

**Okanogan County Planning Commission**  
**3/28/2022**

Albert Roberts - Chair, District 1  
Phil Dart - Vice Chair, District 3  
George Thornton - District 3  
John Crandall - District 2  
Dave Schulz - District 2  
Salley Bull - District 3  
Stephanie (Pete) Palmer - Director of Planning  
Morgan Allen - Clerk  
Rocky Robbins - Planning Department  
(Verlene Hughes - Absent)

*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 countywatch.org and are not the official county record of the meeting. Officially approved minutes of the Planning Commission have not been published for a long time on the Planning website. The AV Capture video of the meeting can be found here: [Okanogan County, WA](#)*

**Summary:** *Attendance at meeting difficult due to audio issues. Election of Chair (Roberts) and Vice Chair (Thornton.) Director Palmer distributes informational packet re what is going on in the rest of county government regarding land use; info included as to possible PC operating principles (saying it wouldn't hurt her feelings if these suggestions were thrown into the trash.) County-wide Zoning survey results revealed (56 responses, ranking issues in this order: 1. Methow Review District, 2. District Use Chart, 3. Enforcement, 4. Nightly Rentals); PP reviews info on: cannabis operations; enforcement, More Completely Planned Areas/Sub Areas; Riverbank Software (watersheds.) Planning Commission members ask questions regarding consultants for Shorelines Review and Zoning Ordinance and what the role of the Planning Commission will be; Planning Commission asks how the lawsuit against the county on the Comp Plan fits into the process and what the main complaints were in the lawsuit. PP will not discuss this due to litigation, although Dart points out the lawsuit is public information. Chair states that if there are no agenda items for April, PC will not meet at 7PM April 25th.*

## **Election of Officers**

**George Thornton - Vice Chair** (Nominated by Salley Bull)  
No other nominations, George Thornton elected unanimously

**Albert Roberts - Nominated by Phil Dart**  
**Verlene Hughes** (not present) - Nominated by Salley

**Albert Roberts elected as Chair, 4-2** (secret ballot.)

## **Director Palmer - Packet gone over**

- 1) **By-Laws** - Vague, revisions have been suggested
- 2) **Roberts Rules** For the PC's reading
- 3) **Parliamentary Procedure** - Just for your information
- 4) **Discussion Guidelines for local governments**
- 5) **Sample scripts for 5 motions**
- 6) **When Public Pressure is Intense**
  
- 7) **Request for Qualifications** for Consultants on Shorelines review - Once hired, will start public process for SMP review
  
- 8) **Results of public survey on of zoning issues** : 56 responses county-wide with priorities:  
**Top 5 -**
  - 1) Methow Review District: 28
  - 2) District Use Chart: 20
  - 3) Enforcement: 16
  - 4) Nightly Rentals: 11

Hope by Mid-April, will start hiring consultant, then a long process. Hoping for later this fall. Budget supplementals, etc

## **Commission questions regarding consultants for Shorelines Review and Zoning Ordinance and what the role of the Planning Commission will be.**

GT - Will we see the qualifications?

PP - Board will do the hiring.

GT - It's public information.

PP - If PC wants to see it, she will put it before them.

AR - We can see it, but won't have anything to do with hiring processes.

PD - Will the consultants do the work? Work they just work with us? Last time we did the Zone Code, we re-wrote the zone code. This is a new.....or will they wire wut yam or just have us rubber stamp it?

PP - They would do all the technical work, then run it through you as the advisory group, then through the public process.

JC - Where do they get the initial work order? Go through Comp Plan and then adapt zoning to that?

PP - Basically they will re-write the zoning code. Take the zoning as it is now, then the Comp Plan , and match them up. Area rezone - a lot of activity with sub area advisory committees?

JC - They will do all the mapping?

PP - Yes. District Use Chart and zoning chart. Not sure if they will go section by section and present to you or if they will wait until the end

**Planning Commission asks how the lawsuits against the county on the Comp Plan fit into the process, what the complaints were in the lawsuit. PP will not discuss due to litigation.**

AR - So how do the lawsuits against the Comp Plan fit into the process?

