

FERRY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
April 28, 2010

Chairwoman Tamra Stevens called the special April 28, 2010 meeting of the Planning Commission to order. Commissioners Gary Howden, John Hamilton, John Egge, Lorna Johnson and Bob Kirkham were also present. Irene Whipple was present from the Planning Department. Commissioner Joe Bond and Attorney Steve Graham were also present. Kevin Green and Cynthia Bonneau Green attended as guests. Wes McCart, President of Stevens County Farm Bureau attended as an invited guest to speak to the Planning Commission.

Wes McCart, President of the Stevens County Farm Bureau was introduced to the Planning Commission. He addressed some issues he had regarding our Agricultural Land of Long Term Commercial Significance designation process.

- Put criteria in the opening, not as an appendix
 - Make sure final document does not lead to any conclusions: when he read the first three pages of Appendix A, it appeared we had Ag Land of Long Term Commercial Significance.
 - State the exact wording of the WAC's and state that we will look at them; apply them, and in the end, if there are any Agricultural Lands of Long-Term Commercial Significance, then that is what we will designate and if there are none, then we will not designate any.
- Back it up with a Findings of Fact. (A short version of our Appendix A could be a Findings of Fact).
 - For example: Whereas: The reason we are or are not regulating....
 - Also, a BOCC Findings of Fact
- Economically viable:
 - Need public input; then argue those points with the GMHB
- Distance from UGA:
 - How far does it have to be to be from an UGA before we call it Agricultural Land of Long Term Commercial Significance? What are the issues; smell, noise? Since livestock is our major industry, 100', for example, probably would not keep the complaints away about the smell, etc. Then choose another distance and determine if that distance would be far enough away to prevent the complaints and if so, then that would be the required distance from an UGA.
- Market access:
 - We needed to come up with a defensible distance. Create a distance that is reasonable for Ferry County and state why and how we came up with that distance.
 - In Stevens County, the cattlemen go together and several truck loads are hauled to Omaha.
 - Wes McCart thought that somewhere in the county we could produce hay that could be exported, but are those areas large enough to make it economically viable? The answer is probably "No".
 - Cynthia Bonneau Green mentioned that they make urns. In their experience, it is more economically viable to ship out of Colville than it is from Republic.

- It was also mentioned that to ship from Republic, you have to go over a mountain pass, a ferry, or through a foreign country.
- Soil types:
 - Do not use the word “prime” when discussing soil types
 - State exact wording in the WAC’s
 - Explain why we are only using Type 2, 3, and 4 soils. Then if we get a comment back saying; for example, that Type 4 is rocky, etc., we have backup for not choosing Type 4.
- Open Space Tax Classification:
 - Shows the aspect of “long term”, however it may not show that it is commercially viable.
 - Recommends we map all the open space parcels as the starting point, and then adding all other components of the WAC in order to determine if it still qualifies for Agricultural Land of Long-Term Commercial Significance
- Frost Free Days:
 - Look at individual cases to be eliminated, instead of putting it on the whole county.
 - Frost free days is already considered within soil types
- Consistency:
 - Lewis County is almost all prime soils—Ferry County does not have the same soils, etc.
 - Look at neighboring counties’ procedures
- Wording:
 - Words are important
 - Need to change the word “parcel” as there are rarely 1,000 acre “parcels”
 - Recommends we use contiguous parcels in ownership (which we did, but the document did not actually state exactly that), but recommends we do not recommend farm size.
- Enhancement:
 - Fisheries and agriculture are the only two issues that need to be enhanced
- Grazing:
 - Could designate Forest Service Grazing Allotments as Agricultural Land of Long-Term Commercial Significance, however it is probably already designated Timberland of Long-Term Commercial Significance. In order for both designations, it must meet all the components of each. Allotments are only for approximately six months out of the year, so may not qualify for Ag Land of Long-Term Commercial Significance.
- Definition of what “Agricultural Land of Long-Term Commercial Significance” is for Ferry County.
- Need final maps
- It is on record at the GMHB compliance hearing on February 10, 2010 that we are not required to designate Agricultural Land of Long-Term Commercial Significance if we actually do not have any.
- Develop a timeline and ask GMHB for an extension to come into compliance.

Wes McCart recommended that we start over with our process, but Attorney Steve Graham thought starting all over would take too long and recommended that we look at our current procedure and readdress points of concern. Regarding a compliance extension, Steve mentioned the possibility that a BOCC approved timeline could be submitted to the Governor.

The Farm Bureau was asked by its members to intervene to support Ferry County in developing a defensible document and record for Agricultural Land of Long-Term Commercial Significance. Steve Graham asked if the Farm Bureau was going to submit any more appeals, as it costs the county a lot of time and money. He mentioned that on the last appeal that the Farm Bureau was involved with (Case #09-1-0012), there was no record at all submitted by the petitioners. Wes McCart said that the Farm Bureau was not the main appellant; that they were only a party of the suit, and that particular case was going to move forward anyway, with or without the Farm Bureau. Steve mentioned that in Ferry County's experience the comments alone would not carry the day and that just building the record has never been enough. What has worked in the past is when we sit down with a "professional" and ask them pointed questions.

Discussion was held and the Planning Commission agreed to hold a special meeting to meet with our State Legislators and Senators when they were available.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.