

BOCC notes 6-18-18, afternoon session

JD- Jim De Tro (BOCC Chair)

CB- Chris Branch (BOCC Vice chair)

AH- Andy Hover, BOCC member

LJ- Lanie Johns (County Clerk)

Angie- Angie Hubbard (assistant to Planning Director)

Char Beam (Planning Dept.)

One member of the public

This is a paraphrasing of conversations by one of several volunteer citizen note takers and published on the website of Okanogan County Watch (www.countywatch.org). 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.

A video of this afternoon session is available for viewing on the County Watch You Tube channel.

Topics Covered: Comprehensive Plan

Note taker arrived at 1:30.

Short discussion about planning dept activities. Who is doing what on different committees.

Comprehensive Plan

Map of different land designations was projected on the big screen. (Federal, State and Tribal resource land).

Angie- What does BOCC want to do with small rural parcels that are isolated within forest land.

CB- the bottom line for me is what are we going to do with the different designations? What will they mean?

AH- the difference between Ag and Forest are not that great

CB- The thing that drives the different designations is the GMA. To protect Ag land, and forest land. If we were to do something now, which we can do even though we are not under the GMA (Growth Management Act), it would give us a toolbox to use in the event things change in the future. We are not like the west side, so there isn't a driving need. There is the perception that we already don't have enough private land for the desired development.

AH- You may have misunderstood me. Instead of designating the little islands of land as Ag, designate them as Forest. Because when it's set up properly, Ag is an accepted use within forest land.

CB- I agree

AH- so to have the islands out there in Rural designation doesn't make sense. What was the reason for having them be rural in the first place?

Angie- Some of it was transportation grid, some were other criteria.

AH- it doesn't make sense to me to have an island of Ag surrounded by Forest land.

JD- if you are using certain criteria, you will end up with islands like these.

AH- We have so little rural property already, and if we take more away, then we will reduce it.

CB- It goes back to what we are doing with the designation. We need to make a thoughtful and conscious decision about where we are going to go in the future. If you look at the WAC, and see that there could potentially be some kind of regulation in the future, we need to have a plan for that. If we designate something- what does that mean?

AH- At a population of 50K, the GMA kicks in. But there are counties right now trying to get out of GMA.

CB- Which ones?

JD- Chelan and Ferry counties.

AH- in looking at this map, the balance of rural, Ag and timber is obvious. We are not top heavy on rural. The only reason I would think about doing this, is because the law says that we have to. We have a legal responsibility to do something. I don't think we should assume regulation. We just need to fulfill what we are required to do by law.

CB- let's exclude that we are going to manage under the assumption that our population is going to put us into the GMA category.

AH- what time frame are you looking at?

CB- let's say 50 years out.

AH- If there are no major events, I would be concerned that the population growth on the west side would drive people over here.

CB- let's look at 50 years- 20 years goes by really fast. So 50 years. Does the overall vision statement call for rural? If the population got too big, it wouldn't feel rural any more. If we look at the map, you say that we are not top heavy on rural, but what does that mean? Do we have enough rural land to accommodate the sort of residential growth that we want? Is it the economy driving it? What kind of density do we want to accommodate? How does agricultural use fit in?

AH- you are losing me. Of the designations on the map, are you OK with the designations that are listed now?

CB- they appear to be a mix of zoning and land uses

AH- we only have three designations that we have to look at – Ag, Forest, and Rural. There are other things on the map as well.

Angie- the reason we have neighborhood commercial is to capture the unincorporated towns.

AH- there is timber and water on the map as well, but just for reference.

CB- it shows Ag resource, but it doesn't show timber as a resource land. I'm not sure what the intent of this map is. Is it to show current use?

Angie- timber is there just to show federal land that is not a resource.

AH- if the wording on the key is OK, then we would need to determine if the shaded colors on the map represent what we want them to.

CB- they represent what we want to talk about, but they don't say what we want them to be.

AH- the property designations shown here are from an analysis based on tax status and soil mapping.

CB- if you are relying on this map to be the designation for the types of land, then all the brown colored areas would be Ag land of long term significance?

AH- yes, that is how I understand it.

CB- We have had a conversation about designating federal lands as ag or forest.

AH- yes I compromised and agreed to that. I'm listening to what you have to say. Maybe the process by which this map was created should be looked at.

