

Okanogan Board of County Commissioners
10/9/17

JD—Jim DeTro
AH—Andy Hover
CB—Chris Branch
LJ—Lalena Johns-clerk to the Commissioners
PH—Perry Huston—County Planner
DH—Dan Higbee—Building Department

This is a paraphrasing of conversations by one of several volunteer citizen note takers and published on the website of Represent Okanogan County (ROC.) Any writer's comments or explanations are in italics. For officially approved minutes of Board of Commissioner meetings, normally published at a later date, see www.okanogancounty.org.

Summary of updates from the Voluntary Stewardship Program, Marijuana Advisory Committee, Water Availability study, Nightly Rentals, Procedures & Administration for Development Permits. Also, BOCC convenes as the Board of the Tonasket EMS District.

Note taker arrived at 2:30

PH—Performance review executive session will take 15 minutes. PH, AH, JD, CB leave the room.

Return 2:45

Smokejump Base

AH—Perry, before we get started, I want to say JD & I were at a meeting at the Smokejumper Base. The USFS's Preliminary Project Analysis (PPA) says Twisp is the place for the Smokejumper base for socio-economic reasons but they need lots of money in the budget to do what needs to be done. I propose a joint letter with Winthrop, Twisp and maybe Okanogan and Omak to Jim Peña (Regional Forester of USFS Region 6) with ccs to Jim Williams (Forest Supervisor of Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest) and the new chief of the Forest Service. Invite them to come to the Methow to discuss funding, learn the process to get the funds for this. Will you, Perry, draft a letter because you're good at it. Is that OK, Chris?

CB—OK with me but I'll need to see the letter before we send it.

AH—Of course. (To JD)—just Twisp & Winthrop?

JD—Everybody's welcome on board.

PH—Socio-economic effects Winthrop & Twisp but fire affects the whole county.

AH—It'll be a powerful letter if all the towns join in.

PH—A two-prong letter. Socio-economic benefit plus public safety.

CB—And the county benefits from residents being socio-economically secure.

AH—I'll give you the notes I took at the meeting.

CB—The letter should be directed to Congress people, too.

AH—Newhouse's people were at the meeting but they want the Forest Service & us to figure out how to fund this. It's \$5,000,000 or more for capital expenditure. How can the county and cities help the Forest Service get this funded.

PH—Here are three quick announcements that aren't on the agenda:

1. WATV (too rapid to record, but something has been published)
2. Lake Management District—tomorrow at 6PM in Oroville

3. Champerty Shores (on Lake Osoyoos near Oroville) CB expressed interest in being at the meeting. CB—Did the issue of the estate water system come up? The small system?
PH—No, it wasn't discussed.

VSP (Voluntary Stewardship Program) update 2:50.

PH—Reviewed two sections of the plan last Thursday. Is it OK if different areas of the county have plans that are a little bit different?

PH—Originally, the intent of the BOCC was to do the county as a whole. A later iteration of the Board wanted not to have big differences in the plan, but rather (for example) all the riparian wet lands be treated the same in the whole county. So what does this Board want? Craig asked. (Craig Nelson, Conservation District, heading up VSP committee.)

CB—It seems like (1) the process should do no harm and (2) all are relative to success of the program. This is to avoid having the Critical Areas applied on a county-wide basis?

PH—They used to want the plan that evolved in the Methow not to be radically different from other parts of the county. Wauconda, for example. Also, there are already built in on-site issues.

AH—My question is: I see commonalities are good, but in the Methow, lots of agricultural land has conservation easements. There are lots of absentee owners who lease out farm land. So how will the tenant interact if he wants to put a business plan together? Does tenant have to get the owner to agree? And other places, there is no tenant. How do these plans work with tenants?

PH—Fair enough. The consistency would be stuff like cattle near wetlands—buffer size consistency. Context was talking how to structure (with the permitting process) so that you have the tools in the box to affect wetlands.

AH—Take culverts for a cattle crossing. If there are endangered species, there's a lot of nuances.

CB—Are those different in each valley? I'd like to have Craig here. He could give examples and tell us about differences in the two valleys in VSP. All projects are different, but they're all part of one big plan.

AH—Some see agriculture as just beautification of the land and they don't worry about money. (*He was speaking of millionaires who buy agricultural land and conservation easements and then rent the land out of tenant farmers/ranchers.*)

CB—Some ramifications in both valleys.

AH—It'd be good to have Craig here.

CB—I think it'll be simpler than it seems. No net loss for existing farms at headwaters. They've farmed meadows for a long time. Eventually changes are needed and how that gets done will be the same in both valleys.

AH—But the rich landlords don't need to make money so that's a big difference between valleys.

JD—Not everybody has to be in the VSP. It's voluntary.

PH—Voluntary for how you do it, but not voluntary in meeting the benchmarks.

AH—Owners without a vested financial interest have a different point of view.

CB—Craig can explain this to us.

PH—I'll get Craig.

CB—Without the Critical Areas Ordinance people say I can't expand my farmland by draining the wetlands.

Marijuana update—3:15

PH—Looking at settlement densities and looking at overlays where they could be permitted outright or not permitted. They're being true to their mission.

AH—Asking why this Committee is heavily weighted with non-industry people. Others say it's weighted to industry. Matt Bernhardt (sp?) says one person who's supposed to represent industry really isn't in the industry.

PH—The concern is while he has interest, it's not a business interest.

PH—I can bump the group up one on each side. There are four now—two and two.

AH—Let's bump it up by one just to try to get more people. I got that phone call from people who are irritated. Matt Bernhardt of the Lazy Bee Gardens, just down the road from my house.

PH—Matt wants to be on the committee and I'll do it and try to find a guy from the other side.

AH—But I haven't vetted Matt.

