

**WHTIMAN COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION
02/03/2021
MINUTES**

MEMBERS:

Chad Whetzel – Chair	Dave Gibney – Member
Brian Davies – Member	Keith Paulson – Member
Erina Hammer – Member	

STAFF:

Alan Thomson – Whitman County Planner
Grace Di Biase – Whitman County Assistant Planner
Mark Storey – Public Works Director/County Engineer
Ginny Rumiser – Clerk

GUESTS:

Ken Duft, Pullman Resident; Shelley Chambers-Fox, League of Women Voters;
Hailey Wexler, SEL.

7:02 p.m. – Chad – We will call the meeting to order and ask for introductions. We'll now move on to the approval of the minutes from January 6, 2021.

Motion: By Brian Davies and seconded by Keith Paulson to approve the minutes from January 6, 2021 as published.

Roll Call Vote: Dave Gibney – aye; Brian Davies – aye; Erina Hammer – aye; Keith Paulson – aye; Chad Whetzel – aye.

7:04 p.m. Motion carried.

REPORTS:

- a. Board of Adjustment forthcoming hearings – NW Grain Growers commercial agricultural commodity warehouse outside Endicott. Date yet to be determined.

Alan – We've still got NW Grain Growers in the pipeline. That is a commercial agricultural commodity warehouse just outside of Endicott. We still have not received an application yet, but I think that is going to be coming real soon here. They created a 20-acre parcel and that has been completed. And I think they are, right now, transferring ownership to that 20-acre parcel and then we should be getting an application for a conditional use and a SEPA sometime real soon and then we'll process that one.

- b. Forthcoming Administrative Use Permits – Whitman County Emergency Management proposes a new cell tower on Bald Butte. Date yet to be determined.

Alan – So up on Bald Butte, things are starting to coalesce. So, Whitman County Emergency Management is the applicant. They are going to build a new tower up on top of Bald Butte. That was going to be Weis Towers, that was the original application for a different location. Weis Towers is not going to be the applicant anymore, but they are going to be piggy-backing on the new tower when it eventually gets built. But, Emergency Management is the applicant, so that is Whitman County and we've received their application for a CUP and SEPA. The SEPA is going to be processed next week and it will go into next week's Gazette and there is a 14-day comment period. We've had a botanist up on the Butte, right at the area where they want to build the tower and that was Pam Brunsfeld, and she has told us that there really isn't very much in the way of Palouse Prairie there. It's all been pretty well impacted with invasive species and she has done her report and what is actually going to happen before the tower get built, Pam Brunsfeld, the botanist and the Emergency Services are going to go up there with an entity called the Phoenix Conservancy and some plants are going to get removed from the site. All of that is in the works, it's all being kind of organized and I think the county wants to build that tower sometime around the beginning of May, is their projected timeline there. So, sometime between the middle of April and the beginning of May the botanist and the Phoenix Conservancy are going to go up there and remove some plants and then the construction will begin. But, we're just at the point of processing the application right now. The SEPA will go out next week and this is an administrative permit and it doesn't have to go through the Board of Adjustment, because there are no houses within the 1500 feet. This is a pretty remote area. This is done administratively and obviously the Palouse Prairie was a major issue in the first go around with Weis Towers, but now we've got a botanist, Pam Brunsfeld, who has evaluated the area and all of the Palouse Prairie that is up there will be taken care of and then the site will be, hopefully very appropriate for a new tower. So all that is coming.

- c. Forthcoming Variances – None.
- d. Update on previous conditional use permits and variances – None.
- e. Update on previous Administrative Use Permits – Weis Towers was issued an administrative use permit for a cell tower near Dusty on January 12, 2021.

Alan – Weis Towers actually has another cell site that is just west of Dusty. We issued them an administrative use permit for a cell tower and what happened there was, their original tower got damaged, it is a 120 foot tower. So they wanted to replace that tower and we had actually given them a permit to do that, a building permit to do that last year. Now they want to just cut off 60 feet of the original tower and keep the rest of it still there and build a new tower right next to it. So, that is basically what we are doing

right now and this administrative use permit is to put the new tower in there. And we issued that on January 12th. So there is going to be, like a tower and a half there. And the reason why they want to do that is, because of the market, there is new equipment coming out that they need to put on towers there and there are more customers, so they need more space. So, they've got about 100 feet of one tower and a new 120 foot tower. Actually, 80 feet of the original tower. That permit, as I said was issued on January 12th.

- f. Board of County Commissioners' action – None.
- g. Update on previous Board of County Commissioners' action – Marijuana ordinance was approved by BOCC on December 28, 2020.

Alan – You may have heard that the marijuana moratorium was lifted February 1, 2021. That was earlier this week. So, the ordinance is in place, the moratorium is lifted. And we've got nobody knocking down the door for new permits.

- h. Forthcoming Shoreline of the State Substantial Development Permits – Todd Krause bridge replacement over South Fork of the Palouse River.

Alan – The old bridge over the Palouse River, down off of...gosh, what was the name of that road?

Grace – Manning Road.