CB- I think the map is great, but I don't understand completely what is behind it. It's telling us something, the details of which I don't know.

Angie- I know some of the background- tax codes, soil mapping. In some cases, if it wasn't all Ag or Forest, and it didn't have a small lot size, then they picked the best fit. There was thought that went into it.

AH- I think we should see the criteria that was used to assign the different designations to this map.

CB- what is the title of the map?

Angie- Federal, State and Tribal resource lands. Ted asked me if we should change the title, but I told him it was still a draft.

CB- I think it should be "Proposed resource lands of long term significance". That way it is more useful

AH- I totally get that.

Discussion about how CB came to his thoughts about what the map is for.

JD- wait a minute. You (CB) have spent a lot of time in planning, and look at things differently than many people. By and large, most people are going to look at this and not understand it the same way you do.

AH- right now we are required to look at three types of land. There is no defined set that says, if this, do that, etc.

CB- it is very subjective.

AH- we have gone through the Comp plan and put into writing the definitions of the types of land.

CB- then we should have that in front of us when we are looking at the map.

AH- Chapter 4, resource lands. This is the 6/11/18 copy that Perry gave us.

Map was removed and text of draft Comprehensive Plan from 6/11/18 was put up on the screen.

Review of Ag section of Draft comp plan. Read some sections verbatim and discussed.

CB- asked for a note to be put in asking what circumstances would create a desire for someone to want to be included in the designation.

Continued review and discussion.

CB- The list of criteria in the WAC 365-190-050 (1) lists a lot of things that say they “may” be used. This means that they are optional. Is this guidance? When does it apply? That’s what we need to work out.

AH- I’m trying to look at the broad picture. Let’s look at my hay field. There is a section that is prime soil, some sandy soil, and a section that is full of rocks that you can’t grow anything on. In the overall scope, I would call the whole thing Ag, even though there are parts of it that you can’t grow on.

CB- So these are things that are dealt with on a case by case basis. The Ag designation may or may not contain all of these listed item. A piece of land does not get excluded because it doesn’t contain a particular item, nor does it automatically get included just because it does contain it.

AH- So, that is where I say that the islands of rural surrounded by Ag or Forest, should just be included in the Ag or Forest.

CB- I agree with that

AH- So the purpose of the map is to depict in a visual way the written description that is laid out in the Comp plan.

CB- yes, it’s a tool. But it is not the final designation. That map would have to have only the three catagories: Mineral, Ag and Forest.

Angie- Maybe we need two maps. This one that is the tool to use to get to where we want to be, and the official map that shows only the 3 required designations.

CB- Does the Comp plan have a current use map?

Angie- currently no.

CB- most comp plans have a current use map.

BOCC agree that having two maps would be useful.

AH- does a land use map show the federal lands and what they are used for?

CB- sure.

Angie- so on this third map that we are talking about, do you want it to be tied to the zoning?

CB- if there are land use designations that we use to guide the zoning, then it would be more general. It depends on how detailed we want it. Do we show the different densities? If there is something we want to show, for example, how much is in public use, that may be desirable. I don’t know if it’s in the Comp plan. Those are maps to prove points.

Angie- asked about details to include on new map.

CB- lets put that in the parking lot and work on it later. I say that we need to include the intent of the BOCC in creating the map. What was the ultimate goal?

Angie- Do you want to go over some of the changes that Perry put in?

Referring to the draft Comp. Plan.

BOCC- yes

Discussed the following paragraph:

“Okanogan County will create development regulation that utilizes innovative planning and development tools such as clustering and the transfer of development rights along with density bonuses developed after application of a public benefit rating system to encourage the preservation of agricultural land and an enhanced protection of critical areas.”

AH- what is the rating system that is mentioned?

Angie- it's defined elsewhere in the document.

AH- I don't think that preserving Ag land should be the driving force behind development. I would like to remove everything after the word “system”.

BOCC agreed and text was removed.

BOCC looked at the following two paragraphs:

Okanogan County supports voluntary compliance of landowners with good management practices. Okanogan County will support and when feasible sponsor water quality education programs which inform local citizens and visitors about water quality issues and ramifications.

Okanogan County will actively participate with all agencies with jurisdiction in controlling the illegal diversion of surface water and illegal withdrawal of groundwater

Corrected typo.

