



Commission Meeting Minutes Monday, March 24, 2025

Call to Order – Special Meeting

Commission President Jasmine Vasavada called a special meeting of the Port of Olympia Board of Commissioners to order and open to the public at 4:30 p.m., Monday, March 24, 2025, at the Percival Plaza at 626 Columbia Street NW, Suite 1B, Olympics Room, in Olympia, Washington 98501.

Present

Commissioners: Jasmine Vasavada, President; Maggie Sanders, Vice President; Amy Harding, and Bob lyall.

Attended Virtually: Commissioner Sarah Montano, Secretary.

Executive Session

At 4:30 p.m., Commissioner Jasmine Vasavada, Port of Olympia Commission President, announced that the Commission would recess into a closed Executive Session until 5:15 p.m. to discuss potential litigation with legal counsel representing the agency RCW 42.30.110(1)(i).

Commissioner Vasavada returned the meeting to order and stated that the Commission was in Executive Session until 5:15 p.m. No decisions were made, and no action was taken.

Call to Order – Regular Meeting

Commission President Jasmine Vasavada called a regular meeting of the Port of Olympia Board of Commissioners to order and open to the public at 5:30 p.m., Monday, March 24, 2025, at the Percival Plaza at 626 Columbia Street NW, Suite 1B, Olympics Room, in Olympia, Washington 98501.

Present

Commissioners: Jasmine Vasavada, President; Maggie Sanders, Vice President; Amy Harding and Bob lyall.

Attended Virtually: Commissioner Sarah Montano, Secretary.

Staff: Alex Smith, Executive Director, Chris Wright-Pierce, General Counsel; Warren Hendrickson, Director of Operations; Chris Paolini, Airport Senior Manager; Mike Reid, Director of Community and Economic Development; James Sommer, Public Works Manager; Damien Egan, Harbor Senior Manager; Emily Girton, Marketing and Outreach Coordinator; and Missy Goodell, Executive and Commission Coordinator.

Guests: Anthony Hemstad, Don Krug and Debbie Pattin of the Port of Olympia Citizens Advisory Committee.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Harding moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Sanders seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Executive Director Report

Alex Smith, Executive Director, reported on recent Port activities. She introduced two new team members that recently joined the Port, Brent Barnes, Director of Enterprise Services, and Kim Cayenne, Marina Office Coordinator. She shared that the Port participated in Thurston County Chamber's March Forum, where the Port facilitated the conversation "How Will Real Estate Shape Thurston County's Future?" A ceremony was held with the Black Hills Audubon Society dedicating its new interpretive sign at Billy Frank Jr. Park; and some Port staff toured Lacey MakerSpace to gain a deeper understanding of their operations. The Port will participate in this year's Women Build with Habitat for Humanity South Puget Sound on May 14. Commissioners and Port staff had the opportunity to support the Thurston County Chamber Foundation at their annual 'A Night on the Town' event.

In addition, Alex reminded everyone of the ways they can communicate with the Commission. She stated there is a great deal of information available on the Port's website and encouraged everyone to check it out.

Public Comment

Sixteen individuals provided public comments regarding project labor agreements, port leased land, and the Airport Master Plan.

Consent Calendar

Commissioner Harding moved to approve the consent agenda as presented; Commissioner Sanders seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Pending Issues or Business

Port of Olympia Citizens Advisory Committee (POCAC) Workplan. Anthony Hemstad, Don Krug and Debbie Pattin of the Port of Olympia Citizens Advisory Committee presented the POCAC's 2025 Workplan, the Workplan of the POCAC's Economic Development Subcommittee and POCAC vacancies. The Commission was asked for their direction. The desire to have members from all five districts was noted and a more diverse group was discussed.

Anthony Hemstad updated the Commission on the Economic Development Subcommittee's work to date.

Don Krug asked the Commission for their support to move forward with soliciting more POCAC members. Commissioner Harding expressed support in opening up the application process, ensuring that the process and dates are transparent and clearly stated on the Port's website. Commissioner Harding sees the Commission as setting the strategic direction, the staff is implementing the strategic direction, and the POCAC with a role of multiplying those efforts.

Action Calendar

None.

Action/Other Calendar

None.

Advisory Calendar

None.

Commissioner Reports/Discussion

Commissioner Montano recently attended the recent Thurston County Chamber event where Panattoni was highlighted. Commissioner Montano learned more about Panattoni and what their values are. She believes that this will be a good development for Thurston County and good for employees.

Commissioner Sanders attended a STEDI meeting at the Southwest Washington Agriculture and Business Innovation Park. The Port supported the feasibility study that resulted in this park. They also opened an organic business with a ribbon cutting ceremony. They also have an awesome event center. They will serve as a business resource and innovation hub, and an agri-tour destination.

