

# League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Whitman County Planning Commission

Date: 2/5/2025

Observer Reporting: Chambers-Fox Shelley

Length of Meeting: 1 hour 40 minutes

Members Present: Chad Whetzel, Brian Davies, Mark Tolman (Pullman), Weston Kane (LaCrosse),

Tammy Southern (new commissioner from Garfield) On Zoom: Dave Gibney.

Members Absent: The Planning Commission presently has 3 openings. Alan reports that there will be 3 new commissioners chosen by the Republican party in March.

Others Present (e.g., media, public): Alan Thomson (Whitman County Planner), Grace DiBiasi (Assistant Planner), Brandon Johnson (Public Works), David Werner (Clerk), Tresa Bannister, Noah Schmick, Ken Duft, Gabe Conley Navidad, Mike, Eric, Jamie Anderson, Todd Imeson, Tom Thompson, Kevin Atkinson, Tom Marlos, others in the auditorium not introduced.

**Business pertaining to League Positions or Topics of Interest:** *Include in this section 1) issues discussed that relate to League priorities or positions. Do you recommend local league action? If so, please refer to the League position that supports your suggestion. 2) links to further information available on an issue, if available.*

It has been proposed to build an RV Park on Old Moscow Road. There will be a meeting of the Board of Adjustment on February 27 to rule on this.

The Board of County Commissioners have placed a moratorium on new wind farms and next month, first Wednesday of March, the planning commission will discuss what should be changed about the wind ordinance.

The remainder of this meeting was used to discuss the current draft of the solar ordinance and battery storage regulations. Some recent additions include: project site will be evaluated by a biologist and a soil scientist to limit construction disturbance of sensitive areas, decommissioning includes removal of all underground materials installed by the project and removal of hazardous materials. Site restoration costs shall be based on detailed engineering estimates and assured by a surety bond/irrevocable letter of credit. There is some uncertainty about what financial tests will be applied to the entity providing the surety bond. The BOC have not indicated whether there any areas that should not be used for solar farms. They have to be placed near transmission lines,; there is no imminent domain for a private company. Alan has researched the setbacks for solar facilities in other municipalities and they are small compared to wind farms. Todd Imeson (public) suggests that the landowner be included in the risk calculations involved in decommissioning. Tresa Bannister expressed her disapproval of the use of agricultural land for solar and wind projects. Next meeting march 5.

**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?*

A Public meeting was held by the Commissioners to address the Port of Whitman request for a zone change

for an industrial park in Tekoa from agricultural for manufacturing, processing and storage. This would convert 14+ acre area from agricultural to industrial. This proposal was accepted with the condition that all outdoor light be full cutoff.

**Process & Protocol:** (Observations about participants and procedures of the meeting) *e.g., Did the members appear to have done their "homework"? Were members courteous to each other and the public? Was access to materials for certain agenda items available to you?*

Members are courteous.