PH—One person slated from the north, but nobody's complaining. We've got Malott and the Central Valley and with Matt, we'll have the Methow.

AH—We've got different zoning that could come into play.

PH—Zoning is different in the Methow.

PH—We'll do overlays. I've got experience with overlays and wind farms in Kittitas. Issues with overlays will be similar to zone changes.

CB—Overlays means you don't have to modify zoning a lot.

Water Availability Study update (OCC 17A-400) 3:25

PH—Special meeting in early November is better than regular meeting in October. If I get that, I can get 17A400 in front of them. I'll work with Albert (Roberts? Planning Commission?) . SEPA and public hearing are the next step.

Nightly Rentals update (OCC 17A-270) 3:27

PH—There are SEPA issues. Trying to get 400 & 270 in front of the Planning Commission shortly.

OCC Title 20 (Development Permit Procedures and Administrations)

PH—We issued no decisions last week. We have another year's worth of data. There's separation from omnibus decision & things we're doing now.

CB—You're basing decisions on what you're most likely to use?

PH—Yes. Using overlays for different regions and working this information into the decisions.

CB—Most recent information is probably most important for decisions.

PH—I'll work on and issue some decisions this week, using ones tied to the building permit.

CB—What about the impression that might be given? If you look at applications that seem to have the least negative impact, the impression might be that you're approving everything.

PH—That'd be a problem. First in, first out is best, but I've got to worry about staff resources.

AH—(looking at his computer) On the USGS site you can get data concerning Methow River flow all the way back to the 1950s.

PH. We know. We look at data but I don't have a power point of all the points about how we did a decision.

PH—Dan, Anything on 20?

DH—Nope. Just information on single family dwellings. Just regular stuff. Because of water issues things are starting later. It doesn't mean we're doing more.

CB—Some people may think we better build now in case we can't build later.

DH—I agree, but we're not 20-30 houses above last year.

PH—People *think* they've got the water and we guide them to see if they've really got a water right using the language in their water right—stock watering, irrigation, etc. But we have to explain that even if they've been using domestic water that doesn't mean they actually have a domestic water right. Some have a well but only surface water right for domestic purposes. This causes code work for Dan. They think they're OK but maybe not. We can suggest they use some of the right they've already got to use for domestic supply.

CB—Someone says if I've got a right and a well, but haven't used it for 10 years, maybe tell them the water right is relinquished?

JD—A constituent called me with a question. Said he had a well with a water right. The cabin burned 10 years ago. He knew about the 5 year limit so he put in a solar well to vest in domestic use. Is this OK?

JD—Should we be the ones forcing relinquishments?

CB—Relinquishment is a big can of worms.

AH—And if you're trying to save to build a house, why should you have to worry about relinquishment?

CB—Well, from the legal aspect, it doesn't matter. The DOE isn't really interested in relinquishment issues.

PH (or maybe CB)—Also, we invited river conservancy to learn about water rights and they got to talk to a guy who knows how to help them. We should educate people about water rights.

PH—Title 20 is the same as before, right Dan?

DH—Yes.

BOCC adjourns at BOCC and convenes as Tonasket EMS District at 3:50

PH—There's a payment schedule concerning cash flow issues.

CB—Question about this voucher, a water bill. Is it for the church? The fire station? It seems way up.

PH—I didn't go to that meeting. I went to a different one, instead.

CB—I move we approve the water bill voucher.

AH—Perry, will you ask about the water use in August.

LJ—Is the water utility tied into the parsonage?

PH—We've always tried to split out the church vs. parsonage watering. Also check their operations. Maybe they did a lot more washing/laundry.

AH—It's a huge spike. It doubled and then went back down.

PH—Sometimes they don't read the meter and that causes weird bills.

LJ—It's a fire house with quite a bit of lawn.

Motion approved 3-0, but Perry will check about it.

Adjourn as Tonasket EMT District and reconvene as BOCC

PH—Anything for me?

AH—The Fair Advisory committee is down two people How do we fix that?

PH—Other committees are down, too.

AH—Maybe instead of legal notices, maybe we could put something in regular body of the newspaper.

PH—Discussion of Commissions and Advisory Committees created over time. Maybe the ordinance should be changed if we no longer need a particular group.

PH—JD will remember our discussion about having Ad-Hoc committees.

CB—reads the relevant portion of the ordinance—64040.

PH—Ad-Hoc committees are a good idea.

PH—The Fair Advisory Committee was created by a resolution, morphed with Recreation Advisory Committee.

JD—It had to do maybe with the fact that the Agriplex had to be run by the Recreation guys.

PH—And with the Recreation Advisory Committee, you could have that group going all the time.

PH—I'll try to get something out of classified ads. Lanie will help.

CB—If we get a response, does it go through the Commissioner? Example—run it past Andy if it's from his district?

AH—Fine with me.

PH—Marcy did an article about the Planning Commission. I'll see if I can get her interested.

PH—Anything else?

BOCC—Nope.

Reviewing vouchers 4:08

JD—pages 7-8. Jody Deals (sp?) & Assoc. \$5500. What's that?

LJ—It's the Juvie budget. Maybe therapy?

JD—It's outside. I thought Juvie had in-house therapy.

LJ—I'll have to call. It looks like several therapy sessions @ \$125 each.

AH—What's in for?

CB—Maybe it has to do with specifics of the therapy.

LJ—Maybe there's an agreement.

CB—Member of the Autism Group.

LJ—On the very left side is the fund number. That shows the department.

AH—Account 429 on page 17. Large amount. What's that?

LJ—I think they're Public Works.

JD—A dump truck or a grader.

CB—Lots of CenturyLink Services.

Note taker leaves at 4:20. Commissioners continue to discuss vouchers.