

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

WORK SESSION

August 26, 2008

The Columbia County Board of Commissioners met in scheduled session with Commissioner Anthony Hyde, Commissioner Joe Corsiglia and Commissioner Rita Bernhard, together with Sarah Hanson, County Counsel and Jan Greenhalgh, Board Secretary.

Commissioner Hyde called the meeting to order.

KENNEL TASK FORCE:

Ray Ramsey, 2987 E. Meissner Road, Deer Island: One problem with the draft - it states that, depending on the situation, you must follow 88-13 and 88-14 however, both of these have been repealed so how can they be followed. Todd stated that Counsel would need to look at this and added that this is only to get the Task Force recommendation and it will then go through the county process.

Commissioner Hyde read a letter into the record from Erica Hall, who could not be present today.

I am the one person who voted against this proposal. This proposal, in my opinion, is not the result of carefully considered information and balanced discussion. The basis used for decision-making seemed to have a strong focus on keeping dog kennels as unregulated as possible, as inexpensive to operators as possible, and without full consideration for the big picture moving forward or the greater good of the county. My concerns are as follows:

***Animal care standards** - by completely ignoring standards for dog kennels, and by making the inspection process for kennels limited, the county continues to face the risk of the considerable expenses of hoarding and neglect situations. Are the resources available to absorb these potential costs? I believe the potential impact of this needs to be considered and addressed now as opposed to later, and preventative measures discussed and considered.*

***Licensing Categories** - I don't understand how or why these were included, or how they are meant to be used and enforced. The decision to categorize the kennel licenses was made outside official task force meetings, and their purpose has never been fully explained.*

***Kennel License cost** - Is the amount adequate to balance the burden of animal control's*

time and efforts in addressing and managing kennels, especially now that the county is facing especially difficult times? I believe this number should be set with careful consideration to the animal control budget. County financial resources are limited, and being granted the privilege to breed dogs in this county should be balanced by a responsibility to keep animal control financially afloat and functioning.

Nuisance - *There is nothing in this proposal that addresses community standards for public health, noise, and nuisance issues. Because Columbia County has no nuisance ordinance, this component is critical. Additionally, the ability for a kennel operator to actually be able to comply with the county noise ordinance needs to be carefully considered before a kennel licence is granted.*

By accepting and adopting this proposal as is, the Commissioners send a strong message to the community that complaints about kennels will remain unaddressed and unresolved. That the quality of animal care in these kennels will not be held to the highest standards. That Columbia County will continue to be a place where the lack of rules and regulations attract those who know they'll be able to get away with almost anything.

I would like to see a new committee formed to reconsider this proposal, compare it to ordinances from neighboring counties, and put some actual research into the process of developing a thoughtful ordinance. There are a few committed, reasonable, resourceful members of this task force who should be invited to return for the purpose of refining this proposal into a complete and well-considered potential ordinance.

Ray responded that Erica's letter shows a lack of understanding. There is an over abundance of laws under the State that kennel owners fall under. This ordinance could be reduced down to one page saying that all State laws apply.

Christy Thompson - the Kennel Ordinance Task Force understood that land use, nuisance, etc. are separate issues and outside the parameters that the KOTF were given.

Scott Groves - this is the first he has heard from Erica and understands what is being said. This task force is giving the Board some issues that need to be addressed.

The Board would be missing a good opportunity by not listening to Erica's recommendation. As much as he would not like to see this process delayed, he would agree with the Board forming a new task force with members from the kennel business, a member of the land use department and others to look at the potential conflicts.

Commissioner Hyde stated that there was no interest in including land use issues into this ordinance.

Cheryl Anderson- Columbia County is not part of Metro - it is an agricultural area. Scott is proposing to add metro rules on an agricultural area.

Commissioner Hyde stated that the County will be looking at the recommendation and also the other issues such as land use to come up with a realistic ordinance that addresses the problems. These issues are so broad, we need to develop an ordinance on the books.

Ray wanted to thank the Board for allowing members of the public to participate in this process.

Cheryl Anderson - in looking for revenue for the county, considering the loss of timber revenues, how about the county looking at a business license to help generate revenue. Tony agreed and explained that is something the County has been looking at. Most all other cities and counties have a business license. Cheryl stated that they have a dog show at the Expo Center in Portland that brings in \$7 million to the Portland area. This could be done in Columbia County by having smaller dog shows at the Fairgrounds.

