BOCC Notable Minutes

Morning Session:

2020 BoCC reorganization of duties – Rex F. Johnston to serve as Chairman & David M. Sauter to serve as Vice-Chairman. (1/7)

Economic Development Update:

An Aircraft Maintenance Technician Training Program is being developed by the Columbia Gorge Community College. (1/7)

Sheriff Update:

The current staff includes 130 volunteer Posse Deputies donating 4,260 hours of duty. And, 7 volunteer Special Deputy Pilots donating 2,122 hours of duty since Jan 1st.

The Department’s K-9 named Profi, will be sworn in as a Commissioned Deputy Sheriff and he will be provided the citizenship certificate he has earned by completing the K-9 Academy after coming to the United States from Europe.

The Sheriff’s Reserve Academy is completed. And, 7 new reserve Deputies were sworn in. Yes, these are volunteer positions. (1/21)

Building & Code Compliance:

At a (1/16) Workshop Extension Session, Code Compliance Director Lynn Ward advised that the Code Compliance and Nuisance Enforcement/Abatement Program needs to be updated. The Building Department sought feedback from other Washington counties and cities on how they manage nuisance and code enforcement. Director ward laid out four (4) options to discuss:

* To leave the program as-is.
* Revise the Code Compliance Officer’s role to become the facilitator who oversees complaints as each relevant department addresses complaints and violations.
* Each department would be responsible for overseeing and managing complaints and violation specific to their departments, i.e. zoning violation – Planning, road issues – Public Works, sewer/water compliance – Public Health.
* To eliminate the Code Compliance and Nuisance Enforcement/Abatement Program.

The subsequent discussions indicate the need for improvements in the Code, and not supportive of eliminating the program.

Transient/short-term rentals where the majority of the properties do not meet building or zoning codes, and the property owners are willing to pay fines and continue to rent their properties.

In general, 80% of property owners are not aware they are in violation and usually will fix the problem right away when notified, while the other 20% are blatantly defiant with no regard for state or county requirements, or their neighbors.

Unpermitted Airbnb’s and the inclusion if yurts as they violate codes were discussed.

The discussion also shifted to tiny homes as their numbers increase and the fact that the County will need to address these structures and develop an ordinance along with compliance enforcement.

It was decided that further research on the subject, a look into State business license requirements, and a future workshop to continue this discussion will be necessary. (1/16)

Miscellaneous Reports:

There was a discussion held about the Tribal Housing Project in Wishram and the infrastructure that exists in the area, followed by a brief review of the water and sewer connection fees. (1/14)