Alan – Manning Road, sorry. So the Krause bridge, the one that burned down, so we're now replacing that bridge. We're in the process of replacing it. The old bridge has been removed and the applicant, the Krause's, want to put a new bridge in place and we're now going through the motions to do that. That will require a Shoreline of the State Substantial Development Permit, because this is the Palouse River, which is a shoreline of the State and a Floodplain Development Permit. An engineer is working on that, but we haven't gotten that information yet and I need that floodplain development permit done before we can move onto the Shoreline part. So that is going to take place in next few weeks. The Krause's found a new bridge in California and it's been disassembled and it's going to be transported to the site once he gets these permits. It should be sometime this spring, and put that new bridge there over the Palouse River.

- i. Update on previous Shoreline of the State Substantial Development permits – None.
- j. Planning Commission forthcoming hearings – None.

Alan – That is it for Reports.

Chad – Okay, thank you.

Unfinished Business:

Chad – We can move onto unfinished business.

Alan – Yeah, well that is the update to the Comprehensive Plan. I don't really have an awful lot to report, but I've been sending you results of the survey. I've given you two versions of that. According to what we have received, there have been over 200 responses so far. Which is pretty good. Have you guys had a chance to look at them yet, the responses?

Brian – I have read through some of them and I'm pretty impressed that we're getting as much response as we have so far. It seems to me, right off the bat, from what I have read that the one thing, it seems all real positive, but one thing people don't really know about is the Cluster Developments. I think there is just not a lot of good information out there for them. So, I think we need to educate the public a little bit on that regard. I'm glad they are looking at the website and doing the survey.

Alan – To be honest with you, I think the website has been the biggest source of information for people, because we've had almost a hundred responses, before we had gotten the word out anywhere else. So, where was the response coming from, and I'm making the assumption that it was coming from the website. We had already gotten a ton of responses there. We've gotten a lot of flyers out since that time and now we're over 200 responses. So, the word is getting out. And then also, people like yourselves, the Commissioners', calling people, telling people when you bump into them. Erina has some connections up in the north end of the County and she's getting that out. And we're getting the small towns, advertised there, so the word is getting more and more out there and we'll continue to get responses. And, the public workshops are probably going to start sometime in March, maybe the beginning of March and that's, Brian your right, there's going to have to be an education for the public, because if you look at some of the responses, you can tell that people don't really understand what is going on. They just don't know what this is about. So, the consultant, I've talked to them about this and when those public workshops happen, that is going to be Comp Plan 101. They'll start tackling there, just to help everybody understand what we are trying to do and what does a comprehensive plan mean and all the components to it. So, that is going to start in March, but for right now, we're just kind of gathering the information, the feedback, and it's going to be interesting to see where people's minds are at, where their heads are at and what they are thinking.

Keith – I also heard it on the radio.

Alan – You did?

Keith – I heard that and it was like wow, it sounded good. I don't know if everybody really goes to the website that often to just look at things, but the radio has a big draw. I was pretty impressed with that.

Alan – And there was a little blurb in the Gazette about it last week. So, the media is getting it out there. But, I've got a pretty extensive email list and I've put the flyer out to everybody that I know of on my email list and the Commissioners' are doing the same thing. So, the more people we get involved in this, the better, but we're doing good so far, as far as the number of people that we've connected with.

Dave – The Pullman Chamber distributed a plug for it also.

Alan – Good.

Erina – I know that I was able to get it in a couple of school breakrooms and I think Crossett's is willing to put it on the window so that everybody can read it. But, the one thing that is the heart of it and I think it's a good thing to have that Comp 101. Not everybody is understanding why, so they want to provide the feedback, to make more feedback than we were hoping for, but why, why do they need to do it and what are we doing.

Alan – Yeah, that is going to be pretty informative when we get to that point. And we're going to have a lot of interaction with the public, we want to get their feedback. But, I am noticing too that, and Erina picked up on this, a lot of responses from the incorporated parts of the area, i.e., Pullman, and then some people that apparently don't live in Whitman County as well, but they must have some sort of connection to Whitman County. Erina has been doing some detective work there and has been finding out that we've got some people from Seattle making comments. I'm assuming they have some connections to the county, they don't live here anymore, maybe. But, that is all still useful, that's still helpful. They know the Palouse and we're not going to turn away that kind of information.

Keith – It's a good thing we don't have a public vote on it.

Mark – Every time we look at right-of-way or any kind of land use issues, county roads, I would say that $\frac{3}{4}$ of the property owners have a component out of the county. There might be somebody in the county that owns or operates the land for out of county people that either grew up here or have a connection to that land ownership. I don't think the zip code is what is important as far as comments coming into the county. That is just my view point.

Brian – I really think that this education thing is going to be our key to... I think a lot of people are feeling like this maybe this is governmental overreach. But, we just have to explain to them that we've had this document for 40 years, we're just trying to make it a little newer. But I think they just don't know what it is and what are you guys up to, whose money are you spending.

Dave – If it's done right, it won't be government overreach, it'll be government proper reach, actually municipal reach.

Brian – A document to help us guide our way into the future.

Mark – You know, the new document might be more permissive, not less permissive, because when the original comp plan was written, the main purpose was really preserving the agriculture action, not that that has become less important, it's just that we have more things out there now than we did 35-40 years ago when it was originally crafted. So, the new version might even be more permissive in land use, than what we already have.

