

DRAFT Minutes
Stevenson Planning Commission Meeting
Monday, May 11, 2026
6:00 PM

Attending:

PC Vice-Chair Auguste Zettler; Planning Commissioners Charles Hales, Anne Keesee. A quorum was present. **Commissioner Anthony Lawson** attended later in the meeting. **Jeff Breckel** was serving as an ex-officio member.

City Staff: **Daniel Pitairu, Permits and Records Manager, City Attorney Robert Muth, Skamania County Community Development Staff Mandy Hertel, Planner II.**

Applicant for CUP-2025-003: Wesley Huston

Public participants: Mary Repar, Kara Owen, Ezra Hammer, Rachel Lehr.

PC Vice Chair Auguste Zettler called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. He requested **Daniel Pitairu, Permits and Records Manager** explain the meeting protocol for public comments.

A. Public Comment Expectations: Commenters must raise their hand and be acknowledged by the Chair. Individual comments may be cut off after 3 minutes. Disruptive individuals may be required to leave the meeting. Persistent disruptions may result in the meeting being recessed and continued at a later date. On the phone participants press *6 to mute/unmute & *9 to raise hand.

B. Old Business

1. Meeting Minutes

The Planning Commission was presented with minutes from April 13th, 2026 for approval.

MOTION to approve minutes as presented was made by **Commissioner Keesee**, seconded by **Commissioner Hales**.

Voting aye: **Planning Commissioners Charles Hales, Auguste Zettler, Anne Keesee. Commissioner Lawson** was not in attendance at that time.

Public comments:

Mary Repar commented on tree removals in city right-of-way. She suggested a tree policy. She sent Councilmembers an LDB Beverage request regarding

modification of organic matter using the sewer system to dispose of waste and noted past problems with the sewage plant due to excessive organic matter. The Cascade Transmission proposal is out for comments/SEPA with a new scoping period.

2. Continuance of Hearing for CUP-2025-003:

a. Appearance of Fairness Disclosures

City Attorney Muth administered an Appearance of Fairness Disclosure to Planning Commissioners. The Appearance of Fairness Doctrine is a rule of law requiring government decision-makers to conduct non-court hearings and proceedings in a way that is fair, impartial and unbiased in both appearance and fact. Any conflicts of interest must be disclosed to ensure fairness and impartiality. Disclosures include any financial interest in the final outcome, any outside (ex-parte) communications made with any party of interest or anything else that could be construed as a conflict or affects any decision making. Decision makers can be challenged by applicants regarding any perceived conflicts of interest. Upon questioning, none of the Planning Commissioners disclosed any financial interests, compensation for a vote, or other matters that would impede a fair and impartial decision. **Vice-Chair Auguste Zettler** reported a conversation about the issue at Skamania Lodge as he has a part time position there, but stated no impact on his decision-making. There were no challenges by the applicant or the public.

b. Presentation by Staff

Mandy Hertel, Planner II, provided a brief staff report. She explained the determination for exempting the project from a SEPA (State Environmental Policy Act) requirement and pointed to details in the report that led to the decision. She noted the city planning commission has the final say in planning decisions, which is different than the county planning process. A reevaluation before a judge is possible.

c. Presentation by Applicant

Wesley Huston requested public comment first in order to address any concerns.

Rachel Lehr, a resident in Stevenson living nearby, requested the conditional use permit be denied. She cited concerns over the number of potential campers, sanitation, fire risk, increased traffic, and the farm classification. She stated it would change the character of the neighborhood.

Ezra Hammer, attorney, spoke on behalf of Skamania Lodge/Terrapins Owner, LLC. He provided a number of points regarding the application for a conditional use permit, and reviewed the four conditions needing to be met for approval-health and safety, harmony with surroundings, no impact on surrounding property values, and compliance with the Comprehensive Plan. He stated the application is incomplete and the Planning Commission cannot approve without additional burden of proof from the applicant. He shared the following observations:

- Site plan is deficient-no dimensions, need size of things in order to approve.
- No SEPA checklist.
- Meets bare standards
- No sanitation or trash storage plan
- No fire safety plan.
- No narrative how findings how will be made.