CB- I would like to look at the three population projection alternatives.

AH- Perry said he was going to put in the results of each of the three.

CB- If there are 3 alternatives, are we writing a comp plan for each of the three?

AH- Perry kept going back to the fact that for each of the sections, he would develop alternatives for each of the three population scenarios.

CB- Once we do all that, then the Planning commission makes a recommendation and we choose one of the population scenarios to use in the final comp plan.

AH- correct

BOCC Looked at following paragraph:

e) Okanogan County will support the formation of water banks in areas where feasible to mitigate for water uses from groundwater wells exempt from permitting in accordance with RCW 90.44.050 as well as creating the opportunity

for those seeking an individual or group domestic water supply to obtain a water supply of sufficient seniority to minimize the potential for interruption due to low in-stream flows or impairment of senior water rights.

Okanogan County will craft and adopt local regulation for the administration and tracking of permit exempt wells.

Approved with no discussion.

BOCC looked at the following: (Rural Lands)

Alternatives

Alternative 1-No action

The 2014 comprehensive plan does not have a section specific to groundwater quality and quantity. Policies contained in the unincorporated towns section and water rights section recognizes the importance of water supply to support higher levels of density. The 2014 comprehensive plan was developed in consideration of a presumed to be low growth rate and with the assumption not all existing parcels were capable of being developed and/or desirable for development. New lots were likely to be created due to specific demand rather than speculation on market demand.

CB- I don't understand the last sentence. It appears to be explaining the first part.

Alternative 2-Low Range Population Projections

The low range projections predict Okanogan County will drop in population from 41,120 to 38,493 by 2040. According to an analysis of census data the average household in Okanogan County consists of 1.8 people. The drop in population projected in alternative one would result in a loss of 1459.44 average households by 2040.

No comment by BOCC

Alternative 3-Medium Range Population Projections

The medium range projections predict Okanogan County will grow in population from 41,120 to 45,621 by 2040. According to an analysis of census data the average household in Okanogan County consists of 1.8 people. The increase in population projected in alternative two would result in a gain of 2500.55 average households by 2040.

Alternative 4-High Range Population Projections

The high range projections predict Okanogan County will grow in population from 41,120 to 57,894 by 2040. According to an analysis of census data the average

household in Okanogan County consists of 1.8 people. The increase in population projected in alternative three would result in a gain of 9318.88 average households by 2040

Approved with no discussion

(Coordination Section)

The federal agencies, primarily the United States Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management manage a total of 0000 acres in Okanogan County. This land is critical to the customs, culture, and economy of Okanogan County. The Federal Agencies claim a pre-emption of land use permitting authority on federal land. As such the comprehensive plan designates federal land by the agency that manages it and the resources located on the property. Forest land of long term commercial significance, agricultural land, and mineral lands are identified in an overlay on the comprehensive plan map. The federal agencies must try to make their land management decisions consistent with local plans and policies.

The land management decisions made by the federal agencies controls the economic activity on federal land. Their decisions has a direct impact on local revenue collected from timber harvest taxes and indirectly impacts other revenue sources by generated through other natural resource jobs.

Because of the large amount of land in Okanogan County that is managed by the federal agencies payment in lieu of taxes and the secure rural schools and communities payments are important revenue sources for the county. Okanogan County believes the annual PILT and SRSC payments must be guaranteed by law at a fixed amount with an identified CPI index for annual increases.

Okanogan County will require the federal agencies to comply with federal law by notifying the Board of County Commissioners as early as possible in the formative stages of the formation of a proposed change in any land management policy or regulation or immediate upon receipt of an application or proposal from any non-governmental organization or other agency. Notification shall take place prior to the issuance of any notice to the public.

Okanogan County expects the federal agencies to maximize the use of federal land for agricultural and tourist/recreation activities in absence of a compelling need to curtail such activities for protection of the sustainability of the resource.

AH- tourism and mining are also resources that are not mentioned here. Is there a map that goes with this?

Angie- I don't know

AH- I'm looking at a map from a different county here that shows all of the agencies that are in charge of all the government lands (fed , state, etc)

Angie- would you like a map like that in here?

AH- I wonder if that could be one of the other maps we were talking about today.