Brian – Wasn't there a phrase in that, the first of that document that said, "Preserve the Family Farm".

Alan – In the original comp plan, absolutely.

Brian – Yes, preserve the family farm. There is a whole conservation right there for an evening.

Alan – Yeah, and a lot of people are saying that that is what they want to preserve, they want to preserve agriculture. But there are still a few people that say we need to have some more housing built out there. Well, that is going to be an education, because housing is a difficult component and in an agricultural county, water is always the big issue there. Right now, in our zoning code, we do not allow large lot residential subdivisions. For obvious reasons, because water is the biggie and it always was the biggie back in '70's and '80's and that is why that is in there. But, AG is king, but that has changed a little bit and I'm not saying that we're willing to think about large lot residential subdivisions, that's probably still off the table, because of the water issue. But, how do we build houses in the county, I mean, that is something that is probably going to be a worthwhile debate. There are a lot of people who don't want any more housing and I'm noticing a little bit of confusion in the answers, regarding the unincorporated towns, and so that is going to be part of the conversation. Some folks are thinking that we're trying to create new towns and that is not the case. Where is development going to go? Well, yeah it could go into the unincorporated towns, but the market is what drives that. That is not necessarily what we bring into the comp plan and the market is not going there, much at all. But, we're getting, most of the applications are for housing out in the country. Landowners that want a little slice of their land to put a house on. So, that is going to be a big part of the conversation, do we want to continue with the way that the zoning ordinance is framed right now or do we want to change that up? Another one that is coming up is, tiny homes. That is starting to become more of a question mark. Some folks are asking questions about tiny homes, can they put a tiny home on somebody's land? Well, right now, no. But, I think we need to talk about that.

Brian – There are a lot of opinions out there about those things. I've had some real strong opinions shared with me, you know, people in my community don't want, a lot of them don't want to see that. And then there are people that think they are perfect and

why not? They let them do it in other places, so yes it's something we're going to have to, it's kind of like yes and kind of not.

Dave – I would rather they did a tiny home than just parked an RV there.

Alan – That is part of the problem, is that RV's are not built to be lived in year around. We've got people that are asking to park their RV somewhere and hook it up to a system, a septic system and we don't allow that because they're just not built to be lived in year around. But, these new tiny homes haven't come up to the specks of the building codes and the building codes are changing now, and they are accommodating for tiny homes. So, through L&I you can get it permitted, just like you can a trailer and if it gets the L&I stamp, then it's okay to be living in it year around. Which has been a problem up to now, that these tiny homes have not been up to building code standards. So, that is starting to change and if it does, then I think we need to think about, well can we allow these in the county and where can we allow these in the county.

Erina – I guess I would have to know, maybe where it's being done. I know it's been done a lot, right now, in Europe, England, Ireland, Scotland, because it's a hard time to find even a place to live. What does that do to real estate value? I mean, I would have to know that. That is information that I need.

Chad – I think one of the differences too, between, and I don't know a lot about them, but with a mobile home, once you get it set in place, the wheels removed and the title removed, it becomes real property. Does the tiny home, I mean it's got wheels on it, it can be moved at any point in time, so I don't know how you could turn it into real property.

Dave – Not real tiny homes, they don't.

Brian – Most of the tiny homes, Chad, now days, they're site built or they're hauled in and they're set up on a site and they're set on a foundation, so they would become real property.

Chad – Okay.

Erina – Some can still be hauled around, it depends on the person and what they want. That is what I have been told.

Alan – Yeah, Erina is right.

Dave – Well, actually the ones that you can move are not tiny home, to code, they are a temporary something or other that can move.

Alan – But, that is changing Dave, that's changing. I just had a conversation with the building inspector recently about the new codes that are coming out. So, you can get it certified through L&I. L&I is the entity that certifies mobile homes and they are now

building some tiny homes to the same standard as a mobile home. And it still can be mobile, these tiny homes can still be mobile as a mobile home can still be mobile. But, if it has an L&I stamp, that means you can set it up and live in it year around, but then the zoning code needs to be addressed, it needs to address that. I had a woman from Seattle just a couple of days ago, talking to me about wanting to move into Whitman County, but she doesn't want to buy property, she doesn't want to buy land, she wants to park her RV on somebody's property that allows that. Of course the code won't allow that to happen at the moment. So, it starts to be more and more people who are interested in having this kind of ability to rent a space on somebody's property.

Dave – That is also the sort of thing that you are more likely enforcing by complaint then going around looking for it.

Alan – Yeah, so I want to have a conversation about that and see if there is some way to accommodate for this. You know, affordable housing is a big part of GMA right now.

Dave – Yeah.

Alan – Big push, affordable housing all over Washington and this person I was talking to was from the Seattle area and they are allowing these tiny homes in the Seattle area, in King County. And it's not just that area, other parts of Washington are allowing it too. I think we need to have a conversation about it.

Dave – I have an extended family member who built one in Skamania County, permitted and everything. It's on her father's land.

Alan – We don't have a tool to be able to do that right now, our zoning code doesn't allow it. So, this is something that with the comp plan review here, we could write something in there if that is the choice that the entities, i.e., The BOCC; The Planning Commission; and the public, think it's a good idea.