Commissioner Harding shared a statement as she has observed her fellow commissioners wrestling with how to best represent the community and the environment. She indicated that she was thankful that as the Port of Olympia's staff fully forms, they are really digging into the broad community work with Vision 2050.

"I want to address the public comment we've been receiving regarding our industrial and airport lands in Tumwater. Our community thrives on the passion of its advocates. And I really do deeply value that – how cool is it that we have the carpenters' union and people opposing the airport that are here today.

My time on the port commission has taught me the crucial distinction between advocacy and governance. Advocacy, in its essence, is the articulation of a personal world view, a clear and often binary stance. "Meat is harmful." "Embrace veganism." Or "Meat is essential, follow the Palio path." "No new homes, they will clog our roads." "We need affordable housing, build denser." "I love planes." "I hate planes." These are powerful expressions of individual conviction. And who has the privilege of advocacy is not always representative of our whole diverse community. Just those with the time and resources to show up. That goes back to the Vision 2050 process that we undertook that took thousands of hours and different people participating, that I am really thankful for. As we view our processes through the lens of equity, I really think this matters.

Governance, on the other hand, demands a broader perspective. It requires us to listen intently to a chorus of diverse voices, each advocating for their own vision and then to forge policies that balance these competing interests. Also including the voices of the unheard. It's about finding common ground amidst a landscape of differing priorities. And

then there are the unavoidable necessities, the projects that inspire little enthusiasm. No one clamors for an electrical substation in their backyard, yet we depend on a robust grid to power our present and future energy needs.

Advocacy simplifies, offering yes or no solutions. Governance, when done well, is a complex tapestry weaving together the threads of advocacy to meet both practical and aspirational needs of our community. In Tumwater the city's Comprehensive Plan serves as its guiding framework for how land in Tumwater should be used. It's created with ongoing public input. As the land use authority of the port's properties within Tumwater, Tumwater has designated most of our lands for airport related industry or industrial use. This designation reflects a deliberate choice. These lands, when looking at the whole community of Tumwater, are the optimal location for industrial infrastructure. Industrial lands like substations may not have an abundance of folks clamoring to their defense either.

The recent campaign by the Port of Seattle to safeguard its industrial lands powerfully illustrates this point. Former Port of Seattle Chair Ryan Calkins aptly compared industrial lands to a home's laundry room. You don't showcase the laundry room to guests when they come to your dinner party. You lead them to the kitchen, the dining room, the bedrooms, the parks, the breweries, the coffee shops that define our community's charm. These are the visible, celebrated spaces. But as Calkins emphasized, the laundry room, though unseen, is essential. Without it, the entire house and all its appealing features cease to function. Similarly, our industrial lands and airport lands, though perhaps less glamorous, are the bedrock upon which our community's vitality and functionality rest. I thank the Thurston County residents who have advocated on behalf of and against the activation of our industrial lands as we've seen tonight with the Carpenters' Union and those opposed to the Airport master plan. I'm thankful for those who are working at their jobs, entry level or those requiring higher levels of education alike, or caring for children and do not have the opportunity for advocacy. I'm also grateful for the opportunity to do the challenging work of governance alongside the support of the Port of Olympia Commission. We represent those working in warehouses, as those as well as those purchasing goods distributed by them. Those who use the airport directly and those who experience the benefits more indirectly through medical life lights and wildland firefighting efforts. Governing for all can be lonely because you can feel a little isolated touting the benefits of the laundry room. Can't we all just have a job where you get to celebrate the kitchen? I suppose not. But I am grateful for colleagues who lead with courage and keep our whole Thurston County house working."

Commissioner Iyall reported on his committee assigned meetings. He attended a Yelm Chamber of Commerce meeting, and the Transportation Policy board, and his appointment to the Solid Waste Advisory Committee was just approved.

Commissioner Vasavada reported that the Commission recently toured the former Dancing Goats building. She sees her role at the Commission is to steer economic growth and economic development, but in an ecologically friendly way.

Other Business

None.

Meeting Announcements

A list of upcoming events was displayed on the screen for viewers to see upcoming Commission and POCAC meetings. Executive Director Smith stated the next Commission meeting will be held on Monday, April 14, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Port of Olympia Board of Commissioners, the Monday, March 24, 2025, regular meeting was adjourned at 6:41 p.m. by Commissioner Vasavada.

PORT OF OLYMPIA COMMISSION

Jasmine Vasavada, President

Maggie Sanders, Vice President

Sarah Montano, Secretary