

Local

Kerns stalls Natural Resources Plan adoption

BY TODD ARRIOLA
Todd@TheBakerCountyPress.com

On Wednesday, the Baker County Board of Commissioners failed to adopt the County's Natural Resources Plan (NRP) during the Board's regular session, prompting a strong response from several members of the public in attendance.

Present for the session, which began at 9 a.m., were Commission Chair Bill Harvey, Commissioner Tim Kerns, and Executive Assistant Heidi Martin. Commissioner Mark Bennett was absent, due to a family emergency.

Also in attendance were Baker County District Attorney Matt Shirtcliff, Baker County Sheriff Travis Ash, Ed Hardt, John and Ramona Creighton, Lorrie Harvey, Craig and Doni Bruland, Cynthia Long, Chuck Chase, Ken Anderson, Tork and Wanda Ballard, Bobbie Danser, Marshall McComb, Randy Joseph, Greenhorn City Councilman Nathan Wright, Rusty Wright, and Gregg Smith.

Several attendees commented during the Citizen Participation segment of the session, including Cynthia Long, who said, "After visiting with Congressman Walden yesterday—which I thought was really enlightening, and I think he understands our issues—just food for thought, and one thing I think about is, maybe we can stop beating to death the Forest Service and the BLM (Bureau of Land Management) for all our woes, and looking back to the good old days, and start looking to the future of what we can do..."

She spoke about improving the local economy, and improving agricultural educational programs and vocational schooling. Harvey responded that there are currently efforts associated with those goals. She also voiced concerns about the proposed Owyhee National Canyonlands monument in Malheur County, and Harvey said, "The Commission will be writing resolutions supporting Malheur County, and their opposition to the monument, as well. The meeting I was at, later in the afternoon, with Walden and the other County Commissioners, we all had the same sentiments. We are sending letters of support to Malheur County."

Hardt said, "We do not want to let our guard down with the Forest Service and BLM," speaking about coordination and other issues. He also voiced his concern about the Owyhee Canyonlands proposal. Anderson said, "We need to educate the people. Every time you take an acre out of production, it has a negative impact on the economy. What they're doing is just taking over this whole land, and it has this effect in Baker," speaking about issues associated with logging.

The Ballards expressed concerns regarding the large amount of time and funding used to open and close roads to public access, including Dooley Mountain, and the effects the winter and spring will have on them.

Chase spoke about the BLM's effort with salvage logging near Chase's mining claim, and Harvey said, "The BLM lost several logging sales that they already had in the process, and they were ready to move on it, so, they suffered quite a loss there, as well, and we're working on salvage logging."

Harvey said three billion seedlings would be needed next year for restoration purposes in the Northwest due to wildfires, but there are only three million available. "There's a huge need, and no supply," he said.

Shirtcliff gave a District Attorney and Juvenile Department update, providing the Board with a Baker County Juvenile Referrals chart, showing crime rates for different categories for 2012-2015. He said, and the chart showed, there was a gradual reduction in virtually all juvenile crimes, from 2013-2015. "The recidivism rate is dropping," he said, noting that, with less of a case load, the department is able to better place juveniles into programs in order to help them avoid committing crimes.

Shirtcliff mentioned the new School Resource Officer (SRO), Lance Woodward, and said he's already doing a good job in the position.

Shirtcliff said the Juvenile Department is looking to implement a new GPS ankle monitoring system, capable of two-way communication. He spoke about the benefits, and said, "It saves us money, and then, we're able to keep in detention those kids that have done major offenses, and not burn through that budget (\$38,000, he stated, with \$4,480 spent so far this year.)"

He said the adult crime statistics look much like last year's, except that drug crimes, especially those associated with methamphetamine (meth), are a huge problem for the County. In 2013, there were 83 drug cases, last year, there were 99, and 112 so far this year. Shirtcliff said, "Meth is so hard to get off of. Sometimes, prison is the only thing that saves a life." He reiterated that violations of drug crimes are treated very seriously locally.

Shirtcliff mentioned that efforts are being made to implement an electronic court filing system, and he spoke about the Domestic Violence Child Witness Project, a program at the Baker County Child Abuse Center St. Alphonsus Hospital, on Pochahontas. According to documentation, "The mission of the domestic violence and child witness program is to help lessen the trauma experienced by children who have alleged physical or sexual abuse or witnessed domestic violence and are involved in the investigation and judicial process."