Brian – Where would we see the demand for something like this? Again, is it going to be on the outskirts of Pullman or Colfax, you know, where the major growth has taken place? What do you think is going to drive it besides GMA and what people may hear?

Alan – Well, that is a good question and something that remains to be seen at the moment. Right at this moment in time, I can't see a lot of demand. We don't build that many houses, regular houses in Whitman County anyway. Inside Pullman, yeah, but outside in the county, it could be anywhere and I think it will probably be close to Pullman, because, in this case, this woman is going to go to law school in Moscow, but she doesn't want to live in Idaho, she wants to live in Whitman County. So, it would be close to the main built out areas, Pullman and Moscow. But, who knows where other demand would be. There is not really that much demand for housing, out in the unincorporated area, but maybe a little bit of flexibility, can we have some sort of zoning ordinance amendment that allows someone to take a tiny home and rent a space on somebody's property?

Dave – The more that we have internet access and broadband abilities spreading out, the more that some of this is going to happen. One of the bottom lines is, a tiny home costs a third or so of what a standard size house is and frankly the house that I live in is more space than I need. I'm not moving myself, but.

Alan – Well that is part of the conversation here, because there are a lot of people in this country that are trying to downsize. And there is also these changes that they are making to the building codes that are going to make regular houses much more expensive to build. And I think that it's just heading in that direction, that people are looking for an option that is cheaper, downsizing and they are not trying to build a regular home, because it's becoming too expensive to do so. So, there is going to be, probably some demand, I'm guessing, in cheaper accommodations rather than an apartment in Pullman.

Erina – I think there is also going to be a demand for people who want a tiny home, with 1-5-acres. They're going to want a place for bunny's and chickens, maybe a goat or two. It's becoming a big thing, strangely for younger millennials than gen z. It's become a thing.

Keith – I don't think it's going to affect AG land too much, because I don't think farmers want tiny houses on AG land. I would see it coming more to forest ground, where they can sort of get back in there a little bit and disappear, not see their neighbors and such. Timber area, I would think are places that they would build. Out of sight, out of mind. I know with my storage business, I'm getting a lot of people from the west side and from down south that are coming up here and they are renting my storage units because they want to downsize and don't want to get rid of things yet. It is coming and I think we're going to find ourselves a lot busier with housing than what we see now. Things are going to go the way they are, there's lots of people heading this way, which is why when we go up to Bonners, there's new house after new house, lots of people coming this way.

Chad – Well, one of my cautions, I guess too, is with these tiny houses do you set it up similar to say like an RV park kind of thing? Where they rent a space where they can park a house? And how do you distinguish between, what sets it apart from an RV? You know, obviously the L&I stickers, if that is what they are calling it if they are calling it a year around structure. And then how do you prevent it from... I spend a lot of time out in the basin and you can go, I mean there are houses everywhere out there and you go in the right spots and all of a sudden you can see all these RV's that have just really become a shanty town.

Alan – Well that is something that I think we want to avoid.

Chad – Right.

Alan – It needs to be well thought out. So RV parks, that is something that we don't have a lot of here in Whitman County, but we're seeing a demand for that. We've done

a couple of conditional use permits just recently, to have RV areas just for a temporary basis. And so that is something that is missing in this area, because all the activity coming into Pullman. I mean, you have these huge WSU weekends with RV vehicles coming in from all over the darn place and we don't enough room for them all. So, we can potentially create areas where we can have RV's. And talking about L&I, there are two levels there, you can have a tiny home that is just built like an RV. It's not supposed to be lived in year around. Then you can get it upgraded up to like a mobile home, which is a better upgrade so you can live in it year around. So, is L&I that controls that one and that would determine how long that structure can be lived in? So, there are people that treat them just like RV's so that would have to be in an RV park. But, then there is the other part, where it's more like a mobile home and they want to set it up on a piece of land and live in it. And we can do that right now actually, if it passes muster with the building codes, then we would treat it just like a mobile home. You know, you buy a couple of acres, 4-5 acres and you go through a Rural Housing Certificate and you get all of that done, just like we go through for a regular house and then you can put a tiny home there. But, we don't have the RV park that can have the transient areas marked out for other folks that don't want to live in them year around.

Brian – Well, I think going into the future, trying to look 10-20 years ahead, the people that are going to be spending the money are the really young millennials, like Erina was talking about and maybe they are going to want more of an RV kind of a park, kind of a situation where they can take their tiny home somewhere where they want to spend part of the year and then go somewhere else for the other part of the year. We don't know, but I'm thinking outside of the box and this is going to be critical here, not pinning ourselves into a corner here. I think Keith is right about ag land, the open, open ag land that we have in this county and we have so much of it without a tree on it, they got rid of them. And I don't think there is going to be much of a demand in those areas. But, I think where it might be more quaint with more protection, we may see an increase in people wanting to put those in. I think most of the pressure is going to come from the incorporated communities.

Chad – What was that Keith?

Keith – I was just being funny. I was just saying Malden has a lot of empty lots.

Brian – In Uniontown we just went through a process here, right at the first of the year and we have a new RV park in town, in our Entry Commercial Zone, right before the Dahman Barn, that's going to go in and it's going to be real nice. People from Red Barn Farms are putting it in, so we know it's going to be a class outfit. Didn't we see two RV parks go in late 2019 or 2020?

