

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Whitman County Planning Commission Date: Aug 3, 2022

Observer Reporting: Shelley Chambers Fox Length of Meeting: 1 hr 45 minutes

Members Present: Chad Whetzel, Brian Davies, Weston Kane (LaCrosse), David Tysz, Russ Jamison.

Absent: Fred Wexler, Keith Paulson, Dave Gibney, Matt Webb

Others Present (i.e., media, public): Staff: Alan Thomson, Whitman County Planner; Grace Di Biase, Whitman County Assistant Planner; Brandon Johnson, Public Works; Elinor Huber, Notetaker.

Public: none.

Reports

1. **Update on previous conditional use permits and variances** – Setback variance for Danette Merritt was approved on July 28, 2022.

Unfinished Business

1. The **Shoreline Management Plan** is reviewed by counties in Washington state every 8 years. The plan addresses environmental protection and public access to shorelines. Consultant is working on this at the moment, should hear from them later this month. No updates. The first draft is likely to be presented in September.

New business:

1. Since the **Commission changed the Comprehensive Plan**, there are some **changes that potentially need to be made in the following ordinances:** County Code Chapter 19.10 - Agricultural District; Chapter 19.12 – Cluster Residential District; and Chapter 19.59 – Surface Mining and Rock Crushing, and Chapter 19.54 – Nonconforming Uses and Special Exceptions. The edits discussed last month have been entered into the regulation for the Commissioners to consider the language.

a. Chapter 19.10

- i. The initial section notes that the new Comprehensive Plan allows 2 homes on the same parcel in the agricultural zone.
- ii. 19.10.050 There are no height restrictions on buildings on agricultural land to allow the building of wind farms.
- iii. 19.10.065 e section on accessory dwelling units is no longer necessary.
- iv. Three ways to build a house in rural Whitman County: create a parcel following the rules of short plats, altering an existing parcel, construction on a parcel which existed before Jan 1, 2007 which has not been certified. Now a parcel must be at least 2 acres in order to meet required setbacks from the road and from agricultural land and to meet the 1500 feet view shed requirement.
- v. There are lots and blocks that were set out in towns that are unincorporated so must follow county rules to be built upon. The builder must use enough lots to have room for a house, well and septic field.
- vi. Rural housing certificates are generally required to build a house on agricultural land.
- vii. Rural Residential Site Review (RRSR) shall be required to remodel an existing house or to build a barn or a shop. AND this same process will be also used for second residence on a certified Rural parcel.
- viii. When building a second house on a certified parcel in the agricultural zone, the new house should be built within 500 ft of the existing house. The goal is to keep the house close together so that agricultural land is not impacted.
- ix. When replacing a house on a certified lot, it would be built within 50 ft of the original house.

- x. Creation of a residential group requires a Rural Housing certificate. This regulation allows up to 9 houses on the same parcel but in reality land owners put one more house on the parcel for a family member.
- xi. 19.10.080 residential short plats are limited to 3 lots, 4 lots for commercial.
- xii. Section on businesses in agricultural district should include commercial horse boarding and large trucking repair. The Board of Adjustment can make rules about when the business can operate if it is expected to be noisy. Environmental nonprofits would be added to this section and permitted with a conditional use permit evaluation to determine the impact on adjacent landowners.
- b. Chapter 19.59 Expansion of surface rock crushing does not require a new conditional use permit as long as the quarry is only being expanded 10% or less of the original size and the quarry is not within 1000 ft of a residence.
- c. Chapter 19.12 Cluster residential developments are 20 acres, 4 houses and will require a public well drawing no more than 5000 gallons/day that allows 4 hook ups. The section on long plats using 60 acres must be taken out because the state law no longer permits this.
- d. Chapter 19.54 State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) ordinance needs to be amended to note that an appeal of intermediate steps cannot be allowed.

Public Meetings of interest to League

1. None this month.

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 agenda and meeting link were sent via email.*

Next meeting is tentatively September 21, 2022. Alan has another meeting in Chelan on September 7.

Consultants will be brought in again on the Shoreline Management Plan in September.