

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
April 18, 2017 PM

Present:

Chris Branch - (CB) BOCC
Jim DeTro - (JD) BOCC
Patti Cockfield - (PC) Public Comment
Laura Super - (LS) Public Comment
Wendy Snook - (WS) Public Comment
Craig Olson- (CO) Public Comment
(Andy Hover, BOCC, absent.)

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 writer's comments, questions, or explanations in italics. For officially approved minutes of Board of Commissioner meetings, see www.okanogancounty.org.

Public Comment Session:

Patti Cockfield - PC

PC - After the fire of 2014 there has been a problem with the Chiliwist River washing over the road. The culverts are not the issue. Old creek area is silted over. There are no more banks keeping the water in place and it is moving to the lowest spot which is the road. Transportation comes out and tries to fix it but it is not permanent solution. Just a patch. Wants to know where to go to change the flow.

CB - Fish and Wildlife is the place to go to move the streams around. Material will continue to come back down. Raise the road.

PC - That would take a lot of rock

JD - Can't fix the problem with just the road. The county would fix it but because it's a fish bearing stream the county can't. Rules and regulations

CB - That would be expensive.

PC - Road dept. has had good response to all the concerns.

2nd topic - PC is In support of ATVs. Many issues very complicated about ATVs. Think we should be able to catch people who are ruining riparian areas with ATVs. And people who are driving illegally.

JD - There is an off road and on road license required for ATVs

PC - Thinks there should be an area for ATVs like there is for horse back riding, hiking, snowmobiling, skiing, biking. Lots of ATVs in the Chiliwist Area. Not off road so much but on own property and a cheaper way of getting around.

JD - lots of people use as a farm vehicle.

CB - Don't see as much abuse on private land as public land. Had conversation with ATV club and they were old guys and maybe more responsible than the younger folks

who were not at the meeting. How is it up your way with the ATVs on private land with trespassers?

PC - With the mushroomers it was awful, with the ATVs everywhere and who cared if it was public or private land. There is an argument against them for throwing trash and illegal trespass. But as one gets older can get to places that otherwise wouldn't be available, like lookouts.

CB - Would it be worthwhile to have a little meeting up in your part of the county to talk about ATVs?

PC - yes. thank you

Laura Super Comment (LS)

LS - Representing Methow Valley Citizens Council and also herself. Firstly, the Citizens Council in regards to how the Title 20 process going:

Hearings being advertised. First round of SEPA notifications in the paper. Getting calls. Permits put out. Not sure if Perry is putting them out there as test cases to see how much fire they'll draw or what the plan is. Relying on public comment or the DOE to point out legal deficiencies whether an applicant has a public water right might go south?

Easier with single well exempt purposes instead of those controversial from the start. Might be easier working with Ecology and public health with procedures instead of the public out in front. Looks like some issues that could blow up but not from MVCC.

And know you want this to role out smoothly. Seeing from the sidelines.

JD- Creating predictability. Good legislation Judy Warnick? put forth. Held up by democratic caucus. Frank Chop won't let it come up to a vote.

LS - Senate bill 5239. Hung up in committee.

JD - Hoping it would be resolved at the legislative level this year. Told by several lawyers it was a GMA lawsuit and not a comprehensive plan county lawsuit and so if they made a determination with that, Okanogan county could be exempt.

LS - Hard to tell where Okanogan County fits in with all this. I know that Title 20 was an effort to be proactive and I just hope it didn't create more trouble for everybody.

JD - When we started into title 20 we left the caveat in there that as things progress we would change. Especially as things came out of the legislature then we would have to follow it if it was RCW.

LS - Thought it meant that Perry was going to let it get decided in the courts.

CB - We inherited planning of the past. Building lots created and now can't develop. Now it's down at the lot level.

LS - No one wants to chase it down at the permit level. Hope to get through this.

LS - Now as a taxpayer from French Creek: Josh (Thomson) said last road into the valley is in question. Lots of support for keeping the roads open. When I moved to the valley there were a dozen ways to get in and out of the valley, now most of those roads are gated. Commissioners are pro public access. Commissioners inherited the works of past commissioners. Also, the stage has been set for more, from the resolution. Also, the prosecuting attorney has not managed to stop one gate from going up.

These county attorneys advise against talking to the public. State agencies - Dept. of Transportation, DNR, Governor's Office, Attorney General's office - say this is a county issue. The county attorneys say they work for you. Wants commissioners to redirect these attorneys to protect public access. Be open to directing helpful info.

