

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday April 25, 2023 AM

Present:

Chris Branch (CB) – BOCC Chair, District 1 (By Zoom)

Andy Hover (AH) – BOCC Vice Chair, District 2

Jon Neal (JN) – BOCC, District 3

Lanie Johns (LJ) - Clerk of the Board

These notes were taken by an Okanogan County Watch volunteer via Zoom. Every attempt is made to be accurate. Notes are verbatim when possible, and otherwise summarized or paraphrased. Note taker comments or clarifications are in italics. These notes are published at <https://countywatch.org> and are not the official county record of the meeting. For officially approved minutes, which are normally published at a later time, see:

https://okanogancounty.org/offices/commissioners/commissioners_proceedings.php.

Time stamps below are in real time. To locate topics, a clock on the AV Capture video screen at <https://okanogancounty.org/avcapture.html> can assist in finding the correct spot on the video recording.

Summary of Significant Discussions or Actions:

- Discussion re: incorrect notice for Planning Meeting & no public comment period – zoning and rural character of County.
- Approval of 2 subdivision proposals; Long Plat (Park Place) 2021-2, and Warner (on East Lake) Long Plat alteration 2022-1.
- Approval of Fairgrounds' Manager bid recommendation for 40 stall Horse Barns with Noble Panels.
- Letters of interest for District 1 & 3 LTAC position.
- Wa State Capital Budget passed approving \$670,000 for Courthouse rehab with 5% to 7% Administrative Fee.
- Made decision for Auctioneer Services for County Surplus Auction on May 15th – GovDeals – online and in person,
- Update from Solid Waste and Public Works – Upcoming meeting with Environmental Protection Agency regarding Air Quality – new rules.
- Adjourn for lunch – 11:28.

9:05

Flag Salute

9:15

No Public Comment.

9:18

In depth discussion relating to event at Planning Commissioner's Meeting from Monday Night -
recommend listening to AVC capture for details:

Discussion summarized here: Planning had on their meeting notice that meeting was to be held on Zoom only, which was an oversight per Char Schumacher from Planning Dept. That has been changed to in person and Zoom for future meetings. There was a group of people present at the Planning Meeting who wanted to talk and were not allowed to. AH will suggest Public Comment periods to the Planning Director which is stipulated in the Open Meetings Act. The constituents present at the meeting apparently wished to discuss the Tunk Valley Re-Zone. CB had spoken with the Planning Director after the meeting and learned the group was threatening to oust the Commissioners. More discussion among BOCC regarding some people they have heard from are happy about the 160-acre minimum, and others are not happy. CB states he gets some raving comments and some supporting comments. AH recently met someone from the Tunk Valley that is very happy about the rezone.

9:30

CB- Really hard decisions will be criticized. States for me, it takes a willing risk to make decisions that are not agreed to by everyone. We get accused of overreach. We step out and make decisions that are controversial. Sometimes the people who criticize our decisions are not well informed. They should come and talk to us so we can explain our reasoning and correct the deficiencies of what they have heard. Anyone care to share your opinions on that?

AH – I agree with you. That's our job. No matter what we do, about 50 percent of the people are going to be mad at what you do. I've said the exact same thing. It's the only place (Tunk) that I have ever heard of an actual water shortage. AH discusses water availability with respect to allowing increased development. We hear comments about not wanting houses built above them because of a threat to the water supply, yet those same people don't want restrictions on building. When wells dry up, first in line users have priority, can file an impairment claim to DOE. If their claim is made, the new users must stop using their wells. They get mad at the County for letting it happen. Everyone, regardless of the size of their property, has the same constitutional rights for development.

JN – I don't really know how to add to that, it's a no-win situation and I understand the Tunk Valley people. It's like putting a Band-Aid on a bullet wound. You try to stop the bleeding, but it is definitely not a permanent fix.

CB- There's another piece of philosophy that I would like to share about rural lands our rural ways and the rural landscape and farming and ranching. There's a lot of folks out there interested in protecting our rural character. I always say that the subdivision that goes in next to you could change your operation. In the end the rural way of life that they are accustomed to could go away. Each property owner in the subdivision has the same rights as they do, no matter what size, how long that they have owned it. That's how our country works. If they choose to subdivide their land and allow that rural character to be affected, they will find out there are a lot of diverse opinions out there, about how that land is used, each of whom has the same rights as them. If you care about protecting rural character and your way of life, subdivisions may be exactly what changes your ability to farm. Just a few comments, because I am sure that we will hear about the Tunk rezone again.

JN – I am sure it's going to be back.

9:36

Moved, Seconded, and Carried to approve minutes from April 10th and April 11th.

9:50

Moved, Seconded, and Carried to Approve the Revised April 17th minutes. Still need to review the 18th

Minutes.

9:55

LJ heard back from some Counties and AH is responding to Commissioner Gehring.

Also, LJ received an e-mail from an engineering firm saying they will be meeting with this PM. They are wondering if there is anything else they need to bring with them. They will be on Zoom.

