



OKANOGAN COUNTY
OFFICE OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

123 - 5th Ave. N. Suite 130 - Okanogan, WA 98840
(509) 422-7160 • FAX: (509) 422-7349 • TTY/Voice Use 800-833-6388
E-mail: planning@co.okanogan.wa.us

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

1 A meeting of the Okanogan County Planning Commission was held Marth 28th, 2016 at 7:00 PM.
2 The meeting was held in the Okanogan County Commissioners Hearing Room, 123 5th Ave. N.,
3 Okanogan, Washington.

4 **PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS** present included: Chair Albert Roberts, Vice Chair Phil
5 Dart, Commission Member Dave Schulz, Commission Member Mark Miller, Commission Member
6 Marlene Rawley, and Commission Member Tamara Porter.

7 **OKANOGAN COUNTY STAFF MEMBERS** present included: Director of Planning Perry Huston,
8 Natural Resources Planner Angie Hubbard, and Lauren Davidson Administrative Secretary.

9 **OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Kelsey Taylor, Justin Rodriguez, Suzanne Cheney, Kyle Holme,
10 Annie Cheney, Dawn Webber, Melissa Beseda, Isaac Ekholm, Zach Buchanan, Nikolas Gross,
11 Marry Anne Bennett, Jeremy Moberg, Jamie Curtis Smith, Michael Dredsler, Tonya Harrison,
12 Gregory Harrison, Anders Taylor, Sue Ogborn, Angela Bolich, David Kirk, Daniel Klayton, Pete
13 Weeks, Jennifer Clark, Delaini Giles, Matt Giles, Brett Giles, Boyd Walton, Dianne Carter, David
14 Attwood, Joseph Mcloughlin, Tyler McGrath, Skipper Madison, Jesse Gillewater, Ehjay Goss, Ezra
15 Eickmeyer, Dean Taplett, John Mournahan, Matthew Bernhard, Joe Booth, Verala Booth, Shane
16 Wood, Kyle Hockenstein, David Wright, Stacey Okland, Karen Weins, Steve Kern, Maile Detillian,
17 James Sottolano, Nichol Kuchenbuch, Stacy Storm, Donna Ward, Marcy Stamper, Kyrie Jardin,
18 Janet Burts, Thomas McGregor, Mikkell Gredvig, Daniel Blade, Larry Brownlee, Gordon Cain, Joey
19 Brown, Cody Ferrier, Seth Buchert, Kelly Buchert, Charles O'Brien, Patrick Plumb, Jeremy Clark,
20 Ken Westman, Joseph Marver, John Hayes, Bruce Bernhard, Jim Newton, Casey Newton, John
21 Herzog, Joye Herzog, David Clement, Kathleen Miller Jardin, Kamie Hanson, Mike Hanson,
22 Michael Stewart, Kimberly Cline, Nancy Berghorst, Lynus Berghorst, Julie Conkle, George Conkle,
23 Dominic Petrozzi, Tom Hodo, Lavelle Williams, Nora Sheridan, Stephanie Lanigan, David Brown,
24 Montana Dutton, Jeff Newton, Kelli Johnson, Sean Gronberg, Dirk Nansen, Gilbert Carter, Bob
25 Herbert, Kim Harriman, Joan Willett, Chuck Lane, Derek Nansen, Chas Twedell, Barbara Greene,
26 Carol Young, Michael Bowling, Brad Wayfield, Barb Wayfeild, Mark Pitchar, Chris Bowling, Ashley
27 Wolf, Chris O'Leary, Leah Simon, Michael Buffelo Mozzetti, Brent Harper, Lynette Peterson, Tracy
28 Stevens, Raylene Ray, Shane Horton, Billy Allstot, Stephanie Blacksted, Che Emmens, Dena
29 Timentwa, Vaughn Jolley, Chris Bayley, Brandon Stevens, Susan Speir, Lola Grimes, Rod Grimes,
30 L.D. Key, Jerome Thiel, Trevor Jackson, Jerome Kleven, Darren Duncan, Dave Hopkins, Casey
31 Davisson, Kaci Dagnon, Joseph Martinez, John McManhlin, Shawn Wagenseller, Brad Skelton,
32 Anthony Velenznele, Robert Young, Justin Peterson

33 **Approval of March 28, 2016 meeting agenda:** Schulz moved dart seconded, Vice Chair Dart
34 Seconded.