JD - the prosecuting attorney is an elected official. He does not work for us and we cannot tell him what to do. A deputy attorney advises us. It is a misconception people have that the commissioners can tell them what to do.

CB - Jim is right. 2 things -We have budget control but don't want to spend time jerking peoples' chains around budget. Elected officials can come together and figure out how to work together. An adversarial approach won't help.

Craig Olson - CO

I live on Benson Creek. Last night my road blew out over Benson Creek. Reinforces the concept for maintaining road options for traveling the back country. I encourage you to leave as many roads as possible to public access.

Wendy Snook - WS

WS - Live up Libby Creek and we just love French Creek. Would like to know 3 main reasons to close French Creek road.

JD - because of litigation the commissioners can't comment.

CB - have no knowledge.

WS - Concerned about safety issues and historical interest around road closings. County has fascinating historical areas that would disappear if can't be seen. If there are water issues around the closing then we need to know. The water belongs to everybody. We need the roads kept open for fire escape and firewood gathering. When large tracts are fenced off can't go there anymore. Although Gebbers do good work around the county and create a lot of jobs, they are so powerful and can keep public from open spaces. The water belongs to everybody.

Update County Building Official -

Dan Higbee - DH

DH - Building Dept update for 1st quarter. Handout for building permits compared to permits for previous years. So far only 10 applications behind from last year. Not bad considering the water issues. Attached handout.

Cost Recovery Report - cost of doing business - only \$2000 down from last year .As of now they have a small staff but have been able to keep up.

Budget Process, phones, cannabis

New Legislation proposed that may affect county - the state is considering getting rid of the state electrical inspection with a budget of 2 million dollars. Would need to figure out cost recovery on that.

CB - Would like to be included in the emails regarding this issue.

DH - Nightly Rentals discussion and all the ins and outs of that.

DH - With FOIA required for county workers (?), the employees no longer want to use their own phones for work. So the building dept will need to buy new phones. Not in the budget.

DH - Most marijuana enterprises are not legal or signed off on what they're doing. Not enough employees to monitor all the illegals. Finding them on the normal routes the inspectors make during the work day.

JD - If they are not in compliance with building inspections then they would not be vested.

DH - Perry seems to lean the other way.

JD - Maybe we need to bring this up again.

CB - Has something been established . Showed intention? Fencing or other structures

DH - To be consistent we need to also go by the places we don't see on the routes. Just don't have the manpower to do this.

CB - Do you keep a journal or make notes on what you see?

DH - Have the approvals from the state. Which are permitted and which aren't.

CB - Knows growers who are complying with the requirements and then they see folks down the road aren't

JD - Need a level playing field. Tell Perry to put you on the agenda

DH - Now getting provisional use permit.

CB - Look forward to this. Zoning amendments. Criteria not adequate. Maybe these places need a larger property to accommodate the smell and visual affect.

DH - Extraction process requires building codes for those rooms. Whole new chapter written about the dangers of this process. The fire dept. should know. It would be fire marshall responsibility.

JD - No fire marshall. Can't afford it.

Vintage Faire/Fairgrounds

Vintage Faire representatives Colleen and Jacki - C and J

Josh Freel - Fairgrounds employee - JF

C - Concerned about what needs to be done by April 29th for the Vintage Faire to take place. Vendors are arriving on the 29th and there is garbage and cow manure everywhere.

C & J would like to get in to the fairgrounds this weekend and start to clean up and organize.

JF - Fair in September left the grounds a mess. Still has hay and manure.

The county commissioners and staff worked to find people who could come in and help get the place cleaned up. Employees were found from other departments to devote 4 days to get the grounds in shape for the faire. Everyone worked together to try to get the situation remedied. C & J felt that everyone would suffer embarrassment if the grounds were not cleaned up. C & J left feeling they were heard and something would get done.

Horse Track

A man came to talk about using the track at the fairgrounds for working one horse at a time. The railing is in such bad shape it is considered a liability and so the track cannot be used until improvements are made.

Fairground Improvements

Josh Freel - JF

A discussion on how to improve the fairgrounds. There is a potential \$64,000 that can be used to develop the race track / equestrian center. This money was earmarked for this purpose by two separate funds, the Berg? Trust and The Lumber and Sawmill Trust Group. The use of the money needs to be approved by the trust.

JF - Maybe use the money to revamp the shoots and partial replacement of the railing.

And then every year continue to work on replacing railing. All of the railing needs replacement.

They talked about tourism and making the fairgrounds a multiple use facility.

For example an RV Park. Also, issues around the wells in the fairgrounds.

End of Session