

**WHITMAN COUNTY  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
Virtual meeting by Zoom  
July 7, 2021**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

**Chad Whetzel, chairman  
Dave Gibney  
Russel Jamison  
Weston Kane  
Fred Wexler**

**Brian Davies, Vice-chair  
Keith Paulson  
Erina Hammer  
Matt Webb**

**Staff:** Alan Thomson, WC Planning Director; Grace Di Biase, WC Assistant Planner; Mark Storey, WC Director/Engineer; Brandon Johnson, Public Works; Elinor Huber, Clerk.

**Public:** Ken Duft, Shelley Chambers

**7:07 p.m.** – Alan Thomson – Tonight we are having a discussion over the draft comprehensive plan. My thinking is that it is in the Planning Commission’s hands now. We have had three open houses with the consultants and we don’t plan on having any more open houses at this moment. You need to go over the draft plan. So over the next 2-3 months my thought is to have the Planning Commission discuss this, look it over.

Dave Gibney tells me that Pullman goes over their plan line by line and that sounds like a good idea for all of to put our heads together and read this and make sure it makes sense and answer any questions that you may have. How does that sound to everybody?

Brian Davies – I like it.

Chad Whetzel – Sounds good to me.

Alan Thomson – The next question is when can we meet again? We have a lot of stuff to go through and it will take several meetings. August is typically time off from meetings because of harvest. One of my questions is how available is everybody and when can we meet again. What does everybody’s schedule look like for August? The farmers are probably not going to be available.

Matt Webb – I won’t be able to make it the later part of August.

Alan Thomson – The typical time frame is the first and third Wednesdays of every month. That is when the Planning Commission usually meets. How does the third Wednesday in July look to everybody? Anybody not able to meet?

Dave Gibney – I can’t. We are doing another meeting in Pullman.

Keith Paulson – I will probably be harvesting, so I’m not sure I can. I’ll let you know.

Rusty Jamison – I may not be harvesting, but we did plan a vacation. I guess if you absolutely needed me I could use the computer and zoom in from vacation. What is the date? I'll be gone until the 26<sup>th</sup>.

Alan Thomson - July 21<sup>st</sup>. It is not absolutely necessary that we have everybody but I just want to have a continuity of going through this and checking it out, stage by stage. If we could get at least five people then we would have a quorum then we can continue on.

Erina Hammer – I will probably on the 21<sup>st</sup>. If it is a zoom meeting.

Fred Wexler – Hit or miss.

Alan Thomson – My next thought is the BOCC have given us the okay to have in-person meetings now. So potentially the third week of this month could be a hybrid. We want to get it set up for zoom as well. So it will be both in-person and zoom which may be able to accommodate some folks who can't get to Colfax. Am I right in saying this, Mark?

Mark Storey – That is correct. I confirmed it with the BOCC yesterday that we can start meeting in person. I think we will continue with the zoom presence throughout this process.

Alan Thomson – Can we get a TV set up in the auditorium, Mark?

Mark Storey – At the worst case, I can take the TV down from my office and set it up. It has a camera on it too.

Alan Thomson – How does everybody feel about an in-person/zoom meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup>?

Rusty Jamison – I'd rather go the in-person meeting myself even though it is a drive.

Erina Hammer – For me personally, I'm not able to get home until maybe 5 or 6 so I wouldn't even be able to drive home. So for me the zoom meeting makes it so I can actually participate. So the hybrid works for me.

Mark Storey – Our goal is to make sure, and one of the goals of the BOCC and for public works as well, is to start having zoom option for most of our meetings if not all of them. Our technology is hopefully catching up with us this week. We've got a lot of things back online in the auditorium but I think we will be ready to do hybrid.

Alan Thomson – I'm curious which commissioners would want to be in person. Rusty said he would and Erina said she would be present with zoom.

Keith Paulson – I'd go either way. I like the zoom. It saves me some time.

Matt Webb - It doesn't matter to me. Either way.

Mark Storey – I would suggest we just start with the hybrid with some in person and some in zoom and see how it goes.

Alan Thomson – Chad, how do you feel about in person?

Chad Whetzel – I prefer in person when possible. I think that hybrid is a great idea because people's lives change and sometimes can't get there. I'm thinking back when some were on the phone and that was several times. It got us through but it was kind of a mess. Zoom seems to be a better feature. I am all for the hybrid. It is a great idea.

Alan Thomson – Sounds good.

Dave Gibney – After the 11<sup>th</sup> I should be done with the Pullman plan.

Mark Storey – Also keep in mind when we have in person meetings that the public might come and sit in person. I would love to see more participation in this process.

Alan Thomson – Doesn't look like we have many public, maybe a couple of people tonight. So, Shelly and Ken put the word out.

The basic idea I have is to start on Page 1 and move on from there. I don't know how much people have looked at this draft but a couple of comments on it. We are always looking for the spelling or grammatical errors but the context also is important. Mark, Grace and I have had the back and forth with the consultant over the last few weeks along with the BOCC and we've got some changes that we've presented to the consultants.

Right now, my thought is that now the planning commission can delve into this and see what you think about it and ask your questions and then if you see anything that needs to be talked about, changed, that is the process we should go through.

Mark Storey – I suggest that we do Chapter 1 last. Actually, start on Chapter 2 and go through and see what we like and what we don't like and then do the introduction last rather than first. Then we will know what the introduction should look like better.

Alan Thomson – How do you feel about that?

Erina Hammer – Agreed.

Rusty Jamison - That's fine with me.

Chad Whetzel – Where do you want to start?

Alan Thomson – Brandon is scrolling through right now. We will get to Chapter 2. So, now we will get into Land Use, Natural Resources and Agricultural Conservation element. I don't want to read everything into the record here. I don't think that is necessary. We can have a chance to look at this and scan it and if you have comments or questions, let's just do it that way.

You know there are several elements involved in the comp plan. They are not in any particular order of merit or numerical order. They are all important. That is one of the purposes that we want to get over.

They are all equally important. This is one of the most important ones because it lays out how we develop the County as far as land use and the agricultural conservation element.

Is everybody comfortable with the difference between natural resource and critical area? Critical areas are different. There are five of them. Natural resource protection is basically agriculture, mining and forestry. We don't have much in the way of forestry but the main purpose of natural resource is farming ag land and natural resource rock, crushing.