Mary Graff, Warren - On the Kennel Ordinance Task Force and was pleased with the recommendation. She agrees that issues addressed by Scott and Erica do need to be addressed.

Christy Thompson stated that KOTF had initially added in punishments for say barking dogs or other nuisances, but later found that under land use rules, they couldn't do that and had to remove them.

The Board thanked the Kennel Ordinance Task Force for their participation and recommendations and stated that the County will take this under consideration.

TEEN COURT PROGRAM:

Jean Lewis, Youth Services Initiatives. The purpose of this program is to help lower our drop out rate, help lower the juvenile crime rate and help give the kids the skills to move forward in their lives. She presented the Board with some information on the Teen Court Program. This program existed before but went by the wayside because of the lack of funding and structure. Jean has put together a structure compiled for all cities in the county. She talked about the funding for the program and the research she has done on the costs for these kids going through the juvenile court system. Jean is asking for help from the county to find some funding for this program. She has raised \$6,000 but needs \$15,000.

Commissioner Bernhard was present when the City of Scappoose gave money to this program, which is more than the county can offer at this time. Also, this is something that will need to be funded annually. Commissioner Hyde stated that the Board will

need to check with Stan Mendenhall to see what state funding can be used for this. He believes this is one of the best programs out there for juveniles.

She is working on getting the 501C3 status so she can start working on obtaining grant funding.

Commissioner Hyde stated that because she has met the requirements for grant funding through the Meyer Foundation, this will open it up for a lot of other grant funds, simply because the Meyer Foundation's litmus test is not easy to pass.

Commissioner Bernhard stated that there is a great number of programs out there that are very beneficial and good for the community, however continued funding is always an issue.

In summary, Jean is asking the County for any possible funding to help support this program. Any amount will help. Commissioner Hyde, as Budget Officer, will look at the budget to see if there is any funding available for this.

UPDATE ON CITY OF ST. HELEN'S URBAN RENEWAL PLAN:

Randy Peterson, Chad Olson, Skip Baker and Keith Locke, City of St. Helens, came before the Board to give an update on the city's Urban Renewal Plan. Chad handed the Board a copy of the plan. The Citizen Advisory Committee has been working on the boundaries, goals, objectives, and mission statement. This is very preliminary. Chad referred to an oversized map of the potential Urban Renewal District. There are only a couple of areas in the north and south of the City that would effect the County. Because the county will be effected, they would need to be a co-sponsor to the plan. Discussion was held on the importance of including the fire department and other stakeholders in the planning process. Chad noted that if this plan is not certified by December 31st, the city would have to wait another year.

Commissioner Bernhard asked how the general public is reacting to this plan. Randy isn't sure if the average citizen even understands what an Urban Renewal Plan is. Skip feels that if it doesn't effect their taxes, they're not concerned.

Randy stated that the City Council would be the Urban Renewal Plan Board, however, if the county is a co-sponsor, there would be representation from the County on the Board also.

Commissioner Corsiglia would have expected the County to be involved much sooner

than this. He has received a lot of calls regarding the LID project and both he and the public were confused on which project they were talking about. He talked about the sewer project and Firlock Park. The city is aware of the sewer problems in Firlock Park and tried to get DEQ involved a couple of years ago, but they wouldn't go for it.

Regarding the public hearing, Sarah is not sure the County is required to hold a public hearing because they are only the co-sponsor. However, there is nothing that stops the Board from holding some type of forum for the public. Commissioner Corsiglia feels it is necessary to do so, because a decision is being made on the citizens property and they should be aware of this.

After discussion, there was a consensus of the Board to agree with the City of St. Helens moving forward with the proposed Urban Renewal Plan, including the county property outlined. The Board stressed the importance of holding public hearings and possible town hall meetings to inform the public on this plan.

There was no Executive Session held.

With nothing further coming before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.

Dated at St. Helens, Oregon this 27th day of August, 2008.

NOTE: A tape of this meeting is available for purchase by the public or interested parties.

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BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

By: _____

Anthony Hyde, Chair

By: _____

Joe Corsiglia, Commissioner

Board Secretary:

By _____

Rita Bernhard, Commissioner

By: _____

Jan Greenhalgh