PP - There is a lawsuit. If there are changes to Comp Plan, those would be made and then incorporated into the Comp Plan. Futurewise and MVCC.

JC - Same as before

PP - They kinda paired up

PD - What was their biggest complaint?

PP - Not sure I can discuss on the Open Record, since it's under litigation.

PD - But it's public record....????...through the court?

PP - We can talk later.

SB - Last time it was late resource, no circulation plan, no Recreation Plan. All in there this time.

**9) Cannabis operations** - have gone through all the scheduled meetings re compliance that had to do why the moratorium was put into place, go through our records, go through permits. Good records were not kept within Planning Dept. Some grows have expanded 4-5 times . Revisit Cannabis Code. Hope we can handle this in-house. Annual fee to be discussed.

If you think there are things we need to look at better, let me know.

PD - Have you established a fee?

PP - Chelan and Douglas County used state example. We will be raising our fees quite a bit higher.times o

AR - They are an agricultural endeavor, so they would get something of a break.

PP - CB talks about how much they bring into the small businesses in the County.

GT - *Cannot hear. Mic is not pointed at him.*

PP = in the Methow, they are pushing for dark skies. It will be mentioned numerous times in their comp plan.

PD - Will there be restrictions on how many grows there can be side -to-side?

Interruption - Extraneous voices.

PP - That was one issue that stimulated the review. Water rights are an issue. Exempt well usage is frowned upon. Location of grows are important. BOCC wants to look at one license per property owner, space them ut.

PD - That was one thing there was a lot of discussion about.

PP - We have created these green belts.

GT - Location???? *Can't hear.*

### **Public can't hear.**

Morgan - Isabelle says unable to hear us. If we could project better....???

PP - ON Zoom or AVC?

Morgan - She is now getting audio... hearing very little from people at the table because mics are not pointed at the speakers.

GT - Will speak louder. The location of clusters important. (Difficult to hear.) Lights can really matter (*Still can't hear him - does not adjust mic.*)

### **Cannabis Again**

SB - Says some people have said their property values should be lower because of the disruption of near-by grows. But actually the values went up.

*Discussion on clustering. Examples discussed. One county only allows indoor grows because of the odor problem. Lighting also an issue. Things that are going on ....all of this stuff will be looked at during code update. Odors*

**0:35:32** JC - These are agricultural operations...questions why fences needed, all these requirements, orchards smell due to chemicals. Interesting - what is the county doing to support these as agriculture as well as making regulations.....

SB - Now it's an industry, not agriculture.

### **10) Enforcement discussion**

PD - Requirements are driven by state. OK County has failed by not having any enforcement .

JC - Enforcement was #3 on the list of comments on zoning.

PP - Goes over what has been underway regarding enforcement, giving Planning Dept to issue a civil fine, meeting with them to work out compliance, and if they do not agree we could then enforce the ticket and bring civil action n the courts.

JC - How will we be engaging with this? The Planning Commission? I guess I'm asking why are we having this discussion?

PP - Any time there is a legislative action, or rule...in county code that affects several properties not just one - a legislative action. it usually involves you guys, and then it goes to the Board. I'd recommend looking under 36.A.70, talks about PC, public hearings, the process for adopting legislative actions - usually comes from Dept to you, then you would recommend to BOCCC. They could either approve it at public hearing or make changes, but if it is a legislative action and initiated by BOCC, would not have to come back to PC - would just go back to the Board.

40: 35 PD - It depends upon how much they change. There is a threshold.

DS - They can send it back whenever they want.

**10: 0:41:00**

### **11) Mazama Advisory Committee, other MCPA's**

Working along, updating their Comp Plan of 2000, Jim Gregg is chairman. Once they have completed Sub Unit A plan, it will come to you. You will work with them, just as with other legislative actions. You will recommend to BOCC, then public hearing process

**Other MCPA's:** Will be at least one, maybe more MCPA's. Have included sections in County code on advisory committee.

**Methow Valley Sub Area** advisory group: Only draft, not public yet. Will go to newspapers and radios.

Next page - applications, working document. Last page, colorful map shows Sub Units A-D.