Alan – Out on SR 27 at the Palouse-Albion Road and the other one was the ex-sheriff Tomson, which is off of Sand Road. So we have had two that have been permitted within the last year and a half or so.

Brian – I think we're going to see that, going forward. Demand for that around Pullman, just like you mentioned for the big weekends and all that. In my conversations with Ty

and Kay Meyer, Red Barn Farms, they have a lot of big events there at their event facility at the farm, but they have a ton of people that are always asking, "Why aren't there more RV spaces. We would bring our RV's and stay, that is what we want to do." They have just said that the feedback that they are getting is that there is a big demand or big desire for people to be able to do that. We may see a lot more of it.

Erina – Is there a difference between the demand for kind of game weekend related entertainment for RV parks and then also kind of what I am hearing, the affordable housing related RV. And then permanent tiny homes, which I'm sorry that's like three different baskets or maybe I'm making it more complicated.

Dave – No, that is at least three different baskets.

Brian – It is.

Alan – Yeah, we've got the mobile home park on the Albion road is a good example of, that is a permanent location for people and that is the only one we have in Whitman County, that I am aware of. That would be something to consider for tiny homes, but you would need a water right and we're not getting any of those. Ecology is not giving out many water rights anymore. So water is always going to be a big restraint, a big constriction to having communities. That is why it would be better to have it inside incorporated areas where they have a water system and a sewer system.

Chad – I don't know if it's still zoned that way or not, but years and years ago there was the mobile home park down there just above Wawawai Landing.

Alan – So, that was when they were building the dam. That was a mobile home park for the workers that were building the dam. So, down on the bottom of Wawawai Road, is that what you're talking about?

Chad – Yes.

Alan – So that came about because of the dam. We had a big mobile home park there and that is long gone. That area still exists and there is nothing there now. We had a developer that was going to try to build some houses there, probably about 12-14 years ago and he got a large lot subdivision created there for something like 25-30 home sites, but that fell through it never came through. They do have a water right down there and that is the only reason why they are able to do that. They've got a well that is part of a water right. So, that is still a possibility if somebody were to pick up on that and try and develop that, but we've not had any action on that.

Chad – Mostly I was just curious what the zoning of that area was.

Alan – We changed the zoning. So, it was originally the Agricultural District, so in order for us to do a large lot subdivision there for housing, we had to change it to an RCR designation, Rural Community Residential. Much like in Steptoe. So that is how we did

that and I don't foresee that kind of development because of water. You have to have a water right to develop something with a whole bunch of tiny homes. That is not something that you're going to see happen. But, you're going to see, maybe more demand for individuals wanting to find a spot to put a tiny home. And then they would get an exempt well drilled on the property just for one home.

Dave – What are things like out in places like Hay and down near Central Ferry? I think it's a little further out, but the thing is, this pandemic has shown you do not have to live where you work for a lot of people. And there is going to be, not just millennials, but there is going to be a number of people who are, a couple or maybe with a kid or maybe just a single person, that wants to live out in the middle of nowhere and get access to internet and build or need a ranch house to do it, unless like Erina was saying, they would like a cow or a horse or a few llama's or something.

Alan – Yeah, I think that is a possibility. I think that the thrust of this conservation is that there may be needs to be some wording in the comp plan to accommodate this. Whether it actually happens or not is a different matter, but it needs to be addressed as does climate change. We're getting a little bit of pressure from the state on climate change. That may need to be addressed in the update to the comp plan too.

Brian – How does a rural AG county address climate change?

Alan – Well that is a good question.

Dave – You know, you said that less of the county is family farmed than what it was before. I mean it's more the big Ag. The big Ag has grown some in Whitman County in those 40 years.

Brian – There are family farms that have grown bigger, but there is not very many. There are only a handful of the extremely large operators that are farming that have leased a lot of ground. So, the small family farm, as we've all talked about, has all but disappeared.

Chad – A lot of that anybody local that is owned by large conglomerates outside of the area that have invested. And that ground is leased back to the farmer.

Keith – I agree with Brian on that, I have been Ag for pretty much my whole life and what I have seen over all these years is the family farm is still there, but it's buried at the bottom and these farmers have grown from the 500-1,000 acre family farm that they originally were, to 10 other family farms that they are leasing the ground from.

Brian – Yeah, you know a lot of the farmers in my area still have a lot of the same ground that their families have all had, but the smaller ones have just not been able to keep up and so their neighbors have leased that ground and then all of a sudden we have somebody come in that wants to lease 5,000-acres and they are not from around the area. You know, it stirs the pot up a little bit, I'm referring to Boyer, but they seem to

do a pretty good job. I'm looking right at them constantly, when they are working, because they have 2500-acres right across the road from me. It's still AG and it's still the number one economy component in this county, but it's changed, it's not the same.

Erina – Alan, when you're saying that the State wants climate change, are we at the point of asking cattle producers to feed their cattle seaweed or where are we at?

Alan – I don't know about that.

Erina – Don't laugh, because that has been floated around.

