

COMMISSIONERS' MINUTES
KITITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON
STUDY SESSION

MONDAY

10:00 A.M.

OCTOBER 27, 2003

Those in attendance: Commissioners Perry Huston, and Bruce Coe.

Others: Shannon Carlson, Deputy Clerk of the Board; Erin Anderson, City of South Cle Elum; City of Cle Elum Administrator; Jim Hurson, Civil Deputy Prosecutor; David Taylor, Community Development Director; David Gerth, Mayor of Roslyn; Leonard Bauer and Mark, Washington State Community Trade Economic Development; Larry Nickel; Ron Schultz, Governor's Office; Mike Smith, City of Ellensburg.

STUDY SESSION

CTED/GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT

COMMISSIONERS

At 10:00 A.M. a study session was held to discuss with representatives from the Governor's Office and Community Trade Economic Development to discuss the Growth Management Act.

Mr. Schultz explained he was here to talk with representatives from the cities and county to get feedback on what is working with the Growth Management Act and what is not working. He would take the recommendations back to the Governor's office.

Commissioner Huston said he would talk about the positives first and then have everyone around the table take a turn as to how the GMA pertained to their municipality. Commissioner Huston explained that the Urban Growth Area is the centerpiece of the Growth Management Act. The results with the GMA is that it is more aggressive with concentrating on utilities to increase growth in areas. Because of the Urban Growth Area, there has been a 2% decrease in population in the county, but an increase within the city municipalities, which is good. The issue that he has is the Hearings Board process. Local government follows the process, post the notices, therefore when the decision is made it should not be overruled by the Hearings Board. Municipalities have to invest a lot of money and time when preparing for the hearings board and in his opinion it is a waste of time.

Mr. Larry Nickel expressed his concern is water and everything connected to it. He doesn't believe that the City is in compliance with available potable water. The City has not identified their aqua-recharge areas and if it is in a critical area, it has not been

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identified. Mr. Nickel expressed that water is the greatest indication for growth but who has the rights? The City indicates they are ready for growth but hasn't indicated where the rights are for the water.

David Gerth, Mayor of Roslyn said he would like some input on how other counties are doing what their concerns are. There are pressures on the City of Roslyn on keeping the Comprehensive Plan updated. There is also pressure to expand areas to be included in the Comp. Plan and it has created an impact on the city and staff. The process of the Comprehensive Plan is supposed to be started at the municipality level to establish a record and then it is moved on to the County level for recommendations. He doesn't believe this process is being followed. There was a recommendation on an item to be docketed and there was no record established at the municipality level and the Planning Commission recommended approval. Mr. Gerth brought up some issues he has with Urban Sprawl.

Mike Smith representing the City of Ellensburg said that the framework of the Growth Management Act is working. The Urban Growth Area has helped the City plan for growth and has allowed developers also plan for growth. He agreed with Mr. Nickel's comments about water, water is limited and low-density rural growth is increasing. The City doesn't have the staff to work on the GMA and Comp. Plan, Mr. Smith is the only planner for the City. Unfunded mandates are always going to be an issue. He expressed that the City needs help from the State on bigger issues (globally), and it is hard to complete mandates without funds.

Commissioner Coe stated that the Growth Management Act is a codified power struggle. Cities are concerned with the impact on growth. He feels that there is a good relationship with the municipalities. He feels the ground water issue is not as bad as some people see it. He discussed issues with exempt wells and class "B" wells.

Erin Anderson representing the Town of South Cle Elum, explained that South Cle Elum is the smallest cooperated town. Since I-695, the town has been forced to survive on the Sales Tax, the town was hurt by I-695 and with the increase on unfunded mandates, and it makes it hard to comply with the economics the way that they are. The town doesn't want to grow but is being forced to. They don't have their own planner; they are contracting services with the county.

The City Administrator for Cle Elum said that they are seeing growth in the Upper County as a result of the Mountain Star Resort. With agreements in place with MPR, the city has a water treatment plant, which will enable growth and provide utilities. The good thing with

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the GMA the city has doubled through annexations. The bad thing is that they have loss revenue due to legislation. With the zoning changes it impacts subdivisions and water rights are a huge issue.

Jim Hurson, Civil Deputy for Kittitas County discussed his concern with the Growth Hearings Board and the appeal process. His concern is the process in which the County appeals to the Growth Hearings Board and the proof the County has to supply. He also expressed concern with a 150-page template that is not helpful when writing ordinances.

David Taylor, Director of Community Development Services referred back to what Mr. Hurson said with regard to the ordinances. He is also concerned with the State giving large populated counties money and not giving money to smaller counties. He stressed that the Watershed Plan is not a component of the Growth Management Act and ground water issue is secondary to surface water. He stated that Washington ranks second in the nation with regard to water. Mr. Taylor explained how important Agriculture was in Kittitas County and the flexibility needed in minimum lot sizes.

Mr. Ron Schultz explained that he has visited several other cities and counties and there seemed to be tension between them, but he did not sense that tension in Kittitas County. This was the first time he had heard water was an issue. Mr. Leonard Bauer said he has heard that water is more an issue in Eastern Washington.

Mr. Taylor brought up an issue with Columbia County's experience with Community Tread and Economic Development, in that they would not defend the County with the Hearings Board decision on Ag Lands. Mr. Taylor discussed concerns with ESA. He explained the water rights pertaining to short and long plats. He expressed the same concerns that Ms. Anderson did with funding the small cities. Currently the Community Development Services Departments contracts with the smaller municipalities for services except for the City of Kittitas they contract services out privately.

Commissioner Huston explained that the big obstacle was Department of Ecology. They are trying to take the water away from the municipalities. He would like to see more involvement from the State. Commissioner Coe discussed issues with regard to exempt wells and clean water.

Mr. Taylor explained that the County needs flexibility and assistance from CTED, when it comes to economic incentives. He explained watershed planning and there should be reliable potable/irrigation water for salmon recovery. He suggested that the Sub Basin planning should be connected with the ESA, and the

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Watershed plan to GMA.

Commissioner Huston and Commissioner Coe expressed their frustration with the appeal process and the appearance of fairness and public process.

Mr. Schultz asked if any of the departments or municipalities have had any problems with the Department of Transportation. Mr. Taylor explained that the Central Region has done well with communicating to the County when they are completing projects within the County.


Commissioner Huston thanked the representatives from the State for coming over and meeting with them.

At 12:20 P.M., the Study Session was adjourned.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD

KITTITAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON


Shannon L. Carlson


Perry D. Huston, Vice-Chair

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