Shirtcliff spoke with the Board about the second reading of Baker County Ordinance No. 2015-06, An Ordinance Prohibiting Medical And Recreational Marijuana Processing Sites, Marijuana Dispensaries, Marijuana Producers, Marijuana Processors,

Marijuana Wholesalers, And Marijuana Retailers In The County Of Baker, And Declaring An Emergency. The second reading of the ordinance was approved, by title only, with a motion from Kerns, and a second from Harvey.

A Professional Services Agreement, between Baker County and contractor Robin Stedfeld, as a Court-Connected Domestic Relations Mediator, was approved, with a motion from Kerns, and a second from Harvey. The contract covers the period from July 1, 2015 (the start of the fiscal year) through June 30, 2016, and involves compensation at the rate of \$100 per hour, for no more than eight hours of mediation services per case.

Smith, Rusty and Nathan (a Greenhorn City Council member, and all are property owners there) discussed the City of Greenhorn's request for funding from Baker County, in the amount of \$135,000, for the purpose of improving the City's water supply system. The request includes an estimate of \$90,000 for work on an upper spring, and \$45,000 for work on a lower spring, according to an Anderson Perry engineering study.

The amount requested would be from property sales in Greenhorn, Smith said. The total sales amount would be \$254,845, according to Greenhorn Trustee Larry Pearson. Harvey stated issues with the current estimates, and that the previous estimate total was \$80,000. Smith said he would gather more information and get back to the Board. Kerns mentioned two letters from February and October 2009, from then Commission Chair Fred Warner, Jr., addressed to the Greenhorn City Council, offering assistance. He pointed out a sentence in the October letter, which read, "I believe that we would be receptive to helping financially if given a proposal which has identified problem areas with adequate testing," and a highlighted sentence in the February letter reads, "... we would always consider forwarding additional money from the sale of property in Greenhorn to the City."

Other business included an invoice to Baker County, from Eastern Oregon Counties Association (EOCA), in the amount of \$15,800, for EOCA dues for fiscal year 2015-2016

After a five-minute break, Harvey asked Bruland, Baker County Natural Resources Advisory Committee (NRAC) Chair, to speak about the NRP.

She explained the vote during NRAC's meeting on Thursday, September 10, 2015. "We re-voted on the same document we had voted on, on August 18th. We've had to do the re-vote, because of a lack of a public notice. We were all kind of involved in the wildfires, and it just didn't get posted. So, to err on the side of caution, we went ahead and re-voted. Once again, the plan passed, with a significant margin of four. Because we are an advisory committee, that pass means we are advising

the Commission to please adopt the plan also. After its adoption, we will begin the process of putting in the amendments, the edits, fortifying some sections," she said.

Bruland added, "We would invite public comment on to that. The draft plan is actually on the County website at this point. Please take a look. This document is a living document. We plan on working at this all the time. We need to keep making it the best plan possible..."

Our next NRAC meeting September 22nd (at 3 p.m., in the County Commission Chambers)." She welcomed and encouraged the public to attend the meeting, and to provide input when granted, during the initial and final public participation segments.

Harvey said, "The reason we had to re-vote is, because of my fault. I was coming and going out of here pretty quickly during that time, and I'm sorry I did not accomplish that. So, we rescheduled to have that meeting, and we did."

Kerns said, "I would make a motion to approve the plan, except for the Energy portion," which prompted Harvey to respond that the reason the Energy section is limited is because the County Planning Department is working on zoning ordinances associated with that topic, and he wishes to wait until that is completed, in order for the NRAC to make the section consistent with the Department's ordinances. Harvey said the NRAC's recommendation is to adopt the NRP as written, and changes could be made at a later date.

Kerns added, "Well, I've read it, and I don't think that it's very thorough. I don't know every source. I don't know what a power line is, whether that's a source or not (the section refers to alternative energy sources). I think, if we're talking about power lines, it should mention power lines, and I think that it kind of reads like a private land-grab. I'm just not comfortable voting for it. I'm also concerned about its impact..."

Kerns expressed issues with the clarity of what exactly alternative energy refers to, he talked about ownership and development issues, and he reiterated his wish that the Energy section be left out for now.