Planning Dept does not have capacity to do all admin for more advisory committees, so we have the PC, then the Advisory Committee in Mazama - Sub Unit A - now looking at maybe 3 more, once the area up North is considered. Still in the works. BOCC is discussing this very heavily. We don't want to be spread too thin. Will go out for public notice soon. Will come to you once advisory committees are formed. Want you to be ready.

PD - What is the main driving force? Are they not happy with the Comp Plan? Do they not think the Comp Plan is enough? Why are we doing this?

PP - Calls attention to the input on Comp Plan, there were a number of issues addressed when there were hindered and some comments from the Methow - dark skies, instream flow - a lot of things experienced in their area that are unique to their environments and not really down here in the valley. So each one of those Sub Units will do their own Comprehensive Plan that will be under our Comp Plan.

DS. - Keep in mind that the landowners going back to day one, they were taxed heavily to do those studies. Also, Hwy 20 has that tour scenic??? We allowed the PD's to move back into timber, when the ag land is out front. That has worked extremely well. They want, and have, in the last 2 decades put it this way, that way. For example, there is an underground lake up in Mazama that is unlimited, as I understand it.

PD - Discussion about mic being too loud.

PD - I understand and am all for it. Don't understand why they need to form a lot more. The Methow is all tourist driven and really unique - starting to have those all over the county...kind of pointless if all over the county.

AR - these can be more restrictive. P

## 12) WATERSHED Planning, WRIA 49: "Riverbank."

We take all the site analysis - both WRIA's and add it to this software. Calculate use offsets for each reach - tells us what capacity is used or debited, and what remains in those reserves. Up and running now. Still entering data. Possible these numbers might change before final. We are updating them monthly on our website.

JC - Was model they used externally verified? Has anyone reviewed it?

PP - Shared technical data from report, how computers, technical info. I think George will explain better. I belie the model was created by Colville tribe.

GT - they used it to show the best spots for salmon, etc. and then tweaked to show consumptive use, ettc. Do not show the reserves. A work in progress. Do not necessarily ??? can't hear. Control dam at Oroville has a lot to do with that.

SB - Couldn't follow - looking at map.

GT - Similkameen quite variable.

Some controversy about that, pointing out the complications.

GT - A lot is international water.

DS - Slate peak - We send it to Canada, they send it back.

GT - The knowledge that it being looked at and studied carefully is important.

DS - Talks about the Cub Ck incident again, how the scientists didn't really walk the creek and didn't know about the water fall.

AR - Can they compare domestic and agricultural?

PP - Talks about how the consumptive use is put in (710 gal) which includes stock watering.

PP - Permit exempt wells is all it accounts for 2 cfs reserves not included , but still figuring out a way how we can put that into Riverbank. Hoping to get ahead of the game and put that info in there so we don't need to create a whole new program. Putting it in, but not yet debiting the use.

AR - How to they correlate between and exempt well and drawing from the river? Between 1 and 10 years between withdrawal and effect upon the river.

PP - Water rights don't access that. Those with a water right will never be cut off, but Junior users will be cut off when instream flows are too low.

DS - But when forefathers start this area, started from where Salmon Creek dumped Into the river ....(couldn't follow.) It's a mess. Who reads the meters? I won't go any further.

SB - are city water rights considered?

PP - Yes. ....background side conversations.

JC - Methow is very different fro the Okanogan due to the 2 cfs reserve.

DS - Question: Do we have an index? Will we have one in the future? (Going through packets et.) How do I index it?

PP - It's only information. People in the public felt that I wasn't giving enough update as to what's going on in the department. I don't know until the Board gives us our strategic plan, but we are already putting our feet in the water and share this info, answer questions, etc. By laws, Roberts - my heart won't be broken if you throw it in the garbage. IF you do decide to put By-Laws on the agenda, you will have some things for the agenda.

DS - Asks again about agenda. How will I find this information again later?

## **Adjournment**

1:05 AR - Anything else? April meeting will start at 7PM. If no agenda items, we will not have a meeting.

PP - Correct. Encourage you to have these by-laws brought up and update if necessary .

Meeting Adjourned at 7:08.