

COMMISSIONERS' PROCEEDINGS

Regular Meeting
Adams County Courthouse
Ritzville, Washington

February 10, 2021
(Wednesday)

The meeting was held virtually via GoToMeeting.

Call to Order @ 9:00 a.m.

Present:

Chairman Dan C. Blankenship
Vice-Chairman Terrance J. Thompson
Commissioner Jay R. Weise

[9:00:14 AM](#)

Integrated Health Care Services

Chairman Blankenship convened the joint meeting of the Adams County Commissioners, in their capacity as Board of Health, and Adams County Health Officer Dr. Alexander Brzezny.

Dr. Brzezny reviewed the following:

- Adams County COVID-19 incidence rates – currently a decline in cases of approximately 30-35% every week; hospitalizations are also decreasing.
- Phases by regions and key metrics to achieve in order to move forward.
- COVID variants are expanding in the U.S. – B117 variant in the United Kingdom; B1351 variant (South Africa); and, a Brazilian variant
- Where we are one year later – new variants are developing; the attack rate has increased; virulence seems to be slightly higher than initially; vaccine access is poor; and, the COVID virus will spread any place given the opportunity. On the positive side – the number of deaths are being reduced through mitigation measures; more treatments are being developed; the vaccines are very effective; and, the ability to live with a virus and contend with the capacity to inundate healthcare is being achieved.
- Moving forward the virus will become persistently present with manageable, lasting modifications to personal and societal

behavior being necessary (masking, good ventilation, testing, and new treatments).

- Opioid overdoses – opioid overdoses and opioid presentations have increased approximately 20% over the last year.
- Future challenges to ACHD and Board of Health – community and staff fatigue; insufficient vaccine and uneven vaccine distribution; arrival of temporary workers and agricultural activities; vaccine hesitancy; keeping schools safe; variants; and, structural changes to public health funding.

Karen Potts, RN, provided an update on vaccine distribution in the county.

[10:13:25 AM](#)

[10:15:49 AM](#)

Columbia Basin Development League

Sara Higgins, Columbia Basin Development League Deputy Director; provided an update on the progress of the Columbia Basin Project to include the following:

- The background and history of the Project.
- Irrigation demographics in Grant, Adams, Franklin, Lincoln, and Douglas counties.
- Employment benefits of irrigated agriculture.
- Property tax value of irrigated acreage vs. dry land acreage.
- The importance of conserving the Odessa aquifer for domestic water supplies, municipal and industrial uses in rural communities.

Mike Schwisow, Director of Government Relations, representing CBDL, reviewed the process of the Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program (OGWRP) noting the focus of changing the irrigation source from failing wells on a depleting aquifer to ample surface water supplied by the Columbia Basin Project. Schwisow reviewed completed projects, current projects and future projects. Additional projects include the replacement of eight (8) county road bridges in Adams County and two (2) county road bridges in Grant County. Additionally, Schwisow reviewed past funding sources as well as future funding opportunities.

Additionally reviewed were steps to fully develop 1,029,000 acres in the Columbia Basin Project in phases over multiple decades. The first step is complete with the Columbia Basin Project authorized by Congress in 1945. No further Congressional authorization is required.

Ms. Higgins noted there has been great support at the state level. Moving forward, a goal of the League is to accelerate their ability to advocate and

engage the Federal Government, Bureau of Reclamation, Congress and Appropriations, to leverage the potential of a water infrastructure package to fund programs that will assist with bridges. The league has undertaken a campaign to generate an additional \$125,000 over the next five years, above the operating budget, to increase their advocacy efforts at the federal level.

[11:26:54 AM](#)

Recess @ 11:45 a.m.

Reconvene @ 1:00 p.m.

[1:30:48 PM](#)

Code Enforcement

The Board held a workshop to discuss Code Enforcement in Adams County.

County staff present were Loren Wiltse; Andie Lorenz; Prosecutor Flyckt; Scott Yaeger; Timm Taff (remotely); Sheriff Wagner (remotely); Francisco Flores (remotely); and, Todd O'Brien. Planning Commission Chairman Bob Carlson appeared remotely.

Wiltse reviewed current codes that he feels fail to establish legislative authority to allow him the ability to create a report or pass the report on to the prosecutor's office, noting he doesn't feel he has the authority to declare a code violation.

Sheriff Wagner noted that Building and Planning Director Wiltse does not have the authority to charge. However, he does have the authority to report a violation of code to the prosecutor.

Commissioner Weise noted the subject matter expert should be the one to make the determination of a violation and, if he does not currently have that authority, it should be forthcoming. Prosecutor Flyckt noted that, as the designated building official, he has the authority to determine a violation. Assistant Building and Planning Director Lorenz noted there is no charging language in the Code for how a violation is determined and handled.

Commissioner Weise noted a change to the code may be necessary to authorize the Building and Planning Department to investigate code violations of permits issued by that department. Wiltse noted most complaints are land use violations.

The Planning Commission has been working on a process of handling violations designed to encourage self-cleanup. Currently, the plan is to start with a warning to achieve compliance. The steps graduate if there is non-compliance with the process beginning as a civil matter, moving to a criminal offense if compliance is not received. Planning Commission Chairman Carlson noted he would like to see, in writing, who has the authority to act on compliance matters.

[2:35:02 PM](#)

Rezone Application – Pintail Properties, LLC

The Board set Monday, March 1, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. in Room 202 of the Adams County Courthouse, Ritzville, as the public hearing date to consider and receive comments on the proposed Ordinance Amending or Replacing Exhibit “B” of Ordinance No. O-01-05, Zoning Map; and, Adopting a New Exhibit “B” Zoning Map for Ordinance No. O-01-05 to Reflect the Zone Change from Rural Residential (RR) to Residential (R-1) for Adams County Parcel No. 2529090210002; and Amending the Adams County Code Exhibit B (Zoning Map) Accordingly.

Adjournment @ 2:53 p.m.

Submitted:
s/Patricia J. Phillips, CMC
Clerk of the Board

Edited and Approved:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ADAMS COUNTY, WASHINGTON
s/Dan C. Blankenship, Chairman
s/Terrance J. Thompson, Vice-Chairman
s/Jay R. Weise, Commissioner