Commissioners present: Nate Veranth, forest landowner (Chair); Rex Thompson, forester (Vice Chair); Dick Ryon, forester; Andy Chittick, forester/sawmill operator; Grady Steere, Campbell Global; Steven Mullen-Moses, Snoqualmie Tribe; Monica Paulson Priebe, Green River College; Brandy Reed, King Conservation District; Bernie McKinney, Green River Coalition; Laurie Benson, Washington Department of Natural Resources; Kelsey Ketcheson, Washington State University Extension

Guests: Mike Lasecki, King Conservation District (KCD); Brett Anderson, KCD; Amy Brockhaus, Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust

King County Staff: Fereshteh Dehkordi, Dept. of Permitting and Environmental Review (DPER); Eric Beach, Water and Land Resources Division; Linda Vane, Commission Liaison

Chair Nate Veranth called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m.

Motions

Motion 1- 0720 That the minutes of the May 18, 2017 meeting be approved as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion 2- 0720 That that temporary forest worker housing should be allowed in the Forest Production District. The motion passed by a majority vote.

Staff and Agency Reports and Announcements

King County – Linda Vane reported that the Forestry Program is in the process filling a Forester position. She also reported that a Regulatory Specialist had been hired to assist the Agriculture and Forestry programs with regulatory issues such as code updates.

Washington State University Extension (WSU Ext.) – Kelsey Ketcheson announced that the Vashon Forest Field Day education event would be held on August 5th and that WSU Extension’s Coached Forest Stewardship Planning Course would be held at the Preston Community Center beginning in September.

King Conservation District (KCD) – Brandy Reed reported that the KCD had working on a Land Initiative, some activities of which would involve small lot forest management in accordance with the priorities outlined in the Rural Forest Commission’s (commission) “Actions Required for King County to Conserve Rural Forests.” Commission member Andy Chittick has been serving as the Commission’s representative on the advisory committee for that body of work, according to Brandy. She also outlined the objectives of the KCD’s Urban Forest Health Management Program.

Campbell Global – Grady Steere reported that a wildfire had occurred on Campbell Global timberland in the Tokul area over the weekend, burning 40 acres before being brought under control. He said this served as a reminder that the fire danger is very high this season. Grady also reported on a public meeting held on July 17, 2017 by the City of Snoqualmie concerning a proposed ordinance that would establish Snoqualmie Parkway as a designated truck route with truck traffic limited to the hours of 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. One of the stated purposes would be to address concerns with early morning traffic noise. A monthly permit fee per truck would also be assessed. According to Grady, the ordinance was of concern...
to his company because log trucks typically start work much earlier than 7 a.m. in order to be well away from the area during commuter traffic. There are no local sawmills, so log trucks travel to remote mills and yards. If passed the ordinance might have a negative impact on the economic viability of timber companies in the area, Grady explained. Among other concerns, companies do not want their trucks in with commuter traffic, he said. Campbell Global has asked for studies to evaluate the actual extent of truck noise and the impact of it. In response to concerns raised at the meeting, the City tabled the proposed ordinance for the time being according to Grady.

Grady responded to questions from the commission. Steven Mullen-Moses commented that the Snoqualmie Tribe has been requesting a traffic study for some time. Logging has been part of the valley for well over 100 years, Steve said. A discussion ensued to the effect that working forests are desirable and that companies need to be economically viable as well playing a role in supporting local communities.

**Proposed King County code changes**
Nate Veranth, Commission Chair

Nate Veranth facilitated a discussion of potential code changes that was the latest in a series of such discussions. The conversation on this day focused on the question of whether types of accessory housing that are not currently allowed in the Forest Production District (Forest zone) should be permitted. The three types of accessory living spaces under consideration were Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and temporary or permanent worker housing modeled after farmworker housing options that are already allowed for the Agriculture sector.

Nate summarized the outcomes of the discussion at the May 18, 2017 commission meeting at which the group decided to consider crafting a proposal to allow ADUs in the Forest zone given an as yet undetermined set of conditions. The commission had identified a number issues to be considered in their deliberations such as concerns with potential for forest fragmentation and a desire to limit the degree to which trees might be cleared to accommodate septic drain fields other uses.

Commission Liaison Linda Vane provided a summary of what had been learned about land use patterns in the Forest zone thus far and presented new data. Linda presented information about parcel sizes, industrial and non-industrial forestry uses, and where residences are currently located in the Forest zone. The data showed that of 297 residences in the Forest zone, 179 were on parcels five acres or less in size. Only one residence was discovered on a lot of 80 acres or more in size. Linda also presented data on the number of new ADUs in the Rural Area and Agriculture zones since 2013. In that time period 25 permits were issued for new ADUs. Some 21 of those were on parcels zoned RA-2.5 and RA-5. By comparison, there were 13 new ADUs built in unincorporated urban areas during that time period. She said that the rural ADUs tend to be located near the incorporated areas and major roads.

Rex Thompson commented that it would helpful to look at incorporated areas. Accessory dwelling units are a use that has increased in the last twenty years, he said. He had observed ADUs becoming more common in the rest of the incorporated area.

Nate introduced Steve Evans, Agriculture Program Project manager, who shared his experiences with developing farmworker housing in the county’s Agricultural Production Districts. He explained the many and complex hurdles involved in siting and building worker housing. There are two paths to worker housing, he explained. The first is permanent residences. According to Steve the ordinance allowing permanent farmworker housing was written years ago to help dairies in Enumclaw who needed permanent workers to live on the farm. The dairy business requires workers to be on hand to milk the cattle twice a day, 24/7, he explained.
Steve went on to say that the second path was temporary farmworker housing. He had observed that this housing type was mainly used when a farmer had seasonal labor like vegetable and berry production. Steve said that the county still does not really have a way to help those folks. Among the challenges is that farms are located in flood plains. Putting structures there has been almost impossible, he said. Steve explained that state law set standards for agricultural worker housing. These units have to meet certain standards but can be fairly simple shelters. Steve explained some of the housing innovations that have been tried in the county over the years. The high cost of land and the challenges of ensuring access to water are common barriers to successfully developing worker housing.

The commission engaged in an extended discussion of the available mechanisms for providing worker housing in the unincorporated area, creative new approaches, and the limitations currently placed on worker housing in the Forest zone.

Grady Steere moved and Monica Priebe seconded a motion that temporary forest worker housing should be allowed in the Forest Production District. The motion passed. The recommendation will be forwarded to the Department of Development and Environmental Services (DPER) for consideration.

The commission commenced a deliberation on the merits of allowing ADUs in the Forest zone. Grady suggested supporting the creation of a demonstration project to test the viability and outcomes of allowing Accessory Dwelling Units in the Forest zone. The group also discussed the possibility of mirroring the current rules governing ADUs in the RA zone in the Forest zone.

The commission concluded the discussion with a request to staff to pursue some specific policy analysis and data gathering to assist the group in making an informed decision regarding the possibility of allowing alternative housing options such as ADUs in the Forest zone.

**Treatment of forest management practices in King County Code**

Brandy Reed, King Conservation District (KCD)

Brandy provided a brief report to introduce a regulatory issue. She explained that Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and King County have responsibility for issuing permits for particular forest management activities. By and large their respective regulatory roles are clear. However, problems have arisen when a landowner engages in forest management activities within 1.5 tree lengths of a structure. In these instances the work would be under county jurisdiction instead of DNR. There has been some confusion around this situation according to Brandy. She provided an introduction to the topic, which would be addressed at the September commission meeting.

**Public Comment**

Mike Lasecki commented.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:38 a.m.

**Next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on September 21, 2017, at the Preston Community Center.