Those are the things that we are obligated to so as far as the Growth Management Act is concerned because we are just a partially planning county. Critical areas and natural resources areas are what we are obligated to protect.

Rusty Jamison – One of the things I know is in the second line of the second paragraph the fact that the towns have grown slowly, maybe that was true in 1978, but since then the population of the rural towns has steadily increased and that reflects on our schools and everything else but in the WC population might be more but really the population has moved from the small rural towns to Pullman. I don't know how factual and real you want this to be. It probably doesn't make that much difference. All I'm saying is that is not really true anymore.

Alan Thomson – I'm looking at the Office of Financial Management population data. They put out the population in estimates and numbers for all the towns in WC. My general impression over the years is that the smaller towns have not grown that much. Other than Albion and that population has basically being flat since I moved here in 2002, it alters a little bit. I'm not sure that that statement is correct, Rusty. I think that most of the smaller towns, the population hasn't fluctuated that much but it is a different matter with Pullman, and maybe Colfax.

Chad Whetzel – Right after that section where we're talking about the population up until 1978, maintain the rural agriculture charm, down towards the end of that sentence, it says, *"...as well as maintaining prime agricultural land and opportunities for rural and cluster residential uses in rural activity centers and near urban areas."*

My only question is we have specifically defined the cluster residential areas in a specific manner. Is there some term we can use more generically in case that either that goes away or we change that to some other term or somebody comes up with a better idea?

Alan Thomson – So is it the word, "cluster" or who, I didn't hear what he said.

Chad Whetzel – Cluster.

Alan Thomson – This is a snapshot of what we are dealing with right now. Clusters are not going to go away in the immediate future. We don't know about the distant future, but for right now, they are still viable and there is still an area, and that will be part of a conversation too, regarding the development regulations. Do we want to expand the cluster area?

Dave Gibney – Isn't it actually true that you may want to allow more rural residential period, not limited to cluster?

Alan Thomson – Yes, that is a part of the thought right now.

Dave Gibney – Chad’s thing there of why don’t you just say, “rural residential uses,” and strike the “and” in cluster and moving a little further on do you we really want limited business development to the Pullman-Moscow Corridor?

Alan Thomson – That is our main development corridor. That was why we created the Pullman-Moscow Corridor in the first place.

Dave Gibney – You’ve got a warehouse going out there between Pullman and Palouse.

Alan Thomson – Yes. That sentence also, Dave, *“This plan also increases opportunities for business development in rural areas along the Pullman-Moscow Corridor.”* That is not an exclusive, that’s not the only place that can happen. That is just pointing to the Pullman-Moscow Corridor. That is a true statement.

Dave Gibney –Yes, but don’t you want this plan to increase opportunities for business development in WC?

Alan Thomson – Yes. The good question right now, is where? Because of water and also trying to change zones from the agricultural district to an industrial or light industrial, heavy industrial, heavy commercial has proven to be extremely difficult if you get outside of the Pullman area. Practically speaking, businesses want to be close to the center of activity which is Pullman.

Dave Gibney – I’m not going to argue with you, I’m just going to say again you are wanting to limit the opportunity.

Alan Thomson – Where in there does it say that it is limited to just the Pullman-Moscow Corridor?

Dave Gibney - The implication by naming the corridor is limited. You’re right, it doesn’t explicitly say only in the Pullman – Moscow Corridor.

Alan Thomson – Well it also says, *“...Rural activity centers and near urban areas.”* I don’t think that personally limits any other opportunities elsewhere. We are still going to, if people want start a business somewhere, we still have a process to go through there to get that.

Dave Gibney – You’re right.

Alan Thomson – It is a good thought and I think we need to maybe think about that one a little bit more. I would like to see some, I don’t know if the language is in here right now, but it makes it less of a chore for people to change a zone outside of the Pullman area. I think there should be language in here that allows for that. We’ve run into a lot of difficulty in the past.

Mark Storey – I kind of get what Dave is saying in that sentence. *“The plan also increases opportunities for business development in rural areas along the Pullman-Moscow Corridor.”* Why can’t we just say, *“...in rural areas **and** along the Pullman –Moscow Corridor.”* So that would be very clear that we are not limiting an opportunity.

Chad Whetzel – That makes it sound like it is not so exclusive to Pullman and Moscow.

Alan Thomson – Okay,

Weston Kane – Should it say, “And the Pullman-Moscow Corridor.” Or should it say, “Including the Pullman-Moscow Corridor.”

Mark Storey – The difference is that we don’t want concentrated business development out in the ag area but we do want concentrated business in the Pullman-Moscow Corridor. You could say something about the concentration of business in the Pullman-Moscow Corridor and dispersed around sporadically around the rural parts of the County as well.

Alan Thomson – Hey, Grace. Could you flag this for me? Maybe we could come up with some language in here. Thanks.

Grace Di Biase – Yes, you got it.

Alan Thomson – Okay, we can amend that Dave. Brandon, can you move up a little bit on your screen? Thank you. Okay, down to Findings. Is the County 25 square miles correct?

Mark Storey – The total county is around 2200 square miles. So Ag land is what they are specifically calling for is probably close, 500-600 square miles that are not active Ag land. We call it scab land. The breaks of the Snake are not Ag land either. If grazing is part of it that might increase that number. We could confirm that with NRCS or somebody.

Dave Gibney – For whatever it is worth, Pullman’s population dropped a little this past year.

Alan Thomson – I got a call from OFM, Office of Financial Management a couple of weeks ago and I just got the new numbers here. He forewarned me that the population is going to drop, specifically in Pullman, and it did. That is because of Covid, because the kids weren’t here. That is going to be a blip. I don’t think that, do we need to go with the latest figures or should we just ignore it? Because Pullman’s population on the latest is 29,799.

Brian Davies – Uniontown’s population is not 355. Unless that is counting every child and dog in town. We only have about 260.

Alan Thomson – The 2020 census, Brian, was 294.

Brian Davies – That is a lot closer than 355.

Alan Thomson – The estimate for 2021 is 360. That is according to OFM.

Brian Davies – That seems inflated to me.

Alan Thomson – These are the kind of numbers we have to go by, unless you can show us it is incorrect.

Dave Gibney – You should probably use the latest official ones you can get at the time.

Brian Davies – That is how we try and get funding so we have to go with the numbers that are published.

Alan Thomson – The estimate for Pullman in 2021 is 32,450. I don't know that we are going to get any new numbers between now and the end of the year.