Harvey said, "The Natural Resources Plan is not dealing with private property rights or zoning ordinances. The Natural Resources Plan is coordination with federal and state agencies only, not with private sources."

Joseph said, "Bill, since I have an energy project on federal land, and I'm concerned also, as Tim has mentioned, I would like to understand how that would impact that project if it was being built after this has been approved. Maybe you could explain how that could impact my project, and that would help me better understand that section."

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Sumpter Council recall counts still unofficial

• OAKLEY LIKELY TO RETAIN OFFICE, WOOLF RECALLED BY ONE VOTE

BY MEGHAN ANDERSCH
Meghan@TheBakerCountyPress.com

Recall elections for Sumpter City Councilors Ada Oakley and G. LeAnne Woolf ended Tuesday, September 15th, with ballots due by 8 p.m. Results are unofficial until certified by county clerk Cindy Carpentre.

There were 42 votes to recall Oakley and 46 against. Woolf was recalled by one vote, with 45 for and 44 against. Barring any surprises during the certification process, this will leave Sumpter with four City Councilors: Oakley, Robert Armbruster, Carey Clarke, and Samantha Esposito.

Statements given by the chief petitioners in demand of a recall and responses by Oakley and Woolf to those statements were included with the ballots mailed to Sumpter voters on August 26th.

The Chief Petitioner on the petition to recall Oakley was Melissa Findley. Her statement in demand of recall said that Oakley contributed "virtually nothing" to City Council, voted blindly for sewer and water rate increases, opposed recording City meetings, and changed the nature and size of her residence without the proper building permits.

Oakley's response read, "I chaired the work on an Employee handbook to approval in Jan. 2015. Chaired locating and reading water meters. Shared a list of items, we need to be working on as a team, never put on agenda. Water and sewer rates, we are keeping up but not adding anything extra for an emergency. Not against recording COUNCIL MEETINGS, against some citizens recording private conversations of citizens before meeting starts, ORS 165-540 and ORS 165-543 illegal if you are not a part of the conversation. Was not on council when I bought a shed to turn into a cabin got my zoning permit from the city and building, electrical Plumbing and mechanical from county and was approved by Gary Bood a shed with a porch, Mr. Bood thought I over did porch no red tag ready to volunteer for my seat on council?"

The Chief Petitioner to recall Woolf was Donald McKinnon. His statement in demand of recall stated noncompliance with public purchasing law, little regard for public meeting laws and administration of City staff, contributing to the issues at stake in the current lawsuit, and participating in an illegal meeting trying to take over the Mayor's powers.

Woolf's statement in defense read, "I believe there's a place for at least some of the attitude of the past. I believe there's a place for a bit of continuity from one council to the next. I believe you should keep me on Sumpter City Council. There are issues with the sewer system that DEQ and issues with the water system that OHA want the City to address. It seems like those issues have been put on a back burner, though. I'd like to make sure we address them so the toilets keep flushing and the water Keeps coming out of the tap. Our volunteer fire department is in the best shape it's ever been in, both with equipment and training. The mutual aid agreements and relationship amongst the valley's fire fighters an emergency personnel is phenomenal. We benefit from safer homes and from lower insurance premiums. This is a development of the recent past I'd like us to keep. Volunteer Park was built with a total of over \$80,000 of donated labor, equipment use, and materials. This was the Youngs and the Clarkes and an awful lot of you, too. This community has proven repeatedly that together we create wonders, restoring a narrow-gauge steam railroad and preserving a gold dredge, running our museums, keeping our library open, looking after neighbors, and so much more. I know we'll get beyond this, and I wanted to be a part of what we all accomplish next."

Sumpter also held a mayoral recall election last month. Carpenter confirmed she was notified about an appeal by Melissa Findley, former mayor, against Alan "Dan" Patton, the chief petitioner in her recall election. Carpenter explained the appeal does not effect the election, and those results will stand.

The appeal process is handled through the State. An update on the status of this appeal was not immediately available.

Sage-grouse press conference scheduled

Oregon Governor Kate Brown has announced an upcoming press conference within the next few days regarding the decision process to list the Greater Sage-Grouse as an endangered species.

Baker County Mark Bennett says his belief is that the press conference may signal an announcement listing the bird sometime as early as next week, but that remains unconfirmed

Bennett continues to express concern over the local economic impact of such a listing. "Whatever it is, this has not been a scientifically-based decision," he said