Alan – So one big distinction there is, we are not a fully planning GMA county. That is going to be a requirement for counties that are fully planning. That is coming down from the State Legislature. We are partially planning, so we don't have the same requirements, but everybody is being encouraged to think about incorporating climate change into their comp plans. I don't know what that means right now, to be honest with you.

Dave – Well, one of the things, and this comes off the top of my head and it's being done in the time since I have lived here, the more no-till type of planting keeps more of the carbon in the ground and the fact that we aren't burning anymore, and things like that, you can make the argument some of our people are already...

Brian – We're already there, we've already addressed that, because we're not burning anymore. There are farming practices are going more in that direction.

Dave – You know, the fighting over erosion has had that... When I first came here they didn't till around the horizon, you know, circular.

Chad – One of the things is, our VSP program pretty well covers all that stuff. I don't think we should be trying to tell the farmers how to do it, because, you know, 40 years ago you told them that they had to no-till and there was no no-till. So, now we tell them that they need to no-till and number one, that is not our place and number two that locks them into something and when technology changes and things can improve change, then they have no options.

Dave – I was really more not saying that when the State and Commerce and Ecology come to us and say that you don't have any climate change stuff in your comp plan, that we can have that there by impressing the practices that we already have.

Chad – Right and I agree with you there. I'm just saying that we should stress our VSP program, because that does account for all that.

Alan – I think Dave is right, we need to maybe identify what we are doing already and include that in the comp plan and saying we're addressing climate change this way and this way. I'm not recommending or suggesting that we enforce something upon the

farmers, no. The Comp Plan doesn't do that anyway Chad. The development regulations do that and we're not going to do that through the development regulations.

Chad – Right, this is a guide and I get that. But, what I am saying is and in other areas we have stressed very hard that we don't know what is coming down the pike, let's not limit ourselves to anything. Let's make sure that whatever it is we do, you know, I just don't think that we need to limit ourselves and box ourselves into a corner.

Dave – I completely agree with Chad that the VSP is another one of those things that we're doing now that is good for the environment, good for the climate, and as far as I know, it's working. I haven't heard anyone talking about not take those off or anything.

Alan – One of the biggest drivers for climate change is transportation. That is a major one and I don't see how we can affect that. That is something that is going to have to happen at a Federal level or the State level, you know, the type of vehicles that we have and how they are developed. So, the new energy codes that are coming out address climate change. So how you build a house, we can probably reference that. The energy codes are making things more efficient, building houses more efficient, therefore we're preserving the environment in that way.

Dave – I was really kind of surprised at the popularity of the survey takers of the trail.

Alan – Absolutely.

Dave – But, then again a lot of the anti-trail is similarly nimby to what the marijuana was.

Alan – The survey so far shows an overwhelming approval for building a trail.

Chad – One of the things that I guess that I am kind of concerned about that is, number one, how much money did it require for us to build the trails that we've got? And how much does it actually get used? Because I can drive all around this county and one of the things that I see is that people keep wanting more and more trails, but they're also out on all the county roads and not using those trails.

Alan – Well the big example is the Chipman Trail. A lot of people are using the Chipman Trail and if you build a trail between Pullman and Colfax that links into the Chipman Trail, now you've got a heck of a lot of distance and I am one of those people that will get on my bicycle and ride those trails just because they are there. There are a hell of a lot of people that will do that, and people that don't live here either. So, the popularity of the Chipman Trail, I think, is the example that we should look at. And it went through a similar sort of evolution, lots of people were uncertain about it, lots of people were against it and didn't want it to happen and now that it has happened it's has proven to be extremely popular. And that is happening all over the country, these bicycle trails, hiking trails, the Coeur d'Alene Trail, there is a phenomenal amount of people using them. And that trail between Colfax and Pullman, if it ever gets developed

will be beautiful. I mean, you know what the country is like there, it's beautiful, right alongside the Palouse River.

Chad – Right.

Alan – And in my opinion, I think it would be used a lot.

Chad – Well yes, and I get that, but the other thing is, if it's being built and a lot of these rails to trails that I have seen in other places, originally when they were built they were claiming that they were going to be used for all kinds of people, and in particular in my case, horseback riding. And then all of a sudden, well no we don't want those on the trails. I guess, just my opinion is, how much money is it going to cost the county to do those things and is it going to be for everybody or not?

Alan – Well, that is a big question, financing it. How to build it and pay for it. That is going to be the question that needs to be answered. Whether it's going to be viable or not, who's paying for it, how much is it going to cost? All part of the big conversation. So, that is going to have to be figured out and the Commissioners', right now, I don't know if they are really in favor of this because how are we going to pay for it and then how are we going to maintain it? Who is going to be responsible for that? All those details have not been flushed out. Including some language in the comp plan update to accommodate that, it doesn't necessarily mean that it's going to happen. But, it should be in there saying that we have the ability to build trails and all that stuff. If it ever materializes, that is a different question altogether.

Brian – But, it should be on our wish list, I think. Things that we would love to see in our county, to help the quality of life in our county. I know there has been, we've talked for years about putting a trail in between Uniontown and Colton, that is only 3 miles and you would not believe the absolute rage from the landowners about even mentioning that. And it was all going to be done in the existing right-of-way of SR 195. It makes me just, I don't know.