35 **Approve February 29, 2016 Planning Commission minutes:** Schulz moved to approve the
36 minutes; Marlene Rawley seconded approval of the minutes.

37 **Old Business**

- 38 • Discussion on Zone Code amendment process
- 39 ○ “Zoning OCC Title 17A” Code Amendment 2015-1

40 Chairman Roberts asked if there was anything in particular that Staff needed to present or if there
41 were any changes. He was advised by Sandy Mackie to continue on with the public hearing due to
42 the size of the audience.

43 **New Business**

- 44 • Public Hearing: Revised Zone Code / DEIS

45 Chair Roberts explained the process for the Public Hearing, stating that he would call a name off of
46 the sign in sheet and the person called to testify would be allowed three minutes to speak. Chair
47 Roberts also informed the audience that after the hearing there will be one week to submit written
48 comments. Director Huston clarified that the comment period was for the SEPA Draft
49 Environmental Impact Statement, which is a different comment period. The comment period for the
50 Zone Code is open until the board of commissioners closes the comment period.

51 Gerome Thiel called to testify, resides in Twisp WA on Benson Creek. Impacts of the marijuana
52 grow on Benson Creek Rd. Mr. Thiel as unaware of the grow operation until trucks showed up.
53 Voiced concerns regarding the lights and security systems being on constantly, as well as the
54 smell that comes with the farm, the traffic, and the amount of businesses that are using a singular
55 parcel. Mr. Theo stated that the normal everyday family activities that had taken place in the past
56 such as children playing, people taking walks no longer occurred after the marijuana farm started.

57 David Kirk called to testify, resides 712 Paintbrush Ln, Omak WA. Mr. Kirk voiced his concerns
58 regarding the Liquor Cannabis board only having two people that are monitoring the grows and
59 businesses in the Okanogan County and Douglas County. Mr. Kirk also stated that he agrees with
60 the need for a Conditional Use Permit for marijuana operations.

61 Anders Taber called to testify, resides in Brewster WA, owner of a cannabis producer. Mr. Taber
62 spoke about the impact that a grow has on a community, the opportunity to offer employment, the
63 amount of money that is kept locally within our community, he also stated that he does not have
64 any close neighbors and that the neighbors that he does have he has a good relationship with. Mr.
65 Taber also stated that he thinks that cannabis should be treated as an agricultural crop.

66 Michael Dredsler called to testify, resides in Oroville WA, stated that he would like to convey to the
67 commission that they are spending half a million dollars locally and hiring over fifty people this
68 year. He also stated that there are a lot of growing operations that came in and chose their
69 locations carefully and made contact with the neighbors of the farms before the farms started.

70 Jeremy Moberg called to testify, owner of Cannasol Farms, and president of the Washington
71 Sun growers Industry. He stated that currently there are fifty four farms that are permitted. Mr.
72 Moberg wanted to point out that in the zoning document that marijuana is not permitted as
73 agriculture but hemp is permitted and that is the same plant. He also explained how much money
74 that his business has spent locally in Okanogan County.

75 Tyler McGraff called to testify, resides in Twisp WA on Benson Creek. Mr. McGraff stated that the
76 operation that is on Benson Creek is a nuisance. He stated that the smell is bothersome, as well
77 as the security system and lights are going on all night long. He also stated that he believes
78 marijuana should be zoned industrial.

79 Boyd Walton called to testify, resides in Okanogan County. Mr. Walton states that the problem is
80 that the zoning states what he believes should be the main focus is where Okanogan County is
81 headed in the future. There are three directions this could go, one is not allowing any more grows;
82 the second is allowing anyone to grow if they wish, and the third being that the community take
83 their time to decide what needs to be done. He also stated that he does not think that marijuana
84 needs to be treated like an agricultural crop.

85 Ezra Eickmeyer called to testify, stated that the Thurston County assessor had noted that with only
86 40 operations that were licensed and that they had increased the employment rate by over a
87 thousand jobs. He also stated that the issues that Okanogan County is facing are the same as all
88 the other counties are facing in Washington State.

89 John Monahan called to testify, resides in Omak WA. Mr. Monahan stated that the marijuana
90 operations have increased the irrigations sales and have put a lot of money into products from
91 Washington Tractor.

92 Kyle Hockenstien resides at 1926 Pine Creek Rd Tonasket WA. Mr. Hockenstien stated that he is
93 the owner of a marijuana grow and plans to employ more people than what he already employs,
94 he also stated that the cannabis industry puts money in the community.

