

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Whitman County Planning Commission Date: Feb 5, 2020

Observer Reporting: Shelley Chambers Fox Length of Meeting: 1 hour 50 min

Members Present: Dave Gibney, Rusty Jamison, Robert Hill, Brian Davies, Matt Sutherland (by phone), Guy Williams, Chad Whetzel, Keith Paulson, Alan Thomson (county planner), Eleanor Huber (note taker), Katrin Kunz (assistant county planner)

Members Absent: Gary Moore

Others Present (e.g., media, public): 11 members of the public, Denis Tracy (county attorney)

Public Meetings of interest to League: Board of County Commissioners' action – Public hearing for Lana and Roger Myers **approved changing the zoning** for a 2-acre parcel from the Agricultural District to a Limited Light Industrial District on Monday, Feb 3.

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-%2019.64%20-%20MJ%20-%202020-01-21.pdf>

1. Unfinished business: Continue discussion on cannabis ordinance.

- a. A couple of **wording changes** have been made in the document most notably adding the word **'recreational'** to references to marijuana. People who use medical marijuana can come into a MJ retailer with their card (permit to use) and they can buy from a retailer like Floyds. Denis Tracy suggests that the word **'commercial'** be inserted rather than 'recreational' to clarify this.
- b. There was discussion of including the sentence **'The ordinance does not apply to growing hemp or growing medical marijuana.'** The commissioners want to keep this.
- c. There was discussion of the **distance that MJ businesses must be from sensitive use buildings** (schools, etc.). Should it be 1000 ft or 1500 ft? One modification could be that MJ retail operations will comply with the setbacks from the underlying zoning district. Kathleen Lloyd read a letter requesting that existing residences be added to the list of sensitive use buildings. Dave Gibney suggests that the commission do this. Alan counters that this will eliminate the possibility of new MJ businesses on airport road in light industrial areas because there already are houses within 1000 ft of the industrial district. For outdoor grows the distance will be 500 ft from residences, for indoor grows they will use the same distance as is used for other businesses, 20 ft. Commissioners were polled **regarding whether they wanted to include houses on the sensitive uses list. They declined 4 to 3.**
- d. Chris Boyd points out that there are commercially compatible zones within 1000 ft of municipal boundaries that will be lost for commercial uses if the half mile regulation is used. This would be to the detriment of the county.
- e. To address this issue, Dave Gibney suggests they add to section 16 page 4 that this set back does not apply to light industrial or commercial zones that are next to municipal boundaries. In other words, it **only applies to agricultural areas next to municipal areas.**
- f. A draft memorandum to the County Commissioners was considered next. It recommends that the BOC adopt the ordinance. It also lists in no particular order other pathways that may be considered. This document was not available to me.
- g. Preliminary findings were discussed but not available.
- h. Dave Gibney made a motion that they **proceed to recommend the ordinance to the BOC and have a public meeting. The motion was seconded and passed.** Staff will now prepare the ordinance for a public hearing, including public notice of a comment period. The ordinance will be presented, take public input, discussed and voted on at the public hearing.
- i. Because of the procedural requirements of holding a public meeting for consideration of an ordinance, it could be at least a month before there will be a meeting on this with the BOC.

- j. Next order of business will be to review the comprehensive plan.
- k. New business: None.

Process & Protocol: *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, the most recent copy of the ordinance was available and no, the memo that will accompany the ordinance when it is sent to the BOC was not available.**

Next meeting: Alan is uncertain how long the preparation of the ordinance will take so he is uncertain whether the board will be meeting on the first Wednesday of March. Stay tuned.