

DRAFT MINUTES
CITY OF STEVENSON PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
April 13, 2026
6:00 PM, City Hall and Remote

Attending:

PC Vice-Chair Auguste Zettler; Planning Commissioners Charles Hales, Anne Keese, Anthony Lawson. 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: Dave Cox, Mary Repar, Kara Owen

PC Vice Chair Auguste Zettler called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

A. Public Comment Expectations:

PC Vice-Chair Zettler requested **Daniel Pitairu, Permits and Records Manager** explain the meeting protocol for public comments.

Commenters must raise their hand and be acknowledged by the Chair. Please state your name clearly for the minute taker. 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. Tools for remote or call in participants: *6 to mute/unmute & *9 to raise hand.

Public comments: Mary Repar provided information on library programs, Bonneville Dam events, and a Grange seed and plant swap on April 25th.

B. Old Business

1. Meeting Minutes - Planning Commission was presented with meeting minutes from March 9th, 2026 for approval.

MOTION to approve Planning Commission meeting minutes as presented from March 9th, 2026 was made by **Commissioner Hales**, seconded by **Commissioner Keesee**.

1. Ex-officio member

Jeff Breckel noted he is serving as a non-voting ex-officio member to be a resource and help with communications between the city council and the planning commission. He can engage with dialogue and provide institutional history. The position is not considered to be part of a quorum.

2. Continued hearing for Conditional Use Permit CUP-2025-003

Background: At the February 9th and March 9th, 2026 Planning Commission meetings, Commissioners reviewed Conditional Use Permit application CUP-2025-003 to consider whether the proposed use (campground) can be permitted under Suburban Residential zoning designation (SR) pursuant to CS 17.39.020. 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. Public comments were received regarding the application. Following the initial review, additional information was requested from the applicant. No decision was made at either the February 9th or March 9th, 2026 Planning Commission meeting.

City Attorney Muth administered a Fairness Doctrine to the Commission members. None reported having any financial interest in the project, or current communication with the applicant regarding the CUP application.

Skamania County Community Development Staff **Mandy Hertel, Planner II**, shared the staff report is the same as in prior meetings, with the only additions being an updated site plan and fire marshal comments. **Vice-Chair Zettler** questioned the wording on the agenda regarding possible decision to be made that night.

Hertel explained the intent is to encourage discussion and a decision, as it is unusual to hold three hearings. **Attorney Muth** noted decisions must be made within Stevenson Municipal Code confines addressing issues of public health and safety, property values, harmony within the area of the location, and whether or not it's consistent with the comprehensive plan for the city. He gave a brief overview of the evenings proceedings regarding the public hearing and further discussion.

Vice Chair-Zettler stated without a current staff report in the evening's agenda he felt unable making a decision without the information being available to all. **Muth** advised the commission could move to postpone business item B2 to the following Planning Commission meeting.

Zettler called for a motion to postpone the hearing. **Commissioner Hales** motioned to postpone the public hearing on CUP 2025-003 to the May 2026 Planning Commission meeting. **Commissioner Keesee** seconded. **Commissioners Zettler, Hales and Keesee** voted aye, passing the motion. **Commissioner Lawson** did not provide a vote, but expressed disappointment in not making a decision.

Further discussion took place regarding next steps. It was pointed out the motion to postpone did pass via a quorum of 3 votes.

Requests to city staff to provide and attach appropriate documentation and information to Commission agendas were made by Commissioners to avoid further issues. Holding a special meeting before the next

Commission meeting to review the CUP was considered.

Muth provided details on the actions the Commission could take regarding the application.

- Approve outright as presented with the staff report.
- Approve with conditions added to staff report.
- Deny after a discussion takes in the issues of public health and safety, property values, harmony within the area of the location, and whether or not it's consistent with the comprehensive plan for the city. This provides a record behind the reason to deny.

Muth advised at the meeting tonight it was possible to discuss potential conditions for the project following the verbal staff report; allow public comment, and add information for the staff to process. The applicant will also provide comment.

Vice-Chair Zettler requested prior conditional uses considered be printed to aid the Commission in its current discussion. **Vice-Chair Zettler** asked if any information from the March 2026 Commission meeting needed to be discussed further.

Mandy Hertel, Planner provided a brief update regarding requirements for restroom facilities, locations of water spigots, and the fire marshal's report.

Specifics regarding road design, well flow, and campsite locations from the fire marshal's report were reviewed. **Hertel** noted those conditions cannot be made less restrictive.

Commissioner Lawson expressed concerns over the commercial nature of the campground and the current number of campsites planned. He suggested a condition to limit the campground to 7 sites

only, with a maximum of 6 campers per site. He also suggested the campground be for members only, not the general public. Length of stay and parking requirements were also discussed.

Hertel shared much of the onsite parking needs were already addressed in the fire code. She also related during a recent public meeting held at the site by Commission members, only clarifying questions could be asked of the applicant, and discussions were not allowed. Further discussion took place regarding conditional uses in residential zones, and it was pointed out in SMC 17.15.04-1 zoning campgrounds are permitted conditionally. **Vice-Chair Zettler** emphasized the need to be fair and consistent, as this request is establishing a precedent in regards to future planning issues.

Commissioner Hales recapped the four areas that determine whether a conditional use application is approved or not. He suggested enforceability of some conditions would be easier than others. **Attorney Muth** noted the comprehensive plan does support campgrounds as it encourages tourism. The question is how to make it compatible with the zoning. **Commissioner Keesee** asked how to quantify a financial impact on neighboring properties. **Muth** noted Realtor studies could be used.

Further discussion led to four potential conditions the Commission could require regarding the CUP:

Use of generators, duration of stay, parking, and density of campsites on the property.

These 4 subjects will be discussed at the May 2026 Planning Commission meeting.

Vice-Chair Zettler opened the public hearing at 7:19 p.m.

Kara Owens, General Manager of the Skamania Lodge spoke against the

proposal, citing fire risk, traffic and pedestrian safety, and land use compatibility. She expressed concerns about future business changes.

Mary Repar commented on the site, zoning impacts, and the Comprehensive Plan. She stated sewer connections should be required, and asked for a building moratorium in Stevenson.

Dave Cox reminded Commissioners they represent all their constituents.

The public hearing was closed at 7:53 p.m.

C. New Business

Planning Commission Applications -

Review of the applications submitted to fill the Planning Commission vacancy and prepare to make a recommendation to City Council. Two applications were received.

Tracy Gratto responded to questions from Commission members regarding her interest in serving on the Planning Commission

The second applicant, Brian Riffel, was not available to interview.

Commissioner Lawson motioned to table a decision until Brian Riffel can be interviewed. **Commissioner Hales** seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Discussion

Mandy Hertel and **Daniel Pitairu** will work on improving the city's website for meeting packets. She will also check on special meeting dates. for a special meeting. **Vice-Chair Zettler** requested the application process to interview for the open Commission position continues until the May 11th, 2026 meeting.

E. Adjournment

Adjournment was approved unanimously @ 8:08 p.m. following a motion by **Commission Keese**, seconded by **Commissioner Lawson**.