95 Stacy Oakland resides Okanogan WA and is employed with the Okanogan County Coalition. Mrs.
96 Oakland stated that she is in agreeance with the need for a Conditional Use Permit regarding
97 marijuana operations. She stated that one officer oversees producers and processors but also the
98 liquor and alcohol the in both Okanogan and Douglas County. Mrs. Oakland stated that she
99 believes that there should be an option for the voter and tax payer to live in a location free of pot
100 farms.

101 Karen Wiens Resides in Tonasket WA. Mrs. Wise stated that she also believes that marijuana
102 should be treated as agriculture because it is a plant. Mrs. Wise also discussed the medical uses
103 for marijuana and the diseases that have been proven to respond well to marijuana usage. Mrs.
104 Wise also stated that the economics in Okanogan County need marijuana.

105 Steve Kerns called to testify, resides in Okanogan County south of Twisp. Mr. Kerns is speaking
106 on behalf of the MVCC one of the issues is density, the county's growth projection does not take
107 into account the retirement and secondary homes. Another issue is the water usage is being
108 ignored and there will be large amounts of land that will go without water. Third issue is the lack of
109 consideration to zoning when it comes to wildfire.

110 Nichole Kuchenbuch called to testify, on behalf of Okanogan County Farm Bureau. Mrs.
111 Kuchenbuch stated that the Farm Bureau as a whole approves of the proposed zone as it stands.
112 She also stated that they worked very hard on the right to farm act, which includes smells, sprays,
113 buffers, and setbacks. Mrs. Kuchenbuch also stated that from her interpretations of state law
114 marijuana does not appear as a farm, and that it is not up to the Planning Commission to change
115 that.

116 Janet Burts called to testify resides in Okanogan County. Mrs. Burts stated that she has
117 experienced a growth in her business as a coffee shop since the marijuana has become legal. She
118 also stated that originally she was against marijuana, but now she sees that it is being treated the
119 same as tobacco or alcohol she is no longer against it. She explained that statistics that Okanogan
120 County is the largest county with the worst economy, but also the highest drug rate. Mrs. Burts
121 stated that she believes that the current marijuana operations should be grandfathered in, and that
122 the county should be a little more careful where they allow an operation to be located.

123 Thomas McGregor called to testify resides in Okanogan County. Mr. McGregor stated that he
124 makes a living working with cannabis, and that the work itself is light agricultural use. He also
125 stated that there are many issues with farming such as cherry guns and pesticides being sprayed
126 that he doesn't like, but that he tolerates because he likes this area and that should be the same
127 for marijuana.

128 Mikel Griffith called to testify, resides in Tonasket WA. He is the owner of Solar Shop in Tonasket.
129 He stated that the cannabis issue has helped his store immensely. He stated that he had a
130 marijuana grower come in and spend so much money that he was able to send his daughter to
131 college.

132 Charles O'Brien called to testify, resides on Omak River Road in Omak. Mr. Obrien stated that he
133 has worked closely with the county to make sure his marijuana operation Canamed was
134 constructed properly. He also stated that the county had told him that marijuana was an
135 agricultural crop and should be treated as such now.

136 Patrick Plumb called to testify, resides in Tonasket WA. Mr. Plumb stated that while he originally
137 voted no on the I502 but now agrees with the marijuana operations. He stated that agriculture is
138 something that is grown in the ground and is confused that now it isn't considered agriculture
139 because it is taxed. He also stated that all farming and agriculture has a smell, if its chickens or
140 cows it all smells.

141 Ken Westman called to testify, resides in Mazama. He stated the he believes the nightly rental
142 proposal is a mistake. He stated that in the Methow one of the main problems that arise is the
143 need of affordable housing. By putting in and opening up Nightly Rentals in the Methow they are
144 competing with the chances to get long term rentals in place.

145 Joseph Arbor called to testify, resides in Twisp. Mr. Arbor owns the hotel next to the Twisp River
146 Pub. He doesn't think nightly rentals should be allowed in the Methow.

147 Jon Hayes called to testify, resides in the Methow and is a land use planner. Mr. Hayse stated that
148 we depend on people coming into the community and being able to establish a home in the
149 community. He also stated that this proposal on nightly rentals threatens the very existence of our
150 communities.

151 Bruce Bernhart called to testify, resides in Winthrop WA. Mr. Bernhart is strongly against redefining
152 marijuana to a Conditional Use Permit. He also made a point to explain that Marijuana is a plant
153 that is grown in dirt, and that to label it as anything other than agricultural is wrong. Legalization
154 was overwhelmingly supported in our community. He also explained that he was a cancer survivor
155 and that marijuana helped him enormously in his recovery.