Dave Gibney – You're going to get official census numbers before the end of the year.

Alan Thomson – We should go with that. The official number for the estimate for 2021 is 32,450.

Chad Whetzel – On this it has it listed at 34,850. I agree with Dave. We will just use whatever the census says and it will have to be good enough.

Alan Thomson – Okay, Brandon, can you scroll down? We are relying on the consultant to come up with these numbers and hopefully they are correct. Unless someone else has a comment about it.

Chad Whetzel – We will have another census again and we might verify with that.

Alan Thomson – So, Grace, put a note on this part to talk to the consultant about the census and see if those numbers change.

Grace Di Biase – Dave, when did you say that you believed that would be coming out? You said sometime this fall?

Mark Storey – September, I believe, we will get the official notice.

Grace Di Biase – Okay, thank you.

Keith Paulson – I heard that the population of Malden had dropped by half down to about 125.

Mark Storey – I believe there are preliminary numbers out there but the official numbers I don't think have been released yet. But I think you are correct.

Alan Thomson – The number on this for Malden for the estimate of 2021 is 430 people.

Mark Storey – No way.

Alan Thomson – I mean, 125. I got the wrong line. So that was a drop from last year's estimate of 200. Who knows what it is now.

Mark Storey – I think you are working with the estimated current numbers.

Alan Thomson – Okay, Agricultural Land. This seems very generic and known details here about soils and how things got the way we are. Channeled scablands.

Chad Whetzel – Maybe I’m reading this wrong but it says, “*Very deep to moderately deep loess and colluvium sediment soils are found on buttes at higher elevations. These soils are usually used for dryland farming,...*” That second sentence usually refers to the first sentence only we don’t farm the buttes typically. So, that just seems a little weird the way they worded that.

Alan Thomson – Mark, as a geologist does that sound odd to you?

Mark Storey -It does. There is something wrong with that sentence. Previously I did a lot of soil engineering work and that is sort of backwards.

Chad Whetzel – The second sentence makes it sound like we are farming the buttes and we are not. It just needs to be changed so that way it reads correctly.

Mark Storey – I’ll go through the geological parts of this, because I have one degree in geology related sciences.

Chad Whetzel – I have about 15 seconds of knowledge on geology. It expired.

Mark Storey – I’ll go through this Alan, and get you some things that make it more sensible.

Alan Thomson – Okay, Brandon, scroll down a little bit. Okay, Designation of Agricultural Land. This is something that was missing in our current comp plan but the Growth Management Act did not come into being until 1990 so, in 1978 this wasn’t on the radar.

This is something new that needs to be in this update. We are required to designate Ag land. In talking with the consultant some counties have different gradations of Ag land depending on the soil type. We talked about that with LDC and whether or not we wanted to do that. My thought was no, we have one district that basically is most of the County and that is the Agricultural District and we don’t differentiate soil types. It is all Ag land. I think that would be the better way to keep it. Unless someone has an idea about that.

Mark Storey – It goes back to a previous comment. Does range land figure Ag land for our purposes?

Alan Thomson – It does.

Mark Storey – But it is almost the entire county.

Alan Thomson – So by code definitions, Ag lands includes scablands, range lands, grazing lands, all along the Snake, as well. That is considered the Agricultural District. That is why I think it would be good to keep it as one. All Ag land is designated, basically.

Mark Storey – I think we should say somewhere in here that just for clarity that Ag land does include grazing land.

Chad Whetzel – I don’t know if this is the British spelling of land but at the top where it says, “Prime Agricultural” I don’t think land should have an “e” in it.

Alan Thomson – That is noted.

Dave Gibney – That “e” was crossed out from the Agriculture that was there before. You can’t see it crossed out.

Chad Whetzel – Okay, I see that.

Alan Thomson – For the record, we don’t spell “agricultural” with an “e” in Britain.

Dave Gibney – Isn’t the difference between range and pasture land, and it isn’t land that you grow something else on, but still use for Ag?

Alan Thomson – I think it is primarily about soil types. There you have a different differentiation about soil types and some areas are really good and others are slightly less. In other counties they have a scale of 1, 2, 3, 4 or whatever.

Dave Gibney – I came back past Rock Lake the other day and I saw somebody irrigating wheat.

Matt Webb – He was way too late for that wheat.

Alan Thomson - I hope he has a water right.

Matt Webb – He does, between Ewan and Rock Lake.

Keith Paulson – He has to water because it is clover. It is very poor soil and you have to have water on it to grow anything there.

Dave Gibney – Alan said there were some counties that designate by soil types and I’m not sure that’s right but maybe we should as Mark was saying designate this is prime Ag growing land, and this is range land.

Erina Hammer – If I understand what Mark was saying it was all Ag land and that included range land. Is that right?

Mark Storey – Yes. That is what I was suggesting.

Erina Hammer – I would agree with that.

Matt Webb – I think one of the things is range land is scab rocks that you turn your cows out on, but the prime stuff is you get hay off of it and then you’re going to turn your cows out on it.

Mark Storey – The question in my mind is when you are talking about land use regulation, do we want them treated any differently? I would say no, but you guys might decide otherwise.

Alan Thomson – There is the issue, Mark. For purposes of the State, the Department of Commerce is the one that wants us to designate this land and I had this conversation with them. Right now, when we updated our Critical Areas Ordinance they insisted that the County include some sort of language that

includes prime farmland. Which we did. Which is current right now. I did not differentiate any type of farmland, scab land, crop land. It was all the Ag district. Because it is all one district and Mark was hinting there, as far as zoning is concerned it is one district.

Dave Gibney – Can I ask a different version of that question? If somebody wants to build a warehouse or a house, would you rather they did it on some cattle grazing scab land or a prime canola field?

Alan Thomson – It is up to the landowner to decide whether they want to give up land or not.

Rusty Jamison – I myself would rather see construction built on land that is not real valuable. On the flip side of that it is like what we had happen down at Dusty. The new landowner bought the land and paid a high price for it, PNW did. The current manager got fired or laid off because of some of those mistakes. It wasn't our personal feelings to tell the new landowner what he can and can't do with his land. Consequently, I would admit there is a facility down there that probably is an eyesore to the people in Dusty but the new landowners are the ones who put it there and pay the taxes and it is their problem.