Dave – The trails and the rail to trail and other such trails and in the right-of-way, should at minimum be consistent with the comprehensive plan that we write. Then the market and the rest of the population and everybody else can take it from there. But it should be an allowable consistent use in the plan.

Chad – One of the reasons why I asked that is, because I know the old rail out of Colfax, up along the Palouse River there, it's an old rail grade and I know tons and tons of people who ride their horses out there. But the second they start deciding that they are going to put the trails down, they're going to exclude the horses from the area. Again what I am saying is you have to be highly careful, because you're taking from one group that is already using it, making it for a different group and is that right or not?

Alan – That is a debatable question. I notice that right outside of Albion here, that DOT owns that railroad and there is a no trespassing sign on the crossroads of the rail and

Albion, next to PNW. So, they don't want people on there. Yeah there may be horseback riders on there right now, but...

Chad – No, I'm not saying there, outside of Colfax, behind Wilbur-Ellis, it's part of the abandoned railroad, there are not lines there anymore...

Alan – That is a different rail, right.

Mark – That was developed by Whitman County and it is maintained as parkland by the County.

Chad – Right, and currently as such, because of the way it is, they allow horses out there. But, you start paving something like that, then all of a sudden they get the boot because another group decided they needed it more than they did. And I've seen that in several places over in western Washington, where they used to allow horses and suddenly people get tired of them and they are not allowed to ride them anymore.

Alan – Well that is a debatable question. That has to be fleshed out, but you're right if you pave it, it's not appropriate for horses. It's for walkers and bicyclists.

Chad – In Europe they do it. In Europe they do it all the time, they have horses and bicycles and pedestrians all in the same area.

Alan – They don't have them on the Chipman Trail.

Dave – I'm not sure it's debatable. Actually I think doing things that exclude uses is inappropriate, but I can see where Chad is coming from. And horses and bicycles, especially often don't mix well.

Brian – The horses can't hear them coming.

Dave – But, I have to sympathize with, the multi-use is better if it can be accommodated. I personally am not a horse person, I've ridden one all of three times in my whole life, but only one of those was a good experience. It is still something that should be allowed and accommodated for and not pushed out of some areas.

Brian – You can see some areas where they would have a sand section right next to the paved section for horses, if it's designated for that section. But, yeah you're right, the bicyclists and the walkers and stuff like that tend to not want the horses on the same trail that they are on, so it seems that the horses lose, usually.

Keith – Well, isn't it just because of the manure problem?

Brian – Probably. And the fact that they are riding a shod horse. What do you think Chad? Do you think they would tear up the asphalt if they only put down about 2 inches

of asphalt, do you think a 1,000 pound horse is going to cause some kind of a problem? Maybe that might be a Mark Storey question.

Dave – Horses spook with bicycles too.

Chad – Yeah, that is one of the biggest problems, is that most people, whether they are walking or riding, even including in the back country, don't understand how to approach a horse and they do get scared sometimes. As for tearing up asphalt, it depends on how you shoe them, but it probably is not going to be an issue. The biggest problem would be the, I mean I personally wouldn't want to ride on asphalt, because its slick and things go wrong.

Brian – I don't know if you've been up to Little Boulder, outside of Helmer or not, but part of that trail up to Little Boulder campground is paved. We've got a horse that doesn't mind it, but it's not fun to ride on a paved trail when you're on a horse. But, waking down a paved street...

Chad – Right, it can be done, you've just got to prepare for it.

Brian – You've got to.

Alan – Chad, as an avid biker, it's a bad idea to have bikes and horses in the same spot, for obvious reasons. I mean there is a big safety issue there. You know that horses are probably going to get freaked out by somebody cycling along, going warp speed and that happens. So, it's just a conflict of interest there. So, one way to get around that, because these conflicts happen all over the place, is that some trails are designated for walkers and bikers and others are designated for motorcycles or horseback. You know, when you get out in the sticks not everybody can go on all the trails. So, they designate certain trails for certain activities and avoid the conflict.

Chad – Yeah, and I get that. And like I said, in Europe they do it all the time, where they mix them and in Snohomish County they have it set up like that for horses and bikers. I guess my major point is, you've got to be careful about not favoring one group over another.

Alan – Well, sometimes choices need to be made, because of conflict. That happens all the time, you designate a trail for specific uses. That is very common and yes you are saying that certain people can't go on this trail.

Dave – Well, you know, it's more the pushing an existing use out, whether it's currently proper by doing the development later, as an example, this Weis Tower thing, when it first came up, remember the uproar of the lighting of the sky that went worldwide?

Alan – Yeah.

Dave – It's the minimum that you need to have some thoughts about accommodating current use and being fair to all the potential users. I think we can have that kind of

language, we really shouldn't get bogged down in this plan about what might happen to a specific trail.

Alan – You're right Dave, we don't need to go into that detail for the comp plan update. Allow trails, if you can build a trail, it needs to be mentioned in the comp plan. And then the details happen later on.

Brian – In the comp plan, we just kind of put it out there. We say these are the things that would be desirable, if they could ever come to fruition. Things that life in the county more enjoyable for the county residents. And that is kind of how we approached our Uniontown Comp Plan, back in 2003. We talked about a fishing pond and we talked about a bunch of stuff that is never going to come to fruition, but we talked about it in our comp plan. But, comp plans can kind of have all kinds of stuff in them, you know. But, what is going to drive that? We kind of need to have that in the back of our mind, what could possibly drive these things that we are going to mention in our comprehensive plan.

