

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
10/19/2020 PM

JD—Jim DeTro, BOCC chair, District 3
AH—Andy Hover, BOCC vice-chair, District 1
CB—Chris Branch, BOCC, District 2
LJ—Lalena Johns-clerk to the Commissioners
PP—Pete Palmer, Director of Planning and Development
BP—Brian Points, President, Points Consulting

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 <https://www.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/Commissioners/Minutes%202014/March%204,%202014.htm>

Summary of significant discussions:

Public Hearing—Watershed Plan Addendum: Five people make comments. Several others submitted written comment. The Commissioners discuss the transfer of water rights out of the county and also a proposed amendment to the Resolution to submit the Addendum to the legislature.

Presentation of the Housing Study Results by Brian Points of Points Consulting and the Housing Coalition. Brian Points explains the Housing Study to the Commissioners using Power Point slides.

Public Hearing—Watershed Plan Addendum

Rob Heberley submitted his comment in person. He was a voting member of WRIA 49 and wants to make sure the Minority Report is submitted to the Commissioners. He is concerned that the state DOE is spending \$20,000,000 in Okanogan County to buy agricultural water rights, and that water is being traded as a commodity. He wants to make sure that whatever gets submitted to the DOE, they'll see the Minority Report.

Chris Johnson submitted a comment via Zoom. He has been on WRIA 49 since its beginning. The group decided, by consensus, to forward the report representing the majority view and offering ideas about how to mitigate wells. Also, while WRIA 49 supported the establishment of a water bank, that wasn't the tool they chose. This plan helps to identify ways the city of Okanogan can meet its water needs. He urged the Commissioners to pass the report forward. The Minority Report was adopted as part of the addendum.

Dick Ewing, of the Farm Bureau, submitted a comment via Zoom, saying the addendum did what it was supposed to do—create a process to offset water used for development.

Rob Inlow, of the Whitestone Reclamation District, submitted a comment via Zoom, echoing what Rob, Chris and Dick said. Also, we need a water bank or water trust ASAP. The possibility of 900 acres of agricultural land leaving the county would cause panic. We'd lose 900 acres of property tax. Most of this water being lost is north of Riverside, that section is losing more and more water. We need some way to reallocate the water.

Trinity, of the WRIA 49 Community, recommends moving the Minority Report forward. The Washington State Legislature will need to have all the information.

End of comments.

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Commissioners had a long discussion concerning transfer of water rights and the draft resolution to submit the addendum to the legislature. They discussed an additional “whereas” clause and ended up wanting to think about it overnight and take the resolution up again on Tuesday.

Presentation of the Housing Study Results by Brian Points of Points Consulting and the Housing Coalition.

Brian Points, via Zoom, presents the Housing Study Results with power-point slides. His recommendations include:

1. Increase the supply of market-rate rental housing.
2. Increase the supply of subsidized housing.
3. Encourage development within existing infrastructure. To protect the rural character, build in areas already somewhat dense.
4. Improve access and awareness of home renovation funding opportunities.
5. Improve clarity and consistency of zoning classifications between cities and the county.
6. Increase permissibility of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and other forms of medium-density housing.
7. Increase supply of senior housing, including independent and assisted living units.
8. Increase local management of short term rentals.

Ashley Range, Director of the Oroville Housing Authority mentioned that the document has received much praise. Nancy Nash Mendez of the Housing Authority of Okanogan County said the report will be very useful and pointed out that housing for farm workers is important, too.

BP asked the commissioners if they wanted to think it over or could he distribute the report now. Both AH and CB were comfortable with distribution now.

After the Housing presentation, the Commissioners returned to the discussion of the WRIA 49 addendum and its Minority Report. They will try to come up with a resolution tomorrow to use to submit the addendum to the legislature.