

# League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

**Name of Agency:** Whitman County Planning Commission **Date:** Sept 20, 2023

Observer Reporting: Shelley Chambers Fox Length of Meeting: 98 minutes  
Members Present: This was a hybrid meeting with most participants in the Colfax meeting room: Brian Davies, Fred Wexler, Dave Gibney, Weston Kane (LaCrosse), Russ Jamison (Garfield), Mark Tolman (Pullman), David Tysz (Tekoa).

Absent: Chad Whetzel

Others Present (i.e., media, public): Staff: Alan Thomson, Whitman County Planner, Elinor Huber, notetaker, Grace DiBiase, Assistant County Planner (on Zoom), Brandon Johnson, Public Works (running Zoom),

Public: Shelley Chambers-Fox (LWV)

## **Content (What is being discussed):**

### **Reports**

- a. Board of Adjustment forthcoming hearings – Conditional use permit application for Ferrell Gas in the S-PMC District. Hearing date yet to be determined. Storage area to be placed right before Busch distributors.
- b. Forthcoming Administrative Use Permits – Motley and Motley to build a storage building on their quarry site on SR 270 near Sunshine Road.
- c. Update on previous conditional use permits and variances - Conditional use permit for Todd and Tanya Mitzimberg for a seasonal dry land recreational campground was approved on June 8, 2023 on SR 27 near the turnoff for Farmington. An administrative variance for Kyle Pringle to reduce the front setback for a residence/workshop from 20 feet to nine feet on Dry Creek Road was granted on April 20, 2023. An administrative variance for Scott and Diane Cornelius to reduce the front setback to their residence on Sand Road from 35 feet to zero feet was granted on April 20, 2023. They want to build a wall because the road has become noisy since it was paved. A variance for Phil Brown to reduce the rear setback on a residential parcel on Oakesdale Road from 20 feet to eight feet was granted on June 8, 2023.
- d. Update on previous administrative use permits – An administrative use permit was issued to M.A. DeAtley Construction, Inc. on June 2, 2023, for the deposit of approximately 15,000 cubic yards of natural topsoil onto an agricultural field. The topsoil was removed due to the reconstruction of Almota Road by the County.
- e. Board of County Commissioners' action – None.
- f. Forthcoming Shoreline of the State Substantial Development Permits – Avista replacing a gas pipeline under the South Fork of the Palouse River just south of Albion.
- g. Planning Commission forthcoming hearings – Zone change for a subdivision off Pullman-Airport Road from Heavy Commercial Limited to Light Industrial. This will be an industrial park on the east side of the airport.

### **New business**

1. Planning Commission forthcoming hearings – Zone change for a subdivision off Pullman-Airport Road from Heavy Commercial Limited to Light Industrial. This will permit development of an industrial park on the east side of the airport with 4 parcels. Public Hearing on this zoning change possibly on November 1.
2. Review proposed amendments to regulations in the Moscow Pullman corridors with a plan of adopting them in a public meeting later.
  - a. County Code Chapter 19.15 – North Pullman-Moscow Corridor District (N-PMC)

- i. Taking out language about constructing a 5 lane highway between Moscow and Pullman which has already happened.
    - ii. Change in the appeals process: Appeals need to be filed in 21 days (changed from 24 days due to electronic filing of appeals) of the date from the time that they receive notification.
    - iii. Modifications in the list of permitted business striking ‘with inside seating’ as a qualifier for restaurants since they would like to permit restaurants with inside or outside seating. Also permit coffee stand and mobile food trucks. A discussion ensued with commissioners agreeing that they would like to permit businesses with food and beverage service including restaurants, drive through food and beverage service and mobile food trucks.
    - iv. Front setback section no longer needs to be qualified by the plan to construct the wider highway.
    - v. Several typos and misspellings were corrected.
  - b. Chapter 19.16 – South Pullman-Moscow Corridor District (S-PMC).
    - i. taking out language about constructing a 5 lane highway between Moscow and Pullman.
    - ii. Change in the appeals process: Appeals need to be filed in 21 days (changed from 24 days due to electronic filing of appeals) of the date from the time that they receive notification.
    - iii. Restaurant section will add ‘excluding those defined as bars or taverns’ so that it matches the North side regulations. A winery is considered different from a tavern or bar.
    - iv. Front setback section no longer needs to be qualified by the plan to construct the wider highway.
    - v. Several typos and misspellings were corrected.
- 3. Start conversation about creating a solar energy ordinance.
  - a. There are parts of the state that are trying to prevent more solar farms. There is a rush to get wind farms and solar farms built and they consume farmland. The county currently has no regulation about solar farms that might protect farmland. Companies go to property owners first rather than talking to planning commissions or county engineers. Alan has heard that property owners are talking with a solar company that would like to build a solar farm up near St John and Thornton. An ordinance would not be intended to stop solar farms but to allow them in a planned way. Some companies are building the farms so that smaller grazing animals can graze around them. Russ Jamison points out that for the most part we want property owners to be able to do what ever they think is in their best interest. Is there a plan for solar farms to be used to replace the electricity generated by the dams? Asotin County has started to address this issue.
  - b. Alan will look for more information on this subject and email commissioners.

### **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. The link to the Shoreline Master Plan document was on the County website. Next meeting is Oct 4, 2023.