CB- I've reached the conclusion that I don't care all that much. As a planner it serves very little purpose. What is very important is the text of the statement here. We could go further and require that the agencies comply with our Comp plan. We could specify that with regard to introducing a specific species, for example. Getting to the important points and things they do on federal lands that affect us, we need to point out in details. I think that is more valuable than designations.

AH- We need the map that shows state and federal lands to be included.

CB- the last paragraph hits home.

State agencies are required to comply with local zoning and other land use permits on the lands they manage. Land managed by the state agencies is not identified by ownership and bears the same land use designations, consistent with the applicable criteria, as privately owned land in Okanogan County.

Several state agencies own land in Okanogan County including Fish and Wildlife, State Parks, Department of Transportation, and Department of Natural Resources. It is the policy position of Okanogan County that state agencies should consolidate their land holdings by divesting land that contributes to a checkerboard ownership and the commensurate increase in land management difficulties. Conversely state agencies should obtain additional land only when doing so creates an ownership pattern conducive to more efficient management.

AH- I have a problem with the last two sentences. The state did divest. It didn't matter what type of resource was in the land – WA state decided they would trade, and now you get a designation. It was set up so that you couldn't cherry pick land that had a particular resource. It was random, on purpose.

JD- we need to discuss this more later. We are running out of time here.

AH- Can you send us the remaining sections to review so that we can read it ahead of time and be more prepared for a detailed discussion?

Angie- Yes

JD- Thank you.

AH- lets just say that we get through all the added comments and they are good to go. How far out are we from putting this out for comment?

CB- Aside from the designations, I think we are pretty much on track. We haven't talked much about densities, and there are things coming up that may affect our views, such as water issues.

AH- we can either drive population growth, or decline it. We can tailor it to what we want. 82K people moved into Seattle last year. Those folks are wanting to move out (baby boomers- retirees). I think that the pop growth has shown a trend for a long time but I think that the planning commission -

JD- In mid-2013 if you look at the curves of world population and food production they have crossed. Food source will be the next crisis.

AH- The planning commission needs to take into account the growth projection when they make their decision.

JD- are we going to go into more depth on airports?

CB- I think that there is enough detail here to be OK. On population, it's a funny deal. What are the driving factors in OK county?

AH- the age demographics.

JD- you talk to the real estate agents. They are saying that lots of people are looking at OK county as retirement location.

CB- that's the in-migration. What about the youth who are leaving because there are no jobs? We need to look at how much of the statewide growth can OK county absorb.

AH- I look at it as how much can we absorb, and how do we plan for it. Do you plan for extreme growth, or do you plan for what you can handle or tolerate?

CB- the vision statement we collectively adopt guides us. My feeling about absorbing everything that we can gets put to the side. The plan is to absorb what we want. We can control that by how we do zoning.

Gave example of supply/demand on land.

Short side discussion about how isolated our county is.

AH- if you pick the moderate growth rate, then plan and zone for that rate. I'm trying to prepare myself for a conversation where I can say this is ready to go. What needs to be tweaked? Are they map tweaks, documents, references that need to be tweaked? If you could come up with something that describes what you still want to work on, that would be helpful.

CB- all designations need to lead to the future. We need to know the objectives and motivations behind it (sometimes the philosophical standpoints are not transparent). They need to be clearly understood. *Gave example.*

AH- when you look at it, would you be willing to share what direction you want to see it go?

CB- I can share right now. The comp plan and land use all works together. My primary concern is budgetary. The comp plan needs to have the fiscal eye. It needs to address costs. What type of development doesn't increase the County's cost. It depends on where the development is. If the services are costing more in a particular area, then we need to take a close look. What's in demand in the real estate market, may not be in the best fiscal interest of the County. The urban growth areas are merging together. The cities are gobbling up everything, and the counties are getting trounced. The cities are getting the big tax base, and the counties are getting left behind. We have less of that here, although there are a few small examples.

Angie and ?? left.

CB- We have to remember that the pop projections include cities and towns. When we have subdivisions in the remote areas, and people move out there, it creates a fiscal problem for the county because it costs a lot to get services to them.

AH- Lanie, do we have anything more?

LJ- We have a housing Auth. Letter. I drafted a resolution about a vehicle exchange (coroner is reviewing); there is also the question of where we can pay for Mr warden's \$6K bill? There is a bill regarding statewide imagery services. (discussion about the details of the payment and where it will come from.

Note taker left at 3:35. No further significant discussion.