

Plan Commission & Task Force Minutes

Town of Washburn

Town Hall

Thursday, November 14, 2024

Commission members present: Kim Bro (chair), Jim Park (town board representative - via Google Meet), Tim Schwenzfeier (vice chair), Caroline Twombly.

Commission members absent: Cyndi Belanger (secretary).

Planning Task Force members present: Terri Bahe, Ryan Padrutt, Alex Prediger, Charmaine Swan, Dennis Weibel (via Google Meet).

Planning Task Force members absent: Tom Cogger, Phil Kraus.

Others present: none.

1. Chairman Bro called the meeting of the commission to order at 7:03 P.M. and verified its legal notification (posted on town website and at town hall and Tetzner Dairy on November 13).
2. The minutes of the October 1, 2024 meeting were approved (Tim moves, Caroline seconds).
3. Alex Prediger and Ryan Padrutt joined the Planning Task Force and introduced themselves to the group. They are new to the planning process and will familiarize themselves with the 2007 plan to identify how they wish to contribute to preparing the updated plan.
4. Emily Nelson, a planning consultant with the Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NWRPC) introduced herself and distributed a map of “Existing Land Use” and a copy of updated demography tables for the “Issues and Opportunities” chapter. She has converted the 2007 PDF plan to WORD.docx format that can be edited by the group, and she will update the background data required for individual chapters. Kim shared materials that the group reviewed previously on land fragmentation and on fiber-optic broadband expansion for the town.
5. The group reviewed the schedule for remaining meetings up to the public presentation and hearing on a draft updated comprehensive plan. If the March town board meeting is on the 11th (2nd Tuesday), a public hearing could be held on Thursday, March 6, 2025 and a posting of a draft plan on February 4th would allow the required 30-day review period. The Plan Commission could meet on February 4th to approve any final revisions. Because the Ashland Daily Press is printed only once per week, the public hearing notice will need to be published on the last week of January. The bulk of text preparation needs to occur in December, and the Implementation steps and Future Land Use Plan will need to be set in January. Subgroups with no more than two Plan Commission members can meet separately to work on draft chapters without needing to post a public meeting notice. The group agreed to meeting December 3rd, January 7th, and February 4th at 7:00 P.M. at the town hall.
6. The group recommended (Caroline moves, Tim seconds) that the Town Board adopt the draft Public Participation Plan that was distributed prior to the meeting.
7. Emily asked the group about reporting the results of the 2006 community survey to identify issues and opportunities. The group felt that, while the issues identified in 2006 remain relevant, the specific, numerical results of the survey are no longer useful. The group is now using feedback that it receives in the process of preparing the updated plan. Kim reminded the group that the City of Ashland used a “Photo Challenge” to encourage community members to submit photos of the characteristics that they value in the community. Sharing photos online is more popular and more common now than it was in 2006, and the town’s Facebook page could be used to advertise the challenge. Jim mentioned that photos cannot be posted by the public on the town’s page, but they could be sent to the Plan Commission email address and, depending on the response, a representative sample could be posted. Kim will re-send information about the Ashland “Photo Challenge” to Charmaine and Phil to see if the process can be adapted to encourage community input as the plan is updated in December and January.

8. Emily told the group that she will post editable chapters of the 2007 plan on a Google Docs site that she can share with the group. As with the “Issues and Opportunities” chapter that she shared, Emily highlighted those portions of the text that the Task Force needs to update. She and Clem (NWRPC mapping specialist) will update factual information, but the Task Force needs to provide information on goals, objectives, and action steps. If access through Google Docs is problematic, NWRPC has another way to provide access to editable chapters.
9. The group identified individual chapters of the plan on which they will begin updating:

Housing:	Kim
Utilities & Community Facilities	?
Transportation	Caroline & Charmaine
Economic Development	Tim (adapting relevant parts of county plan)
Agriculture & Natural Resources	Tom & Dennis
Cultural Resources	Terri
Land Use	Kim & Terri
Intergovernmental Cooperation	?
Implementation	Action steps developed by individual chapter subgroups.
10. The meeting adjourned at 8:51 P.M. (Tim moves, Caroline seconds).

Draft submitted by: Kenneth Bro, Chair, Town of Washburn Plan Commission (November 28, 2024).

Plan Commission Report

The Town Board is required by state statute to adopt a Public Participation Plan for a comprehensive plan and to post a Class 1 notice of a 30-day review of the updated draft comprehensive plan prior to a public hearing on the plan. The commission recommends that the Town Board adopt the commission’s Public Participation Plan.