156 John Herzog called to testify, resides on Pine Creek WA. Mr. Herzog stated that the grow
157 operation that is in his area is not too much of an eye sore; however it does have a smell. He
158 asked that the county take into consideration that the grows have a negative impact on the
159 community and they need to grow it where it doesn't affect the people directly.

160 George Kunkel called to testify, resides in Tonasket. Stated that he has concerns regarding the
161 addictiveness of marijuana and the damage that smoking marijuana has on the human body. He
162 also discussed the negative effects on people who smoke marijuana. He also is concerned about
163 the availability of marijuana to children, as well as the smell of marijuana grows.

164 Tom Hodo called to testify, resides on Benson Creek. Mr. Hodo owns a marijuana operation on
165 Benson Creek. Mr. Hodo stated that the property owner that his grow is located on had originally
166 lived on the property had a mobile home and because of his grow operation they have an income
167 off of the land and were able to move into a larger house. He also stated that the people that are
168 complaining about the security lights should just turn their blinds down so they cannot see the
169 lights.

170 Stephan Lanigan called to testify, resides in Tonasket WA. He stated that the moratorium has
171 costed him at least three or four jobs this year, as he is a fence builder. He also stated that the
172 comp plan had people coming in complaining about the lights, but they can't do anything about
173 lights. He also stated that he believes that the Conditional Use Permits would cause people to
174 leave Okanogan County.

175 David Brown called to testify, resides in Jefferson County. Mr. Brown stated that he is the
176 executive director of Washington Sungrowers, and has a Master's Degree in Botany, as well as
177 being a licensed attorney. He stated that marijuana and farming are both highly regulated, which
178 can be crippling to owners and consumers both. Mr. Brown asked the Planning Commission to
179 please not make things worse by requiring a Conditional Use Permit.

180 Montana Dutton called to testify, resides in Okanogan. Mrs. Dutton is the owner of The Sage
181 Shop. She explained that 90% of the product sold in her store is sourced locally. She went over
182 the numbers regarding the excise taxes that the marijuana operations had paid out, and how much
183 came back into the community. Ms. Dutton also stated that tobacco is an agricultural crop and it
184 shouldn't be any different with marijuana.

185 Jeff Newton called to testify, resides in Okanogan. Mr. Newton owns a marijuana operation on
186 Greenacres Rd in Omak. He stated that the economics are obvious with anyone who works with a
187 private local business. He also explained that just like any other farm or agricultural crop, it will
188 take more than a year to make back what was put into the business. Mr. Newton also stated that
189 the crime rate in Colorado hasn't gone up or changed at all so he doesn't expect Okanogan
190 County's statistics to change either.

191 Dirk Nansen called to testify, resides in Omak WA. Mr. Nansen stated that at one point in time the
192 Okanogan County had a good economy before all the big businesses came in. Mr. Nansen also
193 explained that the Okanogan County is the perfect place for marijuana to be grown, and it one of
194 the very few ways for people to make an income in this area.

195 Bob Hulbert called to testify, resides in Winthrop. He stated that he is representing Lazy Bee
196 Gardens. He stated that he believes that changing marijuana operations to obtain a Conditional
197 Use Permit would be damaging to all of the existing marijuana operations in the county. Mr.

198 Hulbert explained that 90% of the sales from his business are from retail stores that are not
199 located in Okanogan County, resulting in Okanogan County gaining income from wealthier
200 counties in Washington which positively impacts our local economy. He also stated that Lazy Bee
201 Farm is aesthetically pleasing and does not negatively influence property values of the neighboring
202 properties.

203 Kim Harriman of Tonasket part owner of K & M Growers stepped forward to testify. Mr. Herriman
204 explained his history living in Okanogan County and how the job market has changed and what
205 jobs have been lost. Stated he employs 9 people full time, and will be hiring one or two more this
206 summer. He also explained that his company was the first grow operation to get permits through
207 the Planning department and building department, and that he believes the process to obtain a
208 marijuana operation should not be changed.

209 John Willett called to testify, resides in Mazama. Mr. Willett stated that he believes that the
210 proposed zone code was written to quickly and is simplistic. He also stated that he believes that
211 the Planning Commission should keep marijuana as agriculture with other farms and orchards, and
212 that all agricultural crops have a smell associated with it.

