

Latah County Planning Commission
Minutes, 16 March 2004

Planning Commission [PC] Members: John Hunt [JDH], Suvia Judd [SJ], Kathleen Warnick [KW], James Smith [JS], Janet Hohle [JH], Louise Barber [LB].
Planning Director, Michelle Fuson [MF]

Present/Absent: JDH, SJ, KW, JH, JS, LB present.. Staff: Michelle Fuson.

Packet: Agenda; minutes for 3/2/04; Palouse Prairie Summary.

Meeting. Minutes for 3/2/04 accepted. (Agenda Item) John Currin, Potlatch Corporation, did not attend (re. change property division if a highway runs through a property).

Continued discussion of ordinance: Section 4.01.03, 4.02.03, and 4.03.03 (size and setback requirements) revised language moved and approved. 5.01.04.1 (Conditional Uses/appeals procedure) will state that "A copy of the signed findings of fact will be mailed to the applicant within 48 ours of them being signed." 5.02.02.2 (Variance criteria) shall state that " Compliance with the setbacks, height, lot coverage, lot sizes for existing lots and parking requirements prescribed . . ." 6.03.02.1C (Design Standards for Full Plat Subdivisions: land dedicated for parks): discussion about amount of and maintenance of dedicated land; finally decided to have ordinance say that "5% of total land, not to exceed ten acres" should be required; reordering of A-C; D to be absorbed into B; new D will be a prohibition against gated communities. MF will work on these changes, as well as section 6/03/03 (Public Hearings and Procedures). 6.05.03 "boundary line adjustments shall not increase, but may decrease, the number of allowed land divisions for any existing parcel, as defined in section 6.01" accepted by PC.

Article 7 (Design Standards): significant changes reflect realities of enforcement and logical order of site improvement, building construction, and occupancy. PC accepts.

Article 8 (Amendments): MF will work on this section and it shall be supplied to PC before the next meeting. Article 9 (Manufactured Housing and Buildings): JDH questioned why a "building official" suddenly appears, when "planning department" has sufficed before. MF: the building official is the person who issues a valid installation permit. SJ: this section is the result of the fact that no code exists for manufactured housing due to lobbying by _____? 9.02 order needs to be changed; new D-F should used "appropriate regulatory agency" (not "agency having jurisdiction"); plumbing should be added to new D; driveway requirements need to be added (new F?); "all applicable requirements" needs to be spelled out in A (applicable design standards need to be specified). New 9.02.C (old D) should state "All manufactured housing units must bear an insignia of approval of the state in which the manufactured home was built" (not "permit was issued"). 9.05 (Fee) should be made consistent with Article 2. 9.09 to become Manufactured Home Developments (not "parks); and "1/6 acre" should follow 7260 square feet of land for clarification. MF will work on articles 8 and 9.

Sensitive land: JH would like the PC to address the Palouse Prairie situation with something more specific than the existing language in the Comprehensive Plan. No survey exists; it is identifiable but not inventoried. Anything PC does would have to be thought about in terms of takings and if any ordinance could be applied throughout the county. Exchange has occurred between MF and Sanford Eigenbrode re. his proposal; the proposal summary follows:

The Palouse prairie grasslands of southeastern Washington and northern Idaho persist in isolated fragments scattered across an agriculturally dominated landscape. These remnants contain rare plant and animal assemblages and represent an important link to the natural and cultural history of the region. Despite their significance, prairie remnants have no formal protection and have received little attention from research or conservation efforts. Most are within privately owned farms, so their conservation depends upon landowner stewardship that necessarily must be compatible with economic productivity on the landscape. To facilitate private landowner conservation efforts, information on the effects of land management alternatives on prairie remnant ecosystems must be documented and this information made available to landowners and those in positions to influence or guide their activities. This project will take a multidisciplinary approach towards achieving this. First, we will document the effects of land management practices in the agricultural matrix on indicators of ecosystem health in contained prairie remnants. Vascular plants, two component communities of insects and earthworms will be used as indicators. These surveys will assess the richness, abundance and diversity of both native and non-native species in prairie remnants and matrix. We will also make estimates of carbon sequestration in prairie and matrix. The matrix management practices of primary concern in this system are agriculture under either conventional or reduced (conservation) tillage regimes and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) set-asides planted to exotic or native grasses. Second, we will transfer this information to stakeholders by means of workshops, interviews and publications. The workshops will be prepared and delivered by the biologists and social scientists in the project. The workshops are also intended as a way of assessing landowner knowledge and attitudes about prairie conservation. Pre and post workshop assessment interviews will be employed to discover how workshop participation influenced landowner perceptions, attitudes and motivation for prairie conservation efforts. Information from workshops and interviews will be used to prepare outreach materials in the form of web sites, pamphlets, or other vehicles, as deemed appropriate. These dissemination tools will be accessible to community planners, local interest groups, and other stakeholders in the region, as well as landowners. The proposed work is important because it addresses conservation of an ecosystem identified as imperiled and potentially under additional pressure from development. Although Palouse prairie has been recognized as imperiled, concerted and coordinated study of its viability within working landscapes has not yet been undertaken. The project is timely because regional changes in demographics, changes in agricultural practices that promote conservation, and growing public awareness and acceptance of the importance of good stewardship indicate public receptivity will be high.

MF noted that the PC will have to take up the city areas of impact in the county soon (all except Moscow). She will work on 6.03.02, 6.03.03, articles 8 and 9 and send out before next meeting.

Next Meeting: 2 April 2004 at 5:30pm in the Latah County Courthouse, Room 2B.

Submitted by: _____ 19 March 2004
Louise D. Barber