefit to landowners who keep their property in Farm and Agriculture and in order to stay in the Farm and Ag program, they have to demonstrate to the County that they're producing agriculture. So, there's, there's a requirement to show that in the form of the, you know, the products that they sell. And so, in order to stay in the program, they have to demonstrate that to the to the County on a periodic basis, otherwise they'll get kicked out of the program. That doesn't change the zoning on the property. It just changes how it's taxed. Yeah.

BERGTHOLD: This is Commissioner Bergthold. I've got a question on the Kauffman House. Is that just a residence?

DECKER: Is it just -

TYLER: Do they live there?

DECKER: Yes.

BERGTHOLD: Okay. So, there's no product being produced or sold there.

DECKER: No, for the Open Space designation for Historical, the only criteria is that it is listed and

maintained on a Register, you know, if, if the I guess Councilors were to create code and get all changed and add more categories and make it tougher then, you know, that would be something to consider, but as of right now it's if it's on a Register then we have that that's all I can look at.

BERGTHOLD: Okay. Thank you.

TYLER: Current Use Open Space has a handful of categories. Historic is one of them. Stream Protection is one of them, soil conservation is another, recreational oppor— enhancement of recreational opportunities. And so, each one of those categories has its own specific criteria. Historic is that it's on one of the registers. Stream protection, we'll get to that, it's that it meets certain criteria. So, and then Farm and Ag is kind of a separate thing and that it has its own criteria.

BERGTHOLD: I guess just the word, the classification open land, Open Space. I spent last week; I visited a friend in Maryland. His house was used as a hospital during the Civil War and but there's no open space back there just a Historical building. So Open Space, I don't know, philosophically it did – doesn't make sense, but I understand.

TYLER: Yeah.

DECKER: I completely understand what you're saying because the verniculars (sic) of things really get confusing, you know, and I, I hear it and see it all the time. So, yeah.

BERGTHOLD: Okay, that's the law.

DECKER: Yeah. That's what they decided to call it. But so, there's just a couple pictures there of the, the building. One I found in the nomination form that they did from 1911 and then the current one from our County's GIS. Oh, did the, str—15? There we go. So, Stream Protection is applications that meet a couple of different criteria. The first one of them can be areas that are significant springs that are delineated by the Department of Natural Resources study on water resources, which doesn't exist unfortunately. I went through and called the state and wanted to find this study so I could see what properties could qualify and that study does not exist. So, this, that piece of code doesn't really apply. So, the second one is tracts that are, two or straddling major streams that are designated shorelines of the state or identified in the County's shoreline master program. Public access may be required, provided that the public access shall only be required as open space classification is in full force and effect and shall not be deemed to vest any permanent rights or public access or use.

So, the last application, next slide please, is Fir View Slope Lot 12 Reclassification, and so the Application for Stream Protection, we have 11.43 acres of the 38.13 acre parcel. The site's located at 19502 Northeast 19th Street in Vancouver. And the area is, that we'll look at here in a second is within the Shoreline Management Zone of Lacamas Creek. Next slide please.

So, being that it's a reclassification, and looking at the minimum code requirements, you know, we have a 11.43 tract and, it, within our county's Shoreline program, trying to see here the, the mapped area is subdivided through a process that our Wetland and Habitat review staff went through and while the mapped shoreline management area is less than ten acres, you'll see by this polygon, but the, the tract itself is 11.43. And so, we wouldn't establish that separate according. We reviewed this with our PA's office as well. And so, since the remaining parcel will be 11.43 acres and is up against the shoreline management area that it would qualify for approval of the 11.43 acres.

And the next slide has a closer up picture here. You can see the tract area that's mapped urban convert,

convert, sorry my mouth's a little dry. Converse. Oh man. Kevin –

TYLER: Urban conservancy.

DECKER: Urban convert, conservancy. My goodness. Okay. And so, the, the strip that is up against the brown that's not within the polygon will still qualify according with review of our PA's office that it's up against the shoreline management area of the area and would qualify.

