

BOARD OF OKANOGAN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
05/07/2018

In Attendance at Meeting:

Andy Hover - AH (BOCC)

Chris Branch – CB (BOCC)

Lanie Johns – LJ (Clerk of the Board)

Char Schumaker – CS (Planning Department)

Angie Hubbard – Ahu (Planning Department)

Rocky King – RK (Planning Department)

These notes have been taken by one of several volunteer citizen note takers and published on the website of Represent Okanogan County (ROC.) The notes have been taken as close to verbatim as possible, with any writer's comments or explanations in italics. For officially approved minutes of Board of Commissioner meetings, normally published at a later date, see www.okanogancounty.org.

Summary of significant discussions

Update – Planning

Grizzly Reintroduction

There was a brief discussion of an issue relating to grizzly reintroduction involving lack of funds for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to relocate problem bears. The need for establishing coordination between the county and state and federal agencies was mentioned, as was the potential need to address the subject in the Comprehensive Plan.

Shoreline Management Plan (SMP)

Sections of seven tributaries of the Okanogan River had been changed from Riverine to Rural designation in an earlier draft of the SMP. The Commissioners changed those to a Conservancy designation.

Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan)

AH and CB have a lengthy discussion about whether to designate public lands as part of natural resources lands necessary to conserve to maintain the economic viability of various industries (e.g., agriculture, forestry, mineral extraction). AH is in favor of designating public lands; CB is in favor of identifying those areas for coordination between state and federal agencies and the county. The issue is not resolved and will be further discussed after more information is gathered.

Update - Planning

Meeting begins at 1:35 (according to note taker's computer). Begin live streaming at 1:37. Tonasket EMS discussion underway. Adjourned Tonasket EMS and reconvened as BOCC at 1:44.

Grizzly Reintroduction

CS – *(Grizzly reintroduction discussion – inaudible)*

AH – State F&W has undergone budget cuts. Regional Director indicates that funds are limited for relocation of problem bears.

CB – Is this in the letter *(from WDFW)*?

AH – Yes. But I would look for better verbiage tying those things together.

CB – Here is something in the Comp Plan that they are specifically looking for.

AH – How would you adopt that into the 2014 plan?

CB – There is language in there about coordination?

CS- *(inaudible)*

AH – If they are using resources for that that haven't been allocated *(too rapid to record)*.

CB – Want to make sure that we are being specific. We have had two letters. That is specifically raising the coordination issue.

Char – I will make sure.

(CS leaves)

Shoreline Management Plan (SMP)

AH – *(to AHu)*. What do we have on the tributaries?

AHu – *(inaudible)*

Note taker requests that everyone speak into their microphones.

AH – Seven tributaries to the Okanogan designated Riverine. I move to amend maps to include all 7, the pieces that were moved from Riverine to Rural. They will now be moved to Conservancy. *(CB seconds; motion passes unanimously. Note that Commissioner DeTro was absent)*.

Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan)

AHu – We have taken the land cover data and placed some of the State and Federal lands on it; also, some of the Federal grazing allotments *(brings up map with land cover)*.

AH – Can you tell if there is any cropland in the Forest Service?

AHu – He has the soils layer with the state land... *(goes to another map showing farm land)*. Some of that does overlap. So these are the federal range areas, with the land cover. *(indicates the allotments – BLM, USFS, USFWS)*

AH – Do you know why I want to make sure that everything needs to be designated? If people think we are putting on regulation and Fed & State lands are not labeled.... I understand your point about it being confusing if we put it all on one map. In the coordination (*with federal and state agencies*), make map attachments that show the different ag characteristics, forest land, etc. I feel as long as there is that designation in that coordination section – designated soils, etc. – so if you are going to change something, we need to be in the loop.

CB – In coordination section, identify what the issues are, how we are dependent. If someone asks what difference it will make if we designate public lands, I will say very little. We need to make sure we freely admit with designations (*too rapid to record*). Trying to keep coordination in its own section so we can identify issues and concerns... how we are economically dependent on those lands. This is why we feel strongly; they are part of our economy.

AH – Disagree; feds and state can purchase lands. If somehow we had to designate under the GMA, all that property would fall under (*designations?*) As they are able to purchase more property – not saying that is necessarily a bad thing – if somehow people think we are going to be regulated under the GMA, and the state and feds are able to purchase more (ag) property, that is just shrinking down...

CB – If we are looking at designated land...

AH – So, should we go back and see how much has been bought up since (?)

CB – That could be useful.

AH – If the state buys ag land, then they are not going to allow people to build houses on it. But they can increase the amount that they own, then the amount left in private ownership will shrink.