Chad Whetzel – If we start trying to grade Ag land, Mark is going to have to get zoned on the geology to determine which ones are what. If you ask any farmer, of course they got the best ground in the County. But some of it is better than others. That could take years to determine really a formula for what's what.

Mark Story – I do not want another duty to determine whose farm ground is best. That is a nightmare that we don't want to get into.

Brian Davies – Mark, do we have herd districts, open range in WC?

Mark Storey – We do have a small amount of open range land down off Rock Springs Road. It is the last remaining open range we have. I would rather it went away completely, to be honest.

Brian Davies – We are not like Latah County that has multiple herd districts and all that grazing and all that stuff for resource lands.

Rusty Jamison – Alan, when this is all complete, who exactly is going to be reading this kind of report. Is this going to be used in Olympia by legislators? Or really what, we can really get into major details on this thing but I am wondering who is ever going to use it, other than it is just on file?

Dave Gibney – Before Alan answers, I'd like to say this body is going to use it because any land use changes come before us need to be consistent with it.

Alan Thomson – Rusty, Dave is right. So, we the County have to use this. The development regulations have to be consistent with what we write in this plan. Otherwise, we are liable to be challenged and this is important for us and I doubt that anybody else outside of WC is going to care about it. Nobody in Olympia is going to care about it other than we have to have it done. It is for our use. The County's use.

Rusty Jamison – Okay, for our use do you feel more comfortable with it being very detailed or do you feel more comfortable with some of these descriptions being very vague.

Alan Thomson – I am definitely in favor of having a big picture detail. Not finite detail. That is not the purpose of the Comp Plan. That is the purpose of the development regulations, to get into the detail. So, as long as we have designated Ag land that is protected, then that checks the box for the State. The Department of Commerce wants us to do that, and we have to address it. I think we have without getting into soil details. What areas of WC is better crop land than other parts of the County? I don't think it is necessary to do that.

Rusty Jamison – That helps me understand.

Keith Paulson – I agree because I have some farmland and it is designated Ag. I have pasture land and it is also designated as Ag because cattle are Ag. So I feel like you can lump a lot of that together. The ground I have is very poor but it is still Ag ground.

Chad Whetzel – We also need to remember, and Rusty, I appreciate your asking Alan's opinion, but this thing has a possibility of outlasting Alan and we have to think about who may come along next and want to interpret it differently or have a different idea. You just never know. I think that in general we need to go with the guidelines of this is the general direction of where we would like to be. It's not a 100% but this is kind of our wish list.

Alan Thomson – Keep in mind, too, the consultants, they have looked at and done many comprehensive plans so this is consistent with many other comprehensive plans. This type of language. So, we don't need to get too detailed, Rusty, we just need to cover the highpoints. Brandon, can you scroll down?

Okay, Residential Land. Thank you.

Dave Gibney – Do you want to continue the limitations in the current and the idea of cluster where it basically says that you are only going to your residences in clusters. Or do you just want to relax where it is more okay to build a house somewhere in the County?

Alan Thomson – I'd say both. So, cluster has to be included in the comp plan. We have to have that mentioned in order to do clustering. That is why it is in the current comp plan. So, we need to keep that in there but it is not the only place you can build a house but it specifically is the only place that you can build this type of development and 20 acres or more on one parcel. You can't do that anywhere else in the County.

Chad Whetzel – I agree with Alan. This is an overview of where we are at this moment. Right? Am I interpreting that correct?

Alan Thomson – Yes.

Chad Whetzel – One thing that I'm not sure that we want to include, is if this is an overview of where we are right now, it is technically correct where it says that "*....some clustered residential lots in the outskirts of Pullman.*" But if we are looking at possibly expanding that, do we mention the outskirts of Pullman or not. I don't know.

Alan Thomson – We haven't gone there with that conversation yet to do clusters elsewhere. That hasn't been determined.

Matt Webb – Is it limiting like we said on the Pullman-Moscow Corridor, we changed that to not limit it to that by saying near Pullman. Some people might think that is the only place that can happen.

Alan Thomson – It is the only place it can happen right now. That is the actual definition of clustering is within one half mile of city limits of Pullman.

Chad Whetzel – That is what I am trying to figure out. Is this an actual overview of what is going on at this moment or is this more generalized?

Alan Thomson – It is for right now, but land zoned for residential development in accordance with the WC code. So the WC code could change. But we mentioned clustering here in the comp plan so that means we can cluster.

But it doesn't need to be in here where exactly that is going to be. So it references in accordance with the WC code. The WC code only allows it within a half mile of the Pullman City limits, at the moment. But we can change that.

Chad Whetzel – That is what I am saying. *"...some clustered residential lots in the outskirts of Pullman."* Is that a snapshot of what is going on now?

Alan Thomson – Yes that is what is going on now.

Chad Whetzel – Okay, that is technically correct and we don't need to change that.

Alan Thomson – Okay, I think so.

Dave Gibney – I was looking more towards the bottom of the screen.

Alan Thomson – That is a fact there. Are you talking about, *"Approximately 384 acres of land within the tax sharing area....with 141 acres outside the tax sharing area."* That is actually correct.

Dave Gibney – That last bit that is highlighted and still black doesn't actually say, doesn't come to any conclusions.

Alan Thomson – I think it is highlighted for a reason. I don't remember exactly why right now. Maybe it changed. That just is a comment. *"Cluster residential development was the subject of public engagement discussion during the comprehensive planning process."* I don't know if it needs to be in there or not, I don't know. I'll have to talk to the consultant about that one. Grace, please flag that one for me?

Grace Di Biase – Yes.

Mark Storey – Just for my understanding in going through the cluster development language, it was developed as an opportunity area around Pullman, specifically for a reason. But there was a lot of

discussion about whether to expand it. We still have a lot of that discussion with the BOCC on occasion about whether to add more area around Pullman by changing this definition and allowing it to extend it out further. That is an on-going discussion. Alan has crafted this the way we have it now. Is this the way we want it described for the future or do you want to leave it as it is now. I know the BOCC have discussed this and the planning commission 5-6 years ago. Perhaps and is it something the PC thinks we should change while we are right now. That might be a question to think about.

Alan Thomson – I think that was part of the purpose of this update too, was to bring that question to the foreground and ask that question and debate it. Do we want to promote clustering elsewhere?

Dave Gibney – Isn't it still true that very little actual cluster development has occurred? That buildings have actually been built?

Mark Storey – Yes, there is something like 50-60 cluster houses out there.