Alan – Public demand. And we've seen that through the survey already. A big demand for wanting trails.

Keith – Well, maybe we'll get a lot more people putting in over the next month and we'll have a little bit more data that we can look at.

Alan – Yep, right.

Chad – Speaking of the survey's, is it possible to do, because there are a lot of pages and I think we're going to get a lot more information coming in before very long, and I realized that we don't want to eliminate the comments and not be able to read them, but is there a way to maybe condense some of this stuff? I noticed that the consultants did have a few drafts and that was they just kind of broke down the basic answers, real quick so that you could look through it and see who was for it or the percentages against. That would be super helpful instead of going through 400+ pages. Kind of figure out who did what.

Alan – Yeah, that is going to happen. The consultants will condense this, compile all this into a more readable fashion. The only reason you're getting it right now, the raw data right now, is because I asked for it. We're ahead of schedule.

Chad – Right.

Alan – They are on a timeline here, when we get it a little further down the road, they're going to put that together in a more readable fashion, but I wanted to see what results we were getting so far. So, this is raw data and it's difficult to read, but it will come in a different format, eventually.

Chad – And I do appreciate being able to go through and read the comments individually. But it is also nice to have the, at a glance, what was the overall feeling.

Alan – There are two versions there Chad. So this one, where it's generally described and the other one is a little bit more condensed.

Dave – That one that had the graphs in it, it seemed like where the content didn't really lend itself to numeric summaries. I think it was like the last three or four responses is what it appeared to be in that summary. But, that is what you are paying the consultants for, is to summarize this all and here is the general narrative and that sort of thing.

Chad – I know that I have actually talked with some people over at McGregor's, to get it out to growers and I think tomorrow night I have a chance to talk with the Whitman County Fire Chiefs Association and get it spread out to all the communities. So, hopefully we will see some more information.

Alan – Good, excellent. So, maybe we can wrap things up now. This has been a good conversation, but one parting thought, we have three planning commission members that are needed. If you have any ideas, send them our way.

Brian – Where are these members needed? What are the districts that they are needed in?

Chad – One of each, I think.

Alan – Well, Swannack's and Largent's for sure and yeah I think Chad is right, I think it's going to be all three.

Dave – You said that Guy was in Handy's district.

Alan – Yes, right. So all three.

Brian – Guy was in the same area that I am in, so Tom's area?

Alan – Yeah, it used to be Kinzer's district, now Handy's. One for each.

Keith – I know Guy left, who else left?

Alan – Okay, yeah you came in late there Keith. So, Guy handed in his resignation and also Bob Hill, he is having health issues and I just heard today that Gary Moore is resigning as well.

Keith – So, that makes four, correct?

Alan – No, three, Guy, Bob and Gary.

Dave – Because Erina filled Matt Sutherlands position.

Alan – So, we only need three. But we also need somebody on the Board of Adjustment, there is an opening on the Board of Adjustment. I'm hoping that none of you want to jump ship and go to the Board of Adjustment.

Dave – I don't know about that stuff.

Hailey Wexler – I don't even know what the Board of Adjustment is.

Brian – Let's tell Hailey what the Board of Adjustment is, Alan.

Alan – It is the Board that adjusts things.

Hailey – Alright.

Alan – The Board of Adjustment does conditional use and variance applications. It's a quasi-judicial body. They are a little bit more serious. Excuse me, not more serious than you guys and gals.

Dave – When we do zone changes, we are a quasi-judicial body.

Alan – Yes, right.

Dave – But the Board of Adjustment is, if somebody wants to build 3 feet inside the buffer closer to the land or the road is going to go this way, when it's allowable but it requires a conditional use or variance, that sort of thing. And it is more complicated or controversial than what we let Alan do on his own.

Brain – So, all variances go through the Board of Adjustment? And conditional use permits?

Alan – Yes.

Dave – Here in Pullman there is a move afoot to move the Board of Adjustment to a Hearing Examiner.

Alan – Yeah.

Dave – So far we will be keeping the Planning Commission for zoning and some of those quasi-judicial actions. But, the Board of Adjustment is likely to go to a Hearings Examiner soon.

Alan – We have toyed with that idea too, for more controversial projects, such as the Wind Farm and then the PNW site out at Dusty. The applicants hired a Hearings

Examiner, because we knew we were going to get a lot of grief on both of those projects. A Hearings Examiner is basically an attorney who is well versed in zoning issues and GMA and it's very thoroughly done, versus the five volunteers that we have on our Board of Adjustment that don't really have any specific knowledge of the law or the Growth Management Act. So, we have thought of that idea, but it costs money and that is why we haven't done it, permanently.

Brian – It just takes the target off of everybody's back and puts it on one person.

Alan – Right.

Dave – But it does make a greater yield and a smaller target for legal challenges.

Alan – Okay, that is all I have guys and gals. We will meet again next month.

Motion by Keith Paulson and seconded by Erina Hammer to adjourn.

8:15p.m. – Motion carried