

Board of Commissioners Meeting
July 5, 2012

Present: Commissioner William D. Rosholt
Commissioner Steve McClure
Commissioner Mark D. Davidson

Chairman Rosholt called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and began with the Pledge of Allegiance. All three Commission members were present.

Public Comments

Blue Mountain Human Society Animal Shelter

Scott Hayes, President of the Board at Blue Mountain Humane Association, 1406 Susie Lane, Cove, John Brennley, Director of Blue Mountain Humane Association, 1202 11th Street, La Grande, and Heidi VanSchoonhoven, 69795 Antles Lane, Cove, Secretary of the Board of Directors for Blue Mountain Humane Association came to the Commissioners to discuss the meetings about the animal shelter and the progress that is being made. Commissioner McClure has met with the animal shelter representatives and had a productive meeting where they discussed the items brought up by the County attorney. He stated that he was satisfied with the responses that he received. The auditor for the animal shelter was present and they talked about the issue of contracting and they understood the contracting laws. The issues that they are dealing with are internal to their organization and they are working on those. He explained that he feels the next step is to look at the agreement between the Blue Mountain Humane Association and Union County to update it since it hasn't been reviewed in years. Commissioner McClure suggested that the animal shelter put together a proposal and bring it to the County for discussion. He would like to then open it up to the public to comment on it.

Heidi VanSchoonhoven stated that she agrees with Commissioner McClure that the meetings have been productive. She stated that the Board is thankful that it has been easy to work with the County on getting clarifications on questions that the County has. She explained that their goal is to be transparent and she thinks that there were some misperceptions but they are past that now. She agrees that the contract between the Association and the County does need to be reviewed and updated. Blue Mountain Humane operates under the highest standard that is available which is through Oregon Humane. They have compiled shelter standards for the best practices for the industry. She stated that she would get a copy of the standards to the County to get in the contract. The shelter staff has worked hard to coordinate with other agencies so that animals that might have been euthanized in the past are sent to Portland or other locations and adopted out. They have gone from over 300 euthanizations last year to 5 this year. It is not that the animals have stayed and caused problems in the area but they have found homes in other places. They believe that it fulfills their mission of humane treatment.

NEON, Northeast Oregon Network

Matt Nightengale and Lisa Ladendorf from NEON came to update the Commissioners on the work that NEON is doing. Lisa explained that they have given the Commissioners a packet of information that they can look through. She stated that they are a non-profit health collaborative serving Union, Baker and Wallowa counties. They organized as a volunteer organization in 2004 and in 2009 they incorporated. Their mission is to improve health status for all residents and increase access to quality integrated health care for all residents within the three county area. They identify system gaps and facilitating community developed solutions and advocate for rural health policy change. They have worked with the health districts around their policy manuals and providing grant writing technical assistance. Lisa explained to the Commissioners where the program is in the process and what they are seeking for the future.

Follow-up

Irene Gilbert, 2310 Adams Ave. La Grande, came to the Commissioners to explained that she wrote a letter to the Commissioners concerned with Elkhorn Wind Farm not following the regulations in place for their site certificate. They were supposed to do habitat improvement on Dexter Lemon's property and a representative from Elkhorn notified the provider of the plants to be used for that habitat that they would not be doing the enhancement. She had asked the Commissioners to look into the issue and she wanted to see what the Commissioners found out.

Commissioner McClure stated that he has not received any information and he will ask Hanley what the situation is.

Deal Canyon

Charles Gillis, 601 N Ave. La Grande, asked the Commissioners why Deal Canyon is closed to all traffic. Commissioner McClure asked when the last time he was up to Deal Canyon was. Charles stated that is was about 5 days. Commissioner McClure stated that he believes it is now open. He explained that the situation was there were yearlings out and people were leaving the gate open and she locked the gate. A sign was made for the gate so the lock should be off now.

Home occupation Appeal – (Bean) – Continuation

Hanley Jenkins, Planning Director, explained that the Commissioners have a substantial record that has been provided. The Commissioners have the Planning Commission's record and their decision from April 2nd. The Planning Commission's decision was to approve with conditions. That decision was appealed to the Commissioners. The Commissioners held a public hearing on June 6th and accepted additional testimony which is included in the record. An opportunity was provided to submit additional written testimony by both parties

until June 15th. There was additional written testimony received. The appellants had an opportunity for rebuttal arguments until June 22nd. The meeting today is being held for a tentative decision to be made. Hanley explained that the Commissioners requested information on the existing home occupations in the area. There is one existing and one previous. There was additional testimony about activities that may be or have been home occupation uses within the area that are not permitted by the County.

Commissioner Rosholt stated that he read the material several times. He feels that they should uphold the Planning Commission's decision with conditions. He is thinking of changing one of the conditions which would be the operation time for the business to be from 9 to 4 rather than 8 to 5. He feels that there is, has been and will be other businesses in the area.

Commissioner McClure agrees and thinks that the Planning Commission did a good job in their initial review. They tried to come up with a compromise and listen to the people's concerns. He can agree with some of the neighbors that they do not want to have a commercial car repair in the area so it does need to be limited. The business is a small specialized business that does not make it commercial. He explained that the home occupation business reports that the Commissioners received showed them there are a lot of people who have businesses out of their homes in the neighborhood. The level of impact can be argued but that neighborhood has home occupations occurring. If it makes more sense to limit the hours further he has no problem with that. There was a lot of discussion about the road but the history shows that the area was an agricultural area with orchards so when the road was put in it was adequate for the use.

Commissioner McClure moved to tentatively deny the appeal with the change on the hours of operation to 9 to 4 and for Hanley Jenkins to develop findings based on the discussion for final approval. Commissioner Rosholt seconded. Roll Call: Commissioner Davidson: Abstain, Commissioner McClure: Yes, Commissioner Rosholt: Yes. Motion carried.

The final hearing is set for July 18th at 10 a.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:13 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Wilhelm
Sr. Dept. Specialist II