Dave Gibney – There wasn't that when we were finishing up the grandfathering. There had been a lot of undeveloped potential cluster.

Alan Thomson – Initially when we did this on Kitzmiller Road, I believe that all of those parcels have been developed in the original clustering on Kitzmiller and also on Sunshine Road. The latest ones, I think you are right. There are some that we created just before the hammer fell that have not been developed. So, the growth has dried up a little bit there.

Mark Storey - There are probably twenty or twenty-five lots that have not been built on, that I am aware of.

Chad Whetzel – Hasn't almost every one of those clusters have at least one house on them at this point?

Alan Thomson – It can only have one house on them.

Chad Whetzel – I know, you have 4 or 5 houses for 20 acres? On each of those cluster developments isn't there at least one house built on one of plots.

Alan Thomson – Are you talking about Sunshine Road?

Chad Whetzel – On any of the development ones.

Alan Thomson – The newly created ones recently?

Fred Wexler – There are a lot of roads put in. There is one well set up, with no road or a house.

Alan Thomson – I don't know the exact answer to that question but I believe that Mark may be right. There are some that are not developed at all.

Mark Storey – Fred, you are correct. There are several that did the bare minimum to get them created and haven't done anything with them.

Fred Wexler – I do think a lot of that is due to, Kitzmiller sold quick and Sunshine was getting sold, I do believe that Orville Boyd, the location and lack of access makes that one tough. We saw expansion and allowed for more cluster. I think we would see more development and more people interested in the lots.

Erina Hammer – Just thinking outside of Pullman, not that I don't like Pullman because I do. There is a significant housing crises in Spokane and Coeur d'Alene and Kalispell, etc. The young people just trying to start a family cannot buy a house to save their life.

So, thinking about this comp plan if it goes 20 or 30 years, will little towns be thinking about trying to expand their housing potential also? Kind of in the way that Pullman has been expanding their housing potential and how would that also be worded?

Rusty Jamison – I can say this for Garfield. They had a farmer who is gone now, but he did try and help the Town of Garfield by allowing the town to acquisition part of his prime farmland and he was working with the town and trying to develop it.

It so happened that the housing collapsed and was still occurring at that time so people were not willing to move to the small towns because they didn't have the conveniences that you have in Pullman or even in Colfax.

But now with the issues that they have had in a lot of these major cities, for example Portland, kind of like a big bombshell down there. A lot of parts of California, obviously they are moving by the thousands into Idaho. But the point being is that the small towns around Washington, people I think would move there if there were more conveniences and more investors. I'm talking million dollar investors.

One of the main things in Garfield that they are trying to get involved is to get a better internet service and stuff. If you come up here you can see the trucks that are laying the fiber optic cable. But the thing is the town doesn't have the money to put in that kind of infrastructure to every resident.

So, consequently when you do get somebody that wants to work from home and build a new house, when you start looking at the cost for that person it is pretty cost prohibitive. So consequently the attraction for a bigger town like Pullman it looks like a better option. Plus as you guys were talking, right now it looks like you got some big developers putting big money into that town and they are not all from our area.

Brian Davies – The Port District is paying for fiber to homes in all those communities up there. That's all those communities, Garfield included are going to have fiber to home by the end of the summer. It's not going to be a dark fiber until somebody comes and puts the service in there but all those homes are getting it.

Rusty Jamison – All I can say right now, is when I talked to the mayor he hasn't said anything about that. I did know that one resident in our area, they are saying that they paid for the fiber optic to Farmington. But the fact is that the fiber optic went from his house into the connection to Garfield, because the line goes from Spokane through Garfield through Pullman and down to Lewiston that way. He paid for some of that. I know that, because I talked to the people who were putting it in.

Chad Whetzel – One of the things too, it's not just fiber, it is a ton of other programs out there that are actually coming just as fast. Faster than the fiber and the costs aren't that much more. I think we kind of got off in the weeds, but we want our towns to expand but on the other hand there isn't a lot we can do about that. We can't tell Pullman what to do, no more we can tell Uniontown how they are going to run their stuff. That is up to them to decide. We can help them and we should put stuff in there to help them, but that is up to them on how they develop.

Rusty Jamison – I was just answering the question about the little towns and giving examples some of the things that are in Garfield. When people decide where they want to live if they get a job, there aren't so many jobs in Garfield, or any of these other small towns. They have to decide if they want to drive to the main town of Pullman to live in the rural community. They have to decide if they want the kids to go to a small school and things like that.

We've talked about these things before and when you talk to young people today, and I know too my son and his wife that are going to come back and farm with me, well, when you talk to them and get their opinions that are important to them is quite a bit different than us on this committee that are older.

Because they are young and things like school, and convenience stores, and all these things that bigger town of Pullman has to offer is something that is appealing to them. As that changes, maybe these small towns the population will increase again and construction will boom. But right now I'm not seeing that happen. It is certainly not happening in Garfield like it is in Pullman, Spokane, or especially Coeur d' Alene.

Erina Hammer – I just want to clarify, the only thing I was trying to, and I am articulating it badly obviously, I'm so sorry, was just the language in the comp plan. I was trying to understand if the language in the comp plan allowed for even the smaller towns to have the opportunity to, for example if a farmer, I'm just thinking of Oakesdale. I know that there are farmers next to Oakesdale and they hay. If they wanted to sell that to build a house, that person could do that. Again, articulating very badly, but I am wondering is, is that language available in the comp plan if somebody wanted to do that 20-30 years down the road. That is what I am trying to understand.

Alan Thomson – Erina, are you talking about inside the town or outside of the town?

Erina Hammer – What I am looking at there the town, and just outside the town limits. There is going to be, I'm anticipating that there might be a demand for room in these smaller towns in 20-30 years. I'm just wondering if that demand would be supported with the language of the comp plan.

Alan Thomson – The short answer is yes. The development regulations is what we need to focus on for that. As far as the comp plan is concerned, you can build a house somewhere in the County. Development regulations tell you where you can build it. Talking about Pullman, Pullman annexes land and then develops it.

All the other towns can do the same thing but there is no demand at the moment. There is a demand around Pullman for sure. When we did the Cluster Residential District around Pullman, we asked a lot of people if they wanted to develop outside the City of Pullman and we got responses to say, yes, we don't

want to live in Pullman. We want a slice of land within a half a mile of Pullman out in the country and we don't want to be in Pullman.

