

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Whitman County Planning Commission Date: Jan 8, 2020

Observer Reporting: Shelley Chambers Fox Length of Meeting: 2 hours 30 min

Members Present: Dave Gibney, Russ Jamison, Gary Moore, Brian Davies, Gary Moore, Brian Davies, Robert Hill, Guy Williams, Chad Whetzel, Keith Paulson, Alan Thomson (county planner), Ginny Rumiser (note taker), Katrin Kunz (assistant county planner)

Members Absent: Matt Sutherland

Others Present (e.g., media, public): 10 members of the public, Mark Storey (Public works director, county engineer), Denis Tracy (county attorney), Chris Skidmore (Environmental Health)

Public Meetings of interest to League:

1. The first order of business was a public hearing for Lana and Roger Myers to **change the zoning** for a 2-acre parcel near **LaCrosse** from the Agricultural District to a Limited Light Industrial District. The plan is to send out packages to American military personnel serving abroad from this location. The neighboring families are supportive of this project, and the **zoning change was accepted** by the commission.

Business pertaining to League Positions or topics of interest:

Continue discussion on **cannabis ordinance**. The ordinance is available at

<http://www.whitmancounty.org/download/Public%20Works/Planning/Code%20Rev%20-%202019.64%20-%20MJ%20-%202020-01-09.pdf>

1. Mark Storey and Denis Tracy facilitated a discussion of the **state procedural rules that regulate the interaction between the BOCC and WCPC**. These rules direct that the Planning commission's function is to research and then craft a recommendation for handling a zoning issue rather than presenting several options to the County Commissioners from which they could choose. They suggest that the Planning Commission present the BOCC with the ordinance and allow them to accept or decline it. The County Commissioners have been reading the WCPC minutes and so have been keeping up on the discussions all along. Russ Jamison suggests that the first option doesn't necessarily have to be the marijuana ordinance.
2. Denis Tracy has reviewed the wording of the ordinance for enforcement purposes and the re-worded version was discussed to ensure that the original intent was preserved.
3. Kathleen Lloyd points out that the setback for residence to residence is 1500 ft while the setback for an indoor marijuana business to a residence is 20 ft and this is a business that has an 8 ft fence and lights that will ruin the view of the residence. The commissioners want to treat marijuana businesses like other businesses that locate in the county.
4. Chris Skidmore from Environmental Health explained **legalities of drilling exempt wells in Whitman County**. Water rights start after drilling a well and putting that well to beneficial use (home use, watering stock, industrial use of 5000 gallons or less per day). There are no restrictions on drilling wells in Whitman county other than this; some other counties have elected to restrict water use/wells. A member of the public asked should the ordinance prohibit a marijuana business that will use more than the 5000 gallons per day? The commission does not regulate water use; that is done by the Dept of Ecology.
5. Discussion whether to include definitions in the ordinance or simply refer the reader to the appropriate RCW. Reminder cannabis must have a THC level great than 0.3% to be considered marijuana.

Process & Protocol: (Observations about participants and procedures of the meeting) *e.g., Did the members appear to have done their "homework"?* **Yes** *Were members courteous to each other and the public?* **Yes.** *Was access to materials for certain agenda items available to you?* **Yes.**

Next meeting will finalize the findings and go over the list of alternatives. Feb 5, 2020, may also need to meet the third Wednesday of February (19th). Will need to have a comment period before the public meeting.