Mary Repar spoke against approving the conditional use permit due to current zoning restrictions. She questioned if a commercial area was being extended into a residential area.

Wesley Huston spoke on behalf of his application. He stated his willingness to make changes to satisfy the permitting requirements. He noted the property's proximity to the Skamania Lodge's maintenance yard, and that noise from the Lodge occurs during wedding and maintenance activities. He added that site plans don't need all dimensions when a scale is provided, and the number of bathrooms was approved by the Public Health Department. All campers using the site will be known to him.

Vice-Chair Zettler closed the public comment portion of the meeting at 6:47 p.m.

Attorney Muth shared in 2014 a full SEPA was done by Terrapins Owner, LLC for proposed 10 lots that now make up the site in question. He advised if a SEPA was required then, it should be required for any additional uses. **Hertel** stated appreciation for the historical knowledge of the site. **Commissioner Lawson** joined the meeting remotely.

d. Commission Deliberation

Prior to a discussion regarding the approval or denial of the application for a Conditional Use permit by the Planning Commission, the following details were considered.

Findings of Fact: The Planning Commission was asked to review Conditional Use Permit application **CUP-2025-003** and consider whether the proposed use (campground) can be permitted under Suburban Residential zoning designation (SR) pursuant to CS 17.39.020.

The applications and project plans were available for public review at City Hall during regular business hours and at <https://www.ci.stevenson.wa.us/news>, and notice of the hearing had been published in a newspaper of general circulation on January 21st and 28th, 2026.

1. The Planning Commission reviewed the application for a Conditional Use Permit after a duly advertised public hearing in February 2026.
2. The applicant paid the required application fees.
3. **The CUP-2025-003 application** requested permission to provide customers of Cohoperative, Inc., a nursery (Existing Use) located at 365 Foster Creek Road, Stevenson, Washington with the option of making overnight use of the same property through a limited number of primitive campsites (Proposed Use). Seventeen sites are proposed on the 3.2-acre property, which is also a commercial hop growing business.

Following public comments and those from the applicant, Commissioners engaged in a lengthy discussion regarding the application.

e. Decision

MOTION to deny the **CUP-2025-003** for a campground/hop farm facility was made by

Commissioner Hales, seconded by **Commissioner Keesee**.

Voting aye: **Commissioner Hales, Lawson, Keesee**.
Voting nay: **Commissioner Zettler**.

Conclusions of Law

Based on these findings and conditions, the Planning Commission is not satisfied that this Conditional Use proposal:

1. Will not endanger the public health or safety;
2. Will not substantially reduce the value of adjoining or abutting property;
3. Will be in harmony with the area in which it is located; and
4. Will be in conformity with the comprehensive plan, transportation plan, or other plan officially adopted by the council.

3. Planning Commission Applications Commissioners reviewed the two applications submitted to fill the Planning Commission vacancy and prepared to make a recommendation to City Council. They interviewed Brian Riffel. Tracy Gratto had previously been interviewed at the April 2026 Planning Commission meeting. Riffel chose to withdraw his application in support of Tracy Gratto. He was invited to apply to the Skamania County Planning Commission and encouraged to remain interested.

Following **PC Vice-Chair Zettler's** call for a recommendation, **Commissioner Keesee** proposed the Stevenson City Council appoint Tracy Gratto to fill the open Planning Commission position at the May 21st City Council meeting.

C. New Business

No new business was introduced.

D. Discussion

Commissioner Lawson initiated a brief discussion regarding ex-officio members, quorums, and alternate serving members. **Attorney Muth** advised the bylaws allow the Mayor to appoint an ex-officio to serve, with voting allowed only if needed to make a quorum.

Mandy Hertel, Planner II thanked the Commission for their hard work on the CUP process.

Commissioner Hales also thanked the city staff for their work.

It was noted that city emails remain troublesome. Prior to adjournment Mary Repar announced she has trees available for planting.

E. Adjournment

Commissioner Hales motioned to adjourn at 7:26 p.m. The motion was approved unanimously.