So, that's the main reason why we developed the clustering around Pullman because they told us they would buy property outside of the City of Pullman. You have to think about that with all the other little towns. They are not making the same comments about that. There is no demand for Oakesdale or Garfield or anywhere like there is around Pullman. But we can still, that farmer that owns land outside of Garfield or Oakesdale or any other town can still approach the County to build a house on their land. That is how you can do that in the comp plan but the development regulations are what we really need to focus on. We are starting to focus on that a little bit instead of just having one house on a parcel of land and an accessory dwelling unit, can we have two main houses? We have had a conversation with the BOCC and they seem to be open to that. So we can change our development regulations. That will be something that comes hand in hand with what we are doing with the comp plan.

Mark Storey – When the cluster development regulations were developed, I believe there was contact with lots of the small towns to see if they were interested in having that around their towns. None of them were interested. Pullman wasn't really interested, either but the residents were.

Would it be out of sorts or out of character to say that cluster residential zoning or opportunity area could be established around any of the small towns if the town was desirous of that? That might achieve a couple of things. Then you could get 4 houses on 20 acres instead of one house on 20 or 40 acres, and not take up as much of the prime Ag land, and have an easier better development scenario on 20 acres for 4 houses and take up a lot of Ag land meeting all of our other requirements.

The question is, does the planning commission think that would be something that would be good to be put in to this cluster residential? That the opportunity area could be extended to other areas around other towns in the County, to take up that potential demand for housing in those areas in the future.

Matt Webb – If this happens a town is probably going to want to annex that in if the property is adjoining the town. So, that might work good for the town but are we limiting ourselves as the County of that revenue in the County and not annexed into the town.

Dave Gibney – In reality a cluster style development is not desirable to the town because it is big chunks and harder to do infrastructure.

Mark Storey – Once a town annexes they are compelled at some level to supply water and sewer services on 5-acre lots that is not economically feasible. Which is why Pullman didn't like it in the first place because it hadn't been their development.

Dave Gibney – Again, I guess do you want to continue, and I don't know the regulations, but if I wanted to put a house 7 miles outside of Lacrosse, I'd have to have a 20-acre parcel?

Alan Thomson – Okay, first of all, it would have to be identified as a cluster opportunity zone.

Dave Gibney – Why can't I just put a house?

Alan Thomson – You can put a house. You don't need 20 acres for a house.

Dave Gibney – Okay, so what is so special about clusters?

Alan Thomson – Because you a get 4 houses on 20 acres.

Dave Gibney – Why can't I put 4 houses on 3 acres outside of Lacrosse?

Brian Davies – You would have to short plat it.

Alan Thomson – The development regulations would not allow you to do that. That is the answer.

Dave Gibney – Again, to go all the way back to, don't we really want to make it easier for people to build house in the middle of nowhere?

Alan Thomson – Not up to this point, we haven't. That has been discouraged.

Dave Gibney – I know that. That is the question I am asking. What is the direction you really want to go as this plan goes on? You are right, the last 40 years I've lived in this County it has been greatly discouraged to build a house anywhere outside of incorporated areas.

Alan Thomson – Then you need to petition the BOCC to get rid of the viewshed.

Dave Gibney – I'm asking what is the direction this comp plan is supposed to be going in the next 20-40 years. It that is the status quo then that's fine, but if we want to make it easier for residents to happen then this emphasis on clustering is counter-productive. What Erina was talking about if instead of Garfield and Oakesdale you say Steptoe, or even Uniontown, unincorporated yet a residential chunk, then we do want to encourage economic development in the unincorporated pieces of the County.

Alan Thomson – We also want to protect Ag land.

Brian Davies – There is no demand for growth out in the unincorporated parts of the County. You aren't going to get a demand for growth unless you got water.

Dave Gibney – Well, then the County is going to continue to run out of money.

Rusty Jamison – I'd like to say as a farmer, I understand your point, Dave. For me as a farmer I really would not like to see the cluster development right next door to my farm with regards to dust regulations. I do understand what you are saying. In order for WC to attract a large investor that would come in and buy 100 acres and turn it into a development like what you are seeing in Idaho, whether those are 5-acre plots or 20-acre plots, the point being is that you are not going to attract big money unless the regulations were a little bit easier.

So, the question is, does WC want to go in that direction where we could attract outside dollars to come in and develop our land, or do the people in WC want to leave it the same as it is for the last 40 years. I'm torn on how I would feel.

I wish Garfield could attract a bunch of new homes and get some new people to live here that aren't on welfare. But when you look at the town and the structure of it, it really isn't going to happen because it is not attracting large businesses. Instead of attracting people that are making \$100,000 a year income and can build these new houses like in Pullman and Moscow.

Mark Storey – I think, Rusty, you get the crux of the issue.

Alan Thomson – I think the biggest deterrent for big developers coming in here is water and demand. You can't get around it.

Brian Davies – It's not going to happen out in the unincorporated parts of the County. We are a dryland farming county and I think that is the direction the comp plan should continue to go in, if you want to call it the status quo, I'm not a real proponent of status quo because change is good, but I don't see it happening because there is no water. Nobody is going to put in that kind of money on land that doesn't have water.

Mark Storey – I think we are talking about small changes, not big changes. I agree with Brian on that, to be honest.

Alan Thomson – There is potential for a big development in the unincorporated area of WC. That is along 270, the Druffel land right next door to Moscow. That is a definite possibility because they have a water right. A significant water right and they are talking now about developing more of that, with St. John Hardware going in there. Potentially, there are other businesses that want to go in there and that could be a major development, but who knows how long that would take. But there is the opportunity for growth for WC and tax revenue right there at that location. That is the only location in WC where this can happen.

I do believe that it is a good idea to put into this cluster residential blurb that we could have this elsewhere in the County if it is wanted. If one of the other towns wanted to have it there we could put it in the comp plan which doesn't put our feet to the fire, it just is a possibility that there is a demand elsewhere in the County outside Garfield, Oakesdale, wherever so maybe we should put some language in there

Brain Davies – As a municipal government person in Uniontown and property owner in Colton, I just have to say that I've seen the creation of subdivisions and the annexation of these properties into the town limits and that we still have a lot of room. We basically are only half way built out.

