

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Whitman County Planning Commission

Date: 2/4/2026

Observer Reporting: Chambers-Fox Shelley

Length of Meeting: 37 minutes

Members Present: Brian Davies (Chair), Dave Gibney (vice Chair Pullman), Bill Myers (Colfax), David McKeirnan (Pullman-on Zoom), Dean Kinzer (Pullman), Weston Kane (on Zoom) (LaCrosse), Chris Melhus (Malden). Tammy Southern (Garfield), Julian Mathews (Pullman)

Members Absent: none

Others Present (e.g., media, public): Staff: Alan Thomson (Whitman County Planner), Grace DiBiasi (Assistant Planner-on Zoom), Brandon Johnson (Public Works), Mark Storey, Chad Whetzel (BOCC).

Public audience: on zoom: Ken Duft, Evan Ellis KQQQ Radio, Jim, Tammy Storey, Jamie Anderson, Julie, Tom Thompson, JL, Mishelle. Also in the auditorium: Carol Black

Consultants on Zoom: Rachel Granrath, (Kimley Horn), Dan Nickel, (Facet)

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.*

Brian Davies would like to set rules; regular business meeting may not allow the public to comment. There will be public meetings that offer the opportunity for the public to comment. No interruptions no outside conversations, cat calls. If Brian has to call out a disrupter twice, they will be ejected from the meeting.

New Business

Mark Storey announces that the County will move forward concurrently on both projects that the Commission needs to address in 2026. The plan is to split the work between the 2 consulting companies and planning staff. Rachel Granrath, (Kimley Horn) will be working with Grace DiBiasi on the solar and battery ordinance. Dan Nickel, (Facet), will work with Alan Thomson on the Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) update. They will put together a framework and timeline to start the work.

Dave Gibney notes that the Commission has started the solar ordinance. The CAO must be through the Planning Commission by the end of May because the deadline for completion is June 30. The consulting group will prepare reports describing the best available science on the management of critical areas and then do a gap analysis of the

current Whitman County code. The consultant will provide these materials to the Planning Commissioners, and work with the county to address their preferences. Dave Gibney points out that communities below 25,000 population are allowed to adopt the county ordinance rather than create their own so the Commission should be mindful of that. Dan Nickel states that this may not be ideal for small communities since their land use is significantly different than county land.

Mark Storey and Dave Gibney would like a summary of the changes in the ordinance that will be required due to state regulatory changes. Dan Nickel states that the Dept of Fish and Wildlife has come out with new guidance on riparian areas, the Dept of Ecology has updates to wetland areas, and aquifer recharge areas may have some changes. Alan states that the flood plain section has been recently rewritten. While many aspects of the new CAO will be dictated by the state, there will be some deference to local preferences. It will be important to have best available science to support the County's preferences.

Adjourned pm: 7:37

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?*

Board of County Commissioners meeting regarding the decision on revisions to County Code Chapter 19.61 is on March 2, 2026.

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?*

Your additional comments/opinions:

Reminders ☺

A LWV Observer is impartial, silent, and respectful. It is, however, acceptable to ask questions for clarification following the meeting.

Remember to wear your awesome ID Badge!

Please attach any materials, or links to such, received at the meeting that you feel are important to your report. Please submit your report to the LWV Observer Chair within one week of the meeting.

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