CB – (*describes ag conservation easements*) If we continue to allow exception – Chelan does it – I don't understand the protections we are providing for ag lands.

AH – Not talking about protection of ag lands. I understand that will be protected. The reason for the designations was to try to keep a balance of land use.

CB – If we already have it designated and they buy that land. One, we can't control their purchase. That is why we want coordination. The other issue is a different issue.

AH – You are saying that they have bought a large amount of ag land. Then a year later, they say, you need to have this much..., As the amount of private property shrinks, to keep the land use balanced (*gives an example, timber, ag, residential, designation achieving balance*) Then the state buys a large amount of ag land. Then say, the regulation comes down and there is not enough designated ag land left...

CB – While we are talking about this, Gebbers Farms could put a new orchard anywhere, expanding ag land. I don't believe that we are going to do this designation and then make some case that we are serving the needs of the industry.

AH – If we look at these maps and we have only designated privately owned property and the rest will require coordination. Say we were to adopt this today. What happens when state sells some of their property or someone sells to the state? If it were all designated on one map, it wouldn't matter.

CB – The conversation, for me... to me, designating state and federal land is almost a moot point. If the state sells some forest, then we will have to go through designation, anyway.

AH – What I want is a comprehensive map.

AHu – I know PH is working on a map that will meld your two... Chelan County has been designating some Federal land as forest.

CB – Would like to see how they are doing that.

AHu – PH is working on the coordination language.

CB – The intent of designation is to be able to regulate, so you have to think about how.

AH – Do you think there is enough forest land in private holding?

CB – You mean enough to keep the loggers we have busy?

(rapid discussion & debate over whether or not to designate public lands)

CB – What we would hope would make this county viable; the signs *(on highways entering the County)* say we are agricultural.

AH – If people can't make a living farming anymore, what are their options?

CB – Conservation easement *(CE)* or development. Other thing we might want to do, if we have a vision for Ok Co. Say we are looking down the road to 2040. What are our preferences? If I am a realtor, is there enough land to make a living selling land?

AH – At some point there will be a terminus *(of development)*. The driver for me is equity. I understand we can't regulate the feds, but they are not a monarchy. They were set up to protect the states.

CB – Federal govt doled out the lands; it is vested in this. We don't all have the money to own land. They *(public who don't own land)* have the public lands.

AH – Because I own lands, why should I be punished for people who don't own it? Not be able to use it to generate revenue. All I am saying is that when we are talking about designating property. Why don't we look at what Chelan is doing?

CB – We are trying to predict what is going to happen as a result of our actions. Those designations are intended to keep long-term commercial uses. Can look at areas all over the state. Places where those uses are gone. I can see everyone dispersed across the landscape. It will cost us a lot to serve those places. The viability of ag is hampered by a lot of things. Changing technology, etc. Best way is to find ways to make it viable.

AH – As soon as we make ag viable, I will agree.

CB – Twenty years ago it was less viable than it is now.

AH – Have a choice in our Comp Plan draft. Either designate everything or map areas for coordination. Correct? *(CB agrees)*.

CB – It is easiest to do things that are easy, but there are fallacies out there. It is easy to not look at the larger vision. It is a simple definition. Hate to drag it out because I would rather have a Comp Plan that is serving us right now. There is a law that tell us....

AH – Where does it say that we can't designate federal lands?

CB – It doesn't. Designation implies that we may have to regulate some day.

AH – RCW (*reads number*) Guidelines to designate (?) lands. (*too rapid to record; reads text of RCW*) Already in these guidelines to designate, they have already spelled out...

AHu – They already did that. Some of them might (*too rapid to record*)

CB – Bring the WAC (*Washington Administrative Code*) up and we will work our way through it. What I see happening, if we don't get ourselves narrowed down to something acceptable to both ends of this continuum.... (*too rapid to record*).

AH – We've accomplished nothing right now, except having a good discussion on how we feel about things. Where are we at (*with Comp Plan draft*)?

AHu (*inaudible*)

CB – (*too rapid to record*) Multiple use objective forest (*e.g., timber harvest, hunting, grazing etc.*). Should work hard for that.

AHu – Pick up again next week?

CB – How is our economic development section?

AHu – (*Inaudible*).

CB – Need to make sure it is reconciled.

AHu – Anything else that you will want next week?

AH – I'll do a bunch of reading.

CB – You don't have to bring the economic development section.... I will support (*inaudible*). Maybe I can support it even if I think it won't make sense.

AHu offers to email SMP maps CB accepts.

CB – Thinking about this when I was in Chelan. (*Discusses issues relating to development of high value farmland to establish nightly rentals*)

2:48 AHu leaves. Meeting ends