Uniontown in the last 10 years has had over 15 houses built, so per capita that has to be probably the largest growth situations in the State of Washington if you get that many houses in a town of under 300 people. But we still have room to grow. We are not going to, there is not going to be a desire to do cluster development in our area. We have a hard enough time just fixing the leaks in the water system, let alone thinking about trying to extend services anywhere else.

I think speaking of Colton, I know they are in the same boat. They have additional subdivision area to expand and I believe that we will continue being a bedroom community. It seems that people don't want businesses here because they want to do their shopping in Pullman. That is the trend I see. More bedroom community, less services. People won't support the services. They talk about how great it

would be to have a grocery store and a gas station but at the end of the day they are driving into Walmart.

Alan Thomson – How do you feel about adding a possibility of cluster residential? Thumbs up, thumbs down? Seems like Brian is thumbs down on that one.

Dave Gibney – I don't see why you shouldn't say it isn't possible. Just because it is not likely to happen doesn't say it can't.

Rusty Jamison – I would also say that if we do add the proposal for cluster to go somewhere other than Pullman or on the corridor, that maybe the planning Commission at that time would give them something to talk about and decide whether they want to have it or not.

Dave Gibney – It would be a pain to have to amend the comp plan as the first point of putting the cluster development near Oakesdale.

Alan Thomson – It's not going to harm it if we put it in here. If Oakesdale or Garfield don't want anything to do with it or Uniontown, Colton, it won't happen.

Brian Davies – You could put a paragraph in there like a disclaimer saying that these cluster developments could be extended into the County if the residents so choose.

Alan Thomson - If there is a desire or a demand for it. Are we done with this part? Shall we move on? Brandon, scroll down, please.

Okay, Rural Community Residential. These are the unincorporated communities. That is pretty brief and it mentions that we do have unincorporated communities in the County, which is all we really need. We don't need to go into any details about that.

Okay, any thoughts on Commercial and Industrial land?

Mark Storey – I think we should check the numbers. *"The county is home to twelve grain elevators."* I suspect we have more than twelve.

Alan Thomson – I think you are right. We have more than twelve.

Brian Davies – Other than that, I like it. I don't see anything jumping out at me.

Alan Thomson – Okay, Brandon, could you scroll down, please?

Chad Whetzel – I could drive for about 15 minutes and count twelve of them.

Mark Storey – That was what I was thinking.

Brian Davies – Did that mean twelve elevators or elevator companies that own those?

Chad Whetzel – There are a whole lot of private ones out there. If I walk out my front door, I can count two different sets of elevators.

Rusty Jamison – You need to distinguish between elevators or companies. Home storage.

Alan Thomson – We can do that.

Mark Storey – Unfortunately, we have non-Ag people writing the plan for us and so you are going to run into these kinds of things.

Brian Davies – We have a ton of home storage in this County. Maybe they were thinking of the elevators at WSU as you go up and down the buildings. There might be 12 of those.

Mark Storey – Does that mean the students are considered grain?

Brian Davies – What about hay elevators? I got one of them.

Mark Storey – There is an elevator in Hay?

#### Designation of Mineral Resource Lands

Erina Hammer – This may be a very picky thing, I don't know. It says here, *"The challenge is to protect known deposits...."* We are talking about minerals. I'm going to assume we don't know all of the mineral deposits in WC. Would we just say known or unknown deposits and then continue onward? I'm just going to assume we don't know all of the mineral deposits in the County.

Mark Storey – I think that is correct. We don't really know what all the mineral resources are. I would suggest that most of the County is a mineral resource when it comes to industrial minerals.

Chad Whetzel – One of the words they use is *"protect the known deposits...."* Do they mean to protect them from use of all, or protect them so we can use them?

Alan Thomson – It's the latter, so the reason this is in here is because we get challenged by adjacent landowners.

Chad Whetzel – I just defined protect in two different manners. Both of them are technically correct but one is only our intended use.

Alan Thomson – Erina, if you look at the second to last in the red areas, *"Other areas where a location can be demonstrated as having a significant commercial supply and meeting the review guidelines below shall be designated as potential future mineral resource lands of long-term commercial significance."*

So, it is not just the known, it talks about the unknown.

Erina Hammer – Okay.

Alan Thomson – This was something I think is important to be in here because some folks like to use the comp plan against us.

Chad Whetzel – As I read on I see what you are saying. I think that maybe some of this stuff in red really needs to go at the top because it actually defines what we mean by protect.

Alan Thomson – What part are you talking about?

Chad Whetzel – *“The intent of this section is to recognize and acknowledge the importance of mineral resource lands and related activities to the economic livelihood of Whitman County. It is important to preserve and encourage mineral resource lands and related activities to the economic livelihood of Whitman County. It is important to preserve and encourage mineral resource activities as viable operations and to protect them from the encroachment of incompatible uses.”*

That probably needs to go first so that way they can properly define words like, protect. That says we intend to use the mineral resources and that we are going to do things so that they are not covered up and make it more difficult to get to. Whereas somebody else could define it as it is protected and we shouldn't use it.

Brian Davies – Protect and preserve.

Chad Whetzel – At the same time, preserve wouldn't protect and preserve the spotted owl.

Erina Hammer – Now you can't use it.

Chad Whetzel – Right, now you can't use any of that ground.

Alan Thomson – Go over that again, Chad. So, the sentence beginning with, *“The challenge...”*

Chad Whetzel – No, it is the sentence after that starts with, *“The intent of this section...”*

Alan Thomson – So that goes in place with of where, *“The challenge is to protect...”*

Chad Whetzel – No, it goes at the top because it actually defines what protect means.

Dave Gibney – Right after *“Designation of Mineral Resource lands.”*

Chad Whetzel - Right.

Erina Hammer – This very last paragraph, *“Areas can be classified as mineral resource lands based on site geology, ...”* can come right after that because it defines what it is.

Alan Thomson – After I get the minutes I will rearrange things.

Erina Hammer – God help you, Man.

Chad Whetzel – Did you understand the two different designations of protect?

Alan Thomson – Yes.

Mark Storey – I think I understand what you are saying and I can help Alan try and wordsmith this a little bit and bring something back that is a little bit more than what the intent is here.

Chad Whetzel – Right, I just hate to see someone say that our comp plan you said you are going to protect those rocks and we can't use them and can't hurt them and damage their feelings.

Mark Storey – What we want to do is protect the use of those rocks.

Alan Thomson – It was quite a reach Chad.

Chad Whetzel – Why do you think there are so many forests burning down right now for a spotted owl that doesn't even use that area because supposedly of old growth?

