

**Okanogan County Board of County Commissioners meeting
Monday, March 20th PM session**

AH - Andy Hover, BOCC Chair, District 2
CB - Chris Branch, BOCC vice-chair, District 1
JN- Jon Neal, BOCC member, District 3
CH- Crystal Hawley, Asst Clerk of the Board
LJ - Lanie Johns, Clerk of the Board
PP - Pete Palmer, Planning Director

These notes were taken by an Okanogan County Watch volunteer. Every attempt is made to be accurate. Notes are verbatim when possible, and otherwise summarized or paraphrased. Note takers comments or clarifications are in italics. These notes are published at www.countywatch.org/commissioner-and-board-of-health-meetings.html and are not the official county record of the meeting. For officially approved minutes, which are normally published at a later time, click [here](#).

Summary of Significant Discussion:

- *Update on Dept of Ecology inspection of unpermitted properties in the flood plain.*
- *Discussion of enforcement when properties are developed outside of the rules*

The time stamps refer to the video that is published on the county's AV Capture site. To watch the video for this meeting, click [here](#).

BOCC resumes meeting at 1:30 and goes directly into an Executive Session regarding potential litigation over the Zoning Code revision.

3:10:15 Planning Dept update PP- DOE field visits to floodplain sites. Triggered by people who own flood insurance. 174 policies in OK County. Paid out 53 claims so far, 3 with substantial damages. Purpose of meeting was to let us know what they were doing. They requested documentation on 12 sites, and it was found that these 12 sites were not permitted by OK County. DOE now wants us to do enforcement. In the past, DOE helped with enforcement in the Methow, but they have backed away from that now. I've been thinking about how much staff time it will take, with the likely outcome that there isn't any more that we can do.

They gave us a red line document, with the expectation that we will take action. PP told DOE that OK county is in the process of updating the zone code, had will be working on a clearing and grading and CAO. Dept of Commerce has been pressuring to get done or they may start withholding funds. This could affect housing funding.

PP would like the BOCC to give her guidance as they are being pretty pushy.

JN - says it sounds like they are asking for something that isn't possible.

CB - asks to see the policy. Discussion on who holds the actual policy, and what the DOE role is (backing the policy?)

AH - asks about the 12 properties in question.

CB- explains how the flood plain rules work. If county has flood damage prevention ordinance, that allows properties to get flood insurance. Is not sure how it's possible to get flood insurance on an un-permitted property.

PP - says she has not been contacted by any bank about proving permits. Says that sometimes the title companies get involved.

Discussion about scenarios whereby a property could have insurance without permit.

AH asks about what exactly the DOE is saying. Suggests that they have DOE Zoom with them to explain what is going on.

PP says that DOE should have a report to the BOCC by April 8th.

JN is looking at the map, and says there is one that he knows to have been there for at least 60 years.

Discussion about whether they should write a letter to the property owners and what it should say.

Mention of the area between Omak and Okanogan that neither town wants to annex.

Discussion about previous efforts to address houses that are in the flood plane. PP shares anecdote about inspections she did in another capacity that revealed some big concerns.

JN - speaking of nuisance properties, what about that place near Ellisford?

PP - we started working with him when I first started working at the county and he started cleaning up. A lot of work was done with DOT, but don't know what has happened since.

AH - we need to get the Sheriff and Prosecutor here to agree to put these things under a civil penalty.

CB - talks about concerns with removing such things out of a criminal status, to a civil status.

PP - We could institute a stiff daily penalty that would get their attention. That usually resolves it, but sometime a judge has to get involved. One time I had a guy spend 10 days in jail because he refused to comply.

AH - we spent a lot on \$\$ to get more attorneys, we should let them handle this.

JN - asks what Planning Dept does about someone who is building a house without a permit?

PP - we would go check it out, and then send them a letter letting them know we are investigating. We are complaint driven - we can't just go out and inspect.

CB - asks what happens if Building Dept is notified?

PP - says the building dept doesn't like to get involved because they are working on site with lots of people.

CB - talks about a previous building dept inspector who red-tagged some houses.

PP - the Building dept has more teeth because they can withhold the Cert of Occupancy.

AH - brings up that it can impact people who inherit property and can't do anything with it because it can't be insured.

CB - talks about an example that came up with the health district.

Discussion about the benefits of building with a permit.

CB - talks about how there needs to be a program for enforcement or it will never work.

AH - talks about property rights and how people perceive them.

CB - important to compile a list of examples of how lack of permit has caused problems for people.

3:37:00. BOCC goes into Exec. Session for reviewing performance of a public employee.
BOCC adjourns at 2:55 pm after returning from Exec. Session.