BARCA: It— allow me to ask this so I get a better clarification. We have 38 acres, and did we actually subdivide this 11.43 acres out of it? Or are we just, we're carving eleven and a half acres out of the 38 for the purposes of designation?

TYLER: Yeah, so this is part of a larger subdivision, right? The whole 38 acres is being subdivided.

BARCA: Into what sized parcels?

TYLER: So, you can, you can see them up there. In the kinda tan color. They're little, tiny, few thousand, few thousand square foot parcels, right? Whatever the zoning allows in this area.

BARCA: Okay.

TYLER: So, and so the, everything on the sort of northeast triangle of that property, that's the 11.43 acres, it'll be an open space tract according to this, the plat, and that 11.43 acres, the whole property currently is in Farm and Ag so this part that's developed will come out of Farm and Ag, and they'll pay back taxes on that. The 11.43 acres what they would like to do is they can't, again I don't think they can farm it anymore or they can't farm it enough for it to be –

BARCA: Viable?

TYLER: –viable. So, they're, they want to reclassify it into Stream Protection because it's in that shoreline zone of Lacamas Creek, and that whole, all the way up to where you start to see the tree line is all a hundred year floodplain, and that's why it's part of the shoreline zone.

BARCA: So, so the vegetated strip that basically runs from bottom right to upper left.

TYLER: Yeah.

BARCA: That's the shoreline we're protecting?

TYLER: The shoreline is actually next to that as you go north and east.

BARCA: So, it's out of the picture?

TYLER: No, it's so, sorry.

DECKER: (inaudible)

BARCA: That's the shoreline is what looks kind of like farm or—

TYLER: Farmland. Yeah. Yeah.

BARCA: So that vegetated strip that separates the two of them, it's got nothing to do with –

TYLER: It's part of the tract and would also be part of the Open Space designation.

BARCA: So, it needs to be protected as well?

TYLER: Yes.

BARCA: Okay. And so, this tax break that's going to be given to that will be for the person that owns the triangle of the upper right section?

TYLER: Yes.

BARCA: None of the individual parcels below the vegetated strip are participating in this?

TYLER: Correct.

BARCA: Okay. All right, that, that catches me up, thanks.

DECKER: I think that's, that, that does it for the slideshow, but definitely here to answer more questions.

HALBERT: So that, that parcel then, it won't have its own, it won't be an independent parcel? It'll always be part of the 38 acre subdivision?

TYLER: It'll be a separate tract, which means it'll get its own parcel ID number in, in our GIS system.

HALBERT: Okay, thanks.

DECKER: In the future, it would.

HALBERT: Yeah, and then who maintains that and, and if there's public access, are they required to maintain the access to it?

TYLER: I'd have to look at the, what they're proposing through the subdivision. Typically, those are owned and maintained by the Homeowners Association. And the and the Code requirement says that public access may be required. We're not requiring public access or proposing it at this stage.

DECKER: Yeah, we, I mean we haven't in the past cause we, I think we reviewed it with one of our PAs that it wasn't something that we can, it would be like a Council requirement that maybe comes from the top or something.

BARCA: And just for my clarification then all three of the proposals that you brought forward your recommendation is approval on all three of them?

DECKER: Correct.

BARCA: Thanks.

JOHNSON: Okay, any more questions either online or here?

HALBERT: None from me.

JOHNSON: Okay, seeing none, Hunter, you guys, thank you, that was pretty cool. That was really nice. You guys were prepared.

#### **COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION**

JOHNSON: With that said, any more comments from the Planning Commission? Oliver's not here, so –

BARCA: Are we date certain for hearing this?

JOHNSON: I thought we're doing it in two weeks. Is that correct? Was that on the calendar?

TYLER: Yep, that's correct.

JOHNSON: I thought that was on the calendar. I didn't – I could have been wrong. Okay, and good to be back, good to see you back, Mark and we'll, or excuse me Bryan, we'll get going. So, with that said, I think we're done. Let's adjourn.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**