Mark Storey – I can tell you how many conditional use permit hearings I've been in trying to protect or establish a rock quarry just so we can have gravel on our roads. It becomes a challenge.

Chad Whetzel – That's why I think it needs to be defined a little bit better so it flows with our intent.

Brian Davies – It is obviously important things for the County being able to have access to the rock and with as many miles of gravel roads we have we have to have it. We want to protect it so we can use it. Not so we can lock it up. We need to protect it so it doesn't get turned into something else.

Mark Storey – You said it perfect, Brian. Let's protect it so we can use it.

Alan Thomson – Brandon, can you scroll down please? Institutional Land. Okay, thanks.

Chad Whetzel – Do we know this 640 acres they talk about with the Pullman campus, is that just the campus itself? Or does that include the Spillman Farms and the beef center and the dairy?

Alan Thomson – You'd have to ask the consultant that.

Mark Storey – I bet that is just the campus. That is just one square mile.

Alan Thomson – In the City of Pullman, all the other places are outside the City of Pullman.

Chad Whetzel – Right, but technically all that land is institutional land even though it is not within the city limits. I know that Fire District #12 has agreements with WSU to protect the ground.

Rusty Jamison – Was that the original 640 acres that was granted to the campus for construction as a land grant college?

Brian Davies – I would say that is probably is, yes. It is a square mile and that is what was granted.

Alan Thomson – A section of land.

## Renewable Energy

Erina Hammer – I have a question about the wind tower thing. So when they are saying wind potential was already proven high enough that it will likely make an economical secondary use, but it is not as high as everybody else's. Do we have numbers that are coming from that or is that just a guess?

Rusty Jamison – I guess I would say that probably some of this might have been a guess because the company that originally put the windmills in I'm pretty sure they filed bankruptcy. And another company bought them out. I'm not sure exactly who owns it but if the wind was as good as they as predicted it to be I don't think they would have had the misfortune of problems that they had.

Alan Thomson – Rusty, I talked to the operators of the wind farm and I've been told that it is viable. It is a good project.

Rusty Jamison – I think the new owners probably did find it very good viable to them because they were able to purchase it without having the huge cost of putting it into play.

Alan Thomson – I don't necessarily agree with you because First Wind was the developer of this project and First Wind got themselves into difficulty because of a lot of a different reasons. Not because of this specific wind farm. There was a big lawsuit against them.

Rusty Jamison – I realize that. They have wind farms in Hawaii, as well. I had the opportunity to talk with some of the contractors that helped them build that stuff not only here but over there as well. That is kind of a different subject in itself in the way that they used the funds to build the wind mills.

But in answer to your question any time these things are built, they are going to get about bigger projections than what they are going to attain. Consequently at the end of this case the taxpayers were left holding the bag a little bit. Now the new owners are no doubt that they are making a go of it.

Erina Hammer – I was just wondering when it says, "*Whitman County's wind potential is not as high as some...*" I guess maybe they are referencing Grant County. However it is viable, which is fair. So I was wondering where that statement was coming from and if the developers had numbers.

Alan Thomson – I do believe they did because and this is just second hand information with talking with the developer of this wind farm. They have these things called anemometers and they put them up first to find out if the spots they are looking at is a viable location for wind. They found those two ridges were viable as far as wind is concerned.

We aren't talking about anything else, law suits of tax payer blah, blah blah, just the viability of wind. So that is how they figure out where to put these towers. They put the anemometers in a few different spots that were not good. So, they do have data from the wind people.

It is actually true that there are not very many spots in WC that is good for a wind farm. There aren't very many places and then there are a lot of other things in the way, too, like Palouse Prairie and also the other places that might be viable such as Steptoe Butte, Kamiak Butte, are basically off limits.

Mark Storey – I wonder if we are getting into the weeds a little bit. They don't say wind farm, it is still spinning and still generating electricity so it's viable. All we are trying to get at is statements that simply say it has already been proven to be viable in WC and it is compatible with land use so therefore we believe this is a benefit to property owners to have available to them in the future. That is how I read all of this.

Dave Gibney – That next paragraph, something we talked about viewshed got interpreted wrong.

Alan Thomson – Yes, we had another conversation about that. So there will be another rendition coming out tomorrow or the next day, Dave. So this is binding. We don't have everything up to speed yet. The consultant is working on that language.

### Rail Banking

Dave Gibney - Then the next paragraph on rail banking. What is an agricultural trail?

Chad Whetzel – It is probably a trail where they go out traipsing through the canola that they don't own to take pictures without permission.

Alan Thomson – That is a good question. I don't know what that means.

Dave Gibney – I think he meant horse trails. From the conversation we had before, I think they meant recreation other than bicycles or walking. If you use horses it becomes Ag.

Alan Thomson – I need to flag that one and ask him.

Brian Davies – I think you should strike it or else put horse trail.

Mark Storey – I don't know but I wonder if Commissioner Swannack made a comment about this because the John Wayne Trail and the Columbia Plateau trail both have Ag crossings of those trails. They are using the access to the trail at times to get to the lands that they own or control. I don't know if this is confused with that somehow, just people accessing these rail banks.

Dave Gibney – Ag access and recreational trails would make sense.

Mark Storey – I think you are correct.

Alan Thomson – Okay, it is about 8:50 right now and we're not at the end of this section. What do you guys want to do? Do you want to finish this next time?

Chad Whetzel – How much do we have left?

Alan Thomson – I was just looking at it would be a while.

Dave Gibney – This is just the preliminary. The goals are the real thing. We should get them fresh.

Alan Thomson – Is that okay with everybody? Okay, we will get that one next time. How about the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of this month? I'll set that one up then. We have another draft coming out. I'll send that out to you as soon as I get it. We will use that one to talk about next time.

Dave Gibney – I won't be there.

Alan Thomson – Okay. Look it though and if you have comments, let me know.

Chad Whetzel – The next one will be in person?

Alan Thomson – That would be July 21. You can be in person or virtual. Either way.

Brian Davies – Since men's league is in Colfax, I can play and come right to the meeting. Anybody else want to play?

Alan Thomson – I'll set it up for July 21<sup>st</sup> and you choose whether you want to be in person or virtual. Anybody got any parting comments?

Brian Davies – Move to adjourn.

Keith Paulson – I'll second that.

**Adjourned - 8:53 p.m.**