

## League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Whitman County Planning Commission

Date: Nov 17, 2021

Observer Reporting: Shelley Chambers Fox

Length of Meeting: 2 hrs

Members Present: Chad Whetzel, Weston Kane, Brian Davies, Keith Paulson, Russ Jamison, Fred Wexler, Staff: Alan Thomson, Whitman County Planner; Grace Di Biase, Whitman County Assistant Planner; Brandon Johnson, Public Works, Elinor Huber, Notetaker

Absent: Matt Webb, Erina Hammer, Dave Gibney

Others Present (i.e., media, public): Debbie Snell (Port of Whitman), Karen Hinnenkemp, Ken Duft.

### Reports:

- a. There were no administrative reports this month.
- b. Erina has resigned; County Commissioners need to appoint. Still 1 person short on the Board of Adjustment

**Old business: Continue updating of the Whitman County Comprehensive Plan.** The current Whitman County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1978. It is available at [Comprehensive Plan | Whitman County, WA](#). The proposal is to go through the Plan line by line, chapter by chapter. This may require meeting the first and third Wednesday of the month. Chapter 1, the introduction, will be reviewed last since they will have a better picture of what the introduction should look like at the end of the process.

1. In the **Transportation chapter**, the section describing SR 270 was reviewed and approved.
2. **Parks and Recreation:**
  - a. there was an email sent with a couple of questions on this section that they had already covered. A section on **environmental education** was added based in the opportunities section on the email.
  - b. Change in the information on the **Colfax Trail**: it is 2.5 miles long and 2.5 miles back.
  - c. **Goals were reviewed** and a few edits made in the language but not the meaning.
    - i. There was considerable discussion of the use of the **term 'open space'** in PR 2.1. In an assessor's use of this term, it refers to private land and is there a need to add 'public open space' to qualify this. It was decided to add the term 'public' to the more general Goal PR 2.
    - ii. Technically **shorelines** in Washington state are public but you would have to cross private property to visit most of the shoreline of the Palouse River. Thus in PR 2.2 was clarified to indicate that access across private land would require **owner permission**.
    - iii. **Colfax Trail and Bill Chipman trail** are both former railroad right of ways.
    - iv. PR 4.2: Is **'abandonment'** the correct term here? In order for a trail to be built the owner needs to put out an intent to abandon and a group needs to take over the land to preserve the corridor before it is officially abandoned.
3. **Economic Development:** the purpose and introduction were reviewed and a few edits made in the language but not the meaning.
  - a. **'Pulse crops'** is the term used now for legumes. The majority of pulse crops consumed by the world are now grown in Canada. Whitman County does not grow the majority of the wheat in the US.
  - b. Brian Davies thinks that **Schweitzer** is now the largest employer in the county. Schweitzer had a billion dollars in sales last year. This needs to be acknowledged in the plan.
  - c. Debbie Snell offered photos from the Port website if the plan needs updated photos.
  - d. Alan reminds the commissioners that the **Comprehensive Plan addresses goals for the unincorporated county, not Pullman**. Historically unincorporated Whitman County's economy has been driven by agriculture.
  - e. Debbie Snell had added a section on the **Port of Whitman because its main function is economic development**. It was trimmed some to reduce the detail in the document.

- f. It was decided to stop at page 58. Commissioners were asked to read the next sections as homework so the review can proceed more quickly.

**Public Meetings of interest to League**

1. The Pullman Planning Commission will continue to discuss the draft of its Comprehensive Plan on Wednesday, **December 1, 2021**. The draft of the Comprehensive Plan can be found at [Comprehensive Plan | Whitman County, WA](#) The details on remote participation can be found at the Whitman County Planning Commission website.

**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, the most recent copy of the Comprehensive Plan, agenda and supporting materials were sent via email. Next meeting: December 1, 2021