

FERRY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
February 9, 2011

Chairwoman Lorna Johnson called the regular February 9, 2011 meeting of the Planning Commission to order. Commissioners Gary Howden, Cathy Winchester, Darlene Pearson and Mickey Woolley were also present. Irene Whipple was present from the Planning Department. Commissioner Brian Dansel was also present. Margaret Snook and Johnna Exner attended as guests.

Minutes from the regular meeting of January 12, 2011 were approved as written.

The Planning Commission continued their review of the documents prepared by Tamara Stevens and Lorna Johnson dated 1/11/11 titled "Application of WAC Criteria" and made the following changes:

Area 1:

- 6 Predominant parcel size, Comments-2009
 - Change to read: "All individual contiguous land ownership considered as one parcel"
- 11 Proximity to markets and suppliers, Comments-2011
 - 3rd sentence: Change "exists" to "exits"
 - Add a new sentence to the end: "All routes are two lane roads."

Area 2:

- 1 Soils, Comments-2009
 - Add to the end: "Area 2 has no NRCS Class I Prime Soils"
- 1 Soils, Comments-2011
 - Change "scare" to "scarce"
- 3 Tax Status, Comments-2009
 - Delete "Evaluation misinterpretation"
- 5 Proximity to Urban Growth Areas, Comments-2011
 - Last sentence: Add ""Range" to read "Kettle Mountain Range"
- 6 Predominant parcel size, Comments-2009
 - Change to read: "All individual contiguous land ownership considered as one parcel"
- 9 History of land development permits issued nearby, Comment-2011
 - Last sentence: Delete "consistently"

Area 3:

- 1 Soils, Comments-2009
 - Add to the end: "Area 3 has no NRCS Class I Prime Soils"
- 3 Tax Status, Comments-2009
 - Delete "Evaluation misinterpretation"
- 6 Predominant parcel size, Comments-2009
 - Change to read: "All individual contiguous land ownership considered as one parcel"
- F Grazing Allotments, Comments-2011
 - Delete "All DNR and Forest Service Grazing Allotments designated Ag Lands of Long-Term Commercial Significance-"

Area 4:

- 1 Soils, Comments-2009
 - Add to the end: "Area 4 has no NRCS Class I Prime Soils"
- 3 Tax Status, Comments-2009

- Delete “Evaluation misinterpretation”
- 6 Predominant parcel size, Comments-2009
 - Change to read: “All individual contiguous land ownership considered as one parcel”
- F Grazing Allotments, Comments-2011
 - Delete “All DNR and Forest Service Grazing Allotments designated Ag Lands of Long-Term Commercial Significance-”

The Planning Commission reviewed the Draft Agricultural Comprehensive Plan Changes and made the following changes:

- Section 7.4.33
 - 1st paragraph: Change “protect” to “encourage”
 - 3rd paragraph, 2nd sentence: Change to read: “There are lands in Ferry County which do not meet the Prime farmland definition,
- Section 7.4.34
 - 2nd paragraph starting with “It was the intent....”
 - 1st sentence: Change “was” to “is”
 - 2nd sentence: Change “and compliance” to “and in accordance”
Change “were” to “are”
 - 3rd paragraph starting with “Ferry County....”: Change “considered” to “considers”
 - 4th paragraph starting with “The County....”: Change “considered” to “considers”
- Section 7.7.4
 - Delete the first three paragraphs and insert:
“The “land in farms” figures from the U.S. Agricultural Census report that there are 749,452 acres in farms in Ferry County. However, there are, in fact, only 257,603 total privately held acres in the county which includes the city of Republic, the Limited Areas of More Intense Rural Developments (LAMRIDS), residential and recreational land, and natural resource lands. The Census reports “in many instances, an entire American Indian Reservation was reported as one farm.” Removing this 589,738 acres within the Colville Indian Reservation from “land in farm” leaves 159,714 acres reported as actual “land in farms”, which includes timber tracts.

The U.S. Agricultural Census (American Indian Reservations, Vol. 2, Subject Series, Part 5) on page 23 information regarding the Colville Tribe. Figures show 1,344,170 acres as “land in farms” with the number of farms as 227. These figures include the Reservation area in both Okanogan and Ferry Counties.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service soil surveys report 18 prime soil types in Northern Ferry County and 49 prime soil types on the Colville Reservation located within Ferry County.

Pastured woodland and woodland not pastured (woodlots, timber tracts and sugarbush) are included as “land in farms” reported in the U.S. Agricultural Census. All state and federally managed forest lands or lands under current use taxation programs as either designated forest or current use timber are designated as Forest Lands of Long-Term Commercial Significance in Ferry County. The Assessor’s office reports 134,499 acres in these programs, leaving 25,215 acres as actual privately held “land in farms” under agricultural use.

The 21,360 acres of prime soils found in Northern Ferry County include lands in the Urban Growth Area as well as platted lots, timber lands, and isolated pockets, it is clear that this figure of prime soil acreage is not useful in substantiating acres used for agricultural activity.

Ferry County's primary agricultural product is livestock (cattle) and is entirely dependent upon public rangeland for grazing. The 1934 Taylor Grazing Act, the 1976 Federal Land Policy and Management Act and the 1978 Public Rangeland Improvement Act provides leased grazing which stabilizes the livestock industry dependent upon the public range, prevents economic disruption, saves open space and western wildlife and has been the mainstay of the rural western economy.

There are 470,151 acres of Colville National Forest grazing leases and 19,423 acres of Washington State grazing leases within Ferry County. Without the option of these leases, many ranches would not be able to operate."

- 4th paragraph: Change to read: "Some of the objectives of this Comprehensive Plan are to conserve and protect agricultural customs and cultures in lands of long-term commercial significance; to encourage...."
- 5th paragraph: Change to read: "The County strives to conserve agricultural lands in Ferry County. There are lands in Ferry County which do not meet the Prime Farmland definition, but are useful and necessary to the county. Also, the County encourages development on non-prime farmlands."
- 9th paragraph, last sentence: Change "process." to "processes."
- Last paragraph: Change "...access is subject to an Existing Easements...." to "...access is subject to existing easements...."

The Planning Commission also made the following change to the Draft 12/8/10 Draft Development Regulations Ordinance:

- 9th WHEREAS starting with "the "land in farms", 2nd sentence: Change "258,500" to "257,603"

Gary Howden made a motion to forward the Draft Agricultural Sections of the Comprehensive Plan and the Development Regulations Ordinance for a 60-day comment period. Mickey Woolley seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Gary Howden handed out a document dated February 7, 2011 titled Assessment of Transcript-Eastern Washington Growth Management Hearings Board Compliance Hearing of Ferry County Critical Areas Ordinance, Development Regulations Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan, February 10, 2010, Case No. 97-1-0018, 01-1-0019, 04-1-0007c, and 06-1-0003. The Planning Commission will review this document at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.