9:58

Char Schumacher, Planning Department Technician brings 2 subdivision proposals that have made it through the applications process. The first is Park Place Long Plat 2021-2 Okanogan Smith irrigated Plat #13 and the next is Warner Long Plat 2022-1 on East Lake, they will be connecting to existing sewer – Shoreline Property. Two separate long plats. Moved, Seconded, and Carried to approve both applications.

10:05

CB acknowledges the visitors at the Planning Meeting last night live on Burton Street, and from the Mazama Advisory Group.

10:11

AH states that he has no knowledge from the Planning Meeting last night; CB suggests that he talk with the Planning Director today, and possibly reach out to the Mazama residents.

10:12

LJ states that she has a stack of items to discuss.

AH states thanks Lanie for drafting resolution for 52-2023. AH asks Commissioners Branch and Neal to review the resolution for wording.

AH asks about the new recommendation from Naomie Peasley (NP), Fairgrounds Manager. AH to print it out so it can be acted on. There were 3 estimates for building the 2 horse barns; \$159,750, \$200,000. and \$255,600. NP suggests the \$159,750 estimate for Noble Panels for the 2- 40 stall horse barns. Known quality from other racetracks. It was moved, seconded, and carried to accept the recommendation and complete the purchase.

10:25

LJ states we have some interest in District 1 for the LTAC position. 1- the General Manager of Best Western/Peppertree – Jessica Farmer and 2- Ms. Markhaller from Oroville. AH some discusses these 2 as Ms. Farmer is associated with the Winthrop Chamber of Commerce also.

LJ received notice that the Wa State Capital Projects Budget passed and the \$670,000 for the Rehabilitation of the Courthouse is among those projects. She was notified that 5%-7% is taken for the Administration of the grant, however. They will be scheduling a site visit.

AH asks for reminder of what will be covered by this, some exterior work, filling in gaps, painting trim, Annex windows, interior hall, clock tower windows. LJ states the stairs to the Administration building are not expected to be part of this grant. LJ suggests that we may want to send out for bids for the work on the stairs. LJ states there was also correspondence regarding offices of elected officials. LJ has spoken with the Civil Deputy, and they believe the code will need to be modified.

10:37

LJ brings up the 2 bids for auction services for the County:
Gov Deals

Books (?) (*unsure of this auction service as bid was not complete*)
Campbells Auctions

LJ has reached out to the County Homeless Shelter and is waiting for a list of materials needed.

10:40

AH would like to talk about the auctioneer first. Campbells Auction would 16% of sales, GovDeals would get 10% with no buyer premiums & they will come out a catalog the items. They have been doing online business since 2016.

It was moved, seconded, and carried to select Gov/Deals for the County Surplus Auction. They are already a vendor for the State.

Most of the Surplus vehicles are from the Sheriff's Office, Juvenile Dept, and Public Works.

AH would like to have all items at the Fairgrounds South Lot by May 6th. It was moved, seconded, and carried to have Departments bring their surplus items to the Fairgrounds South Lot by May 6th. JN has a question about the auction – is there a chance that the auction won't be set up by May 15th as planned? Yes, but can be online at least.

11:00

Ken Kovalchenko (KK), Solid Waste Manager to update to BOCC;

Drain system in the Bridgeport Transfer Station is working better.

Twisp Transfer Station is in process and the road will be closed for 2 days, at least.

There will be a green waste event in Twisp. We've done this before, and it is very successful.

The construction is going on at the Central Landfill. KK notes that CB hadn't signed the waiver for Greystone Construction to be able to advertise their work at the landfill. They are just wanting to use this for advertising and will be careful not to violate anyone's privacy.

11:05

It was moved, seconded, and carried to allow KK to sign the waiver for the BOCC.

AH received a letter regarding working with the City of Twisp for a different access road.

Unfortunately, when the city was planning for the development, they didn't factor in a new road.

KK received an e-mail/meeting invite from Environmental Protection Agency regarding Air Quality new rules. AH would like to go but may not say things they would like. He has a conflict. CB may be able to attend. JT guesses that there might be no more backyard burning. KK has seen on a map where it is about 50/50 on air quality in Okanogan County, depending on time of year. KK states we will never have perfect air. CB states that sometimes he sees Ag burning goes fast, but leaf burning is very smoky. The meeting is on May 10th.

11:19

Josh Thomson (JT), County Engineer reports on road and maintenance side of Public Works. Not having many runoffs this spring. Owhi Lake road has been the only issue – working with the Tribe on that. Opening gates to lake washed a lot of debris on the road, but it is looking better.

Public Works Projects'

Starting Chip Seal programs

Guardrail job is done

Old Hwy 97 to start in 2 weeks.

Twisp River road overlay to begin in July

JT received CRAB (County Road Admin Board) contracts to sign.

A couple of updates on the Planning/Trails position – A draft resolution has been completed, and now we need an MOU with OCOG to determine what budget lines this will be paid from.

JT said his conference in Alabama was good, a lot of information on gravel roads. Also, some sessions on bridges.

AH asks where we are at with the Forest Service?

JT reports the State is doing gravel haul for roads on Seal Creek.

11:28

Adjourned.