213 Derik Nansen called to testify, resides in Okanogan County. Mr. Nansen explained the medicinal
214 properties of marijuana. He also explained that the plants only have a smell to them when they are
215 blooming, and that is only about a month in the fall.

216 Michael Mozzetti called to testify, resides in Tonasket WA. Mr. Mozzetti is President of the
217 Okanogan Highlands Bottling Company. Mr. Mozzetti stated that he has been an advocate for
218 medical marijuana and that the moratorium is a selective discrimination against the marijuana
219 growers. He also stated that the light pollution and traffic associated with the mining operation that
220 had opened up was very similar to the marijuana operations but that nothing along the lines of a
221 moratorium happened.

222 Dena Timentwa called to testify, resides in Okanogan County and is a Colville Tribal Member. Mrs.
223 Timentwa stated that she thinks that the product standards should be upped. She also expressed
224 concerns regarding the taxing and how much of that is seen at a local governmental level.

225 Casey Davisson called to testify, resides in Tonasket. Mr. Davisson stated that marijuana is the
226 highest regulated crop in Washington State, and the third largest agricultural industry behind wheat
227 and cattle. He also stated that over 1 million dollars was spent in local businesses by his company
228 personally.

229 Casey Dagnon called to testify, resides in Tonasket WA. Mrs. Dagnon stated that she owned a
230 business in Tonasket and since the marijuana operations have started their business has
231 increased by 25-45%. Due to the fact her business has gone up they have been able to put more
232 money back into the community.

233 Anthony Velenznele called to testify, resides in Tacoma WA. Mr. Velenznele stated that he had
234 hired someone for his operation specifically so they can abide by the laws and regulations from
235 both the local county and the Liquor and Cannabis Control Board.

236 Chair Roberts opened the public comment to any others who had not signed up on the sign in
237 sheet.

238 Susanne Chaney, of Tonasket stepped forward to testify. She is an owner of a small farm in
239 Tonasket. She stated that from the beginning Okanogan County was the place to go in the state
240 for marijuana operations due to the lack of restrictions and the wide open spaces. Mrs. Chaney
241 stated that there is enough land in Okanogan County for 200 plus operations.

242 Patrick Gann stepped forward to testify, resides in Lake Stevens WA but owns property in
243 Tonasket WA. He explained the use of irrigation and how the farm he owns conserves water by
244 not allowing any run off and water waste. Chair Roberts asked if there is any regulation for how
245 much water us used by a marijuana grow operation. Mr. Gann stated that it is roughly 4,000 gallon
246 on an acre per day in the heat of the summer.

247 Mathew Bernhart stepped forward, resides in Winthrop WA. Mr. Bernhart stated that he is the
248 owner of Lazy Bee Gardens. He broke down the amount of money that he has spent locally and to
249 which businesses he has supported. Mr. Bernhart stated that the Okanogan County has lost close
250 to 3500 jobs in the last few years, and marijuana operations are bringing back a huge chunk of
251 those jobs that had been lost. He also urged the Planning Commission to not follow through with
252 requiring a Conditional Use Permit and to treat marijuana as agriculture.

253 Pete Weeks stepped forward, resides in Oroville WA. Mr. Weeks explained that he moved over
254 two thousand miles away so he could live in Okanogan County and grow marijuana. He believes
255 that if the Planning Commission were to require a Conditional Use Permit, the majority of the
256 marijuana operations would leave Okanogan County and devastate the local economy.

257 Chair Roberts asked if there were any other volunteers to come up and give testimony. There were
258 no other volunteers. Chair Roberts explained that the public hearing process will be continued at
259 the Okanogan County Agriplex April 11th at 6pm.

260 **Adjourn**

261 Chair Roberts moved to continue the public hearing April 11th at 6:00pm, Commission Member
262 Rawley seconded. Meeting Adjourned at 9:54

263 **SUMMARY OF MOTIONS**

264 Approval of March 28, 2016 meeting agenda: Schulz moved dart seconded, Vice Chair Dart
265 Seconded.

266 Approve February 29, 2016 Planning Commission minutes: Schulz moved to approve the minutes;
267 Marlene Rawley seconded approval of the minutes.

268 Chair Roberts moved to continue the public hearing April 11th at 6:00pm, Commission Member
269 Rawley seconded. Meeting Adjourned at 9:54

270

271 Prepared by Lauren Davidson
272 Administrative Secretary