

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Whitman County Planning Commission Date: Nov 6, 2019

Observer Reporting: Shelley Chambers Fox Length of Meeting: 1 hour 43 min

Members Present: Dave Gibney, Gary Moore, Matt Sutherland, Guy Williams, Chad Whetzel, Ryan Davies, Keith Paulson, Alan Thomson (county planner), Eleanor Huber (note taker), Katrin Kunz (assistant county planner)

Members Absent: Russ Jamison, Robert Hill

Others Present (e.g., media, public): 6 members of the public, Mark Storey, county staff

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-%202019-10-18.pdf>

1. Guy Williams read a statement noting that they could do any of the following: extend the moratorium indefinitely, continue to work on the MJ ordinance, confine to industrial zoned areas only, or curtail any new industry altogether. He believes that voters did not want marijuana production in Whitman County, they wanted marijuana sales. Alan stated that when the ordinance is done, the staff will add the other options.
2. A member of the public would like to reference an existing WAC that restricts any detectable odor in measurable terms, so many ppm. Alan points out that this will not assist in enforcement since the county does not have mobile equipment to measure substances in the air. The plan would be for county staff to go to the area in question and smell the air.
3. Commissioners reviewed the changes that were made at the last meeting which were noted in red in the document.
4. For a Conditional Use Permit to be issued all neighbors within 300 ft would be notified of the request for the permit. Discussion followed suggesting that it might be wise to notify neighbors within 1000 or 1500 ft.
5. There was a discussion about how to reduce the impact of outdoor grows on residences. It was suggested to add that the fenced area of grow should be at least 500 ft from an existing or platted residence. Alan will add this.
6. A member of the public points out that cannabis and marijuana are not interchangeable (cannabis is grown, marijuana is prepared from cannabis). That needs to be cleaned up in the present document. Alan says he is using the definitions in RCW.
7. A member of the public read a letter from Tom Mumford, an attorney that has returned to Whitman County from Bellingham and is concerned that members of the commission do not have the information they need to make policy choices. He is concerned about use of water from the aquifer. The reader feels that much of the ordinance is 'protective' of the cannabis industry when it should be more restrictive since we don't know the impact of large commercial grows on health or the environment.

8. Mark Storey points out that the board's job is to balance the rights of property owners who want to use their property to grow marijuana as well as the rights of people who don't want marijuana grown around them.
9. Matt Sutherland asks what the timeline is to complete this work. Chad Whetzel says the moratorium goes on until March. They will look at the changes made this month in December and decide whether anything additional needs to be changed. Alan proposes that the planning commission have a meeting with the commissioners in January to discuss what has been developed. Then they could schedule a second meeting in January for the public meeting for decision making.

Public Meetings of interest to League: *Were there any public meetings announced that you think League members may be interested in attending and/or becoming involved with that relate to League positions?*

1. **Weis Towers proposes to build a new cell tower on Bald Butte**, however, the county proposes to go up there again in the spring to convince the outside botanist that there is Palouse Prairie there. The AT & T proposal for a **new cell tower on Kamiak Butte** was withdrawn on October 10, 2019. Planning office told them that there isn't room for another tower up there.
2. **Boyer Park marina dock replacement** and rehabilitation Conditional Use Permit was approved on October 10, 2019.
3. **Critical Areas Ordinance** (CAO) was approved at the public hearing of the Board of County Commissioners on Nov 4, 2019.

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 is Dec 4.