

WEEKLY REVIEW

BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

January 26, 2021



This document is a weekly review of the Board of County Commissioners meeting, Tuesday, January 26, 2021. Information related to agenda changes, Consent Agenda, and Public Comment are on the [County website](#).

Public Hearing

Short Plat Vacation, SPV 2020-004 – Michelle Cooke, Assistant Planning Manager & Andrea Watts, Associate Planner

On November 2, 1982, Short Plat 1282 was recorded under Auditor's Fee Number 868546, which created four (4) residential lots off N 134 PR NW in the unincorporated area of Prosser. The short plat also created a 10-foot irrigation easement running east to west through the northeast corner of Lot 1 of Short Plat 1282. The applicants, Richard and Danielle Vice, are requesting the vacation of the unused 10-foot irrigation easement in order to construct an in-ground pool on their property. Owners of property within 300 feet of the subject parcel and all concerned agencies were notified of the proposed vacation and no concerns were received regarding this proposal. The Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District submitted comments in favor of the vacation as an additional 10-foot irrigation easement currently exists along the northern 10' of Lot 1 of Short Plat 1282. The Planning Department recommends approval of the proposed vacation as presented. **The Board moved and seconded to approve the short plat vacation SPV 2020-004 of the 10-foot irrigation easement running east to west through the northeast corner of Lot 1 of Short Plat 1282 in Section 27, Township 9 North, Range 25 East, W.M. Motion carried.**

Scheduled Business

Elections' Support Appreciation Letter – Brenda Chilton, Auditor

Benton County Auditor, Brenda Chilton, shared a letter addressed to the Board of Commissioners expressing her gratitude for the assistance her department received during the 2020 General Election from various County Departments including, but not limited to, the IT Department, Treasurer's Office, Assessor's Office, Facilities Department, Public Works, HR Department, Sheriff's Office and Richland Police Department, the Office of Budget & Finance, the Prosecutor's Office, Risk Management, and WSU. **No Board direction/vote.**

Other Business

Change Order #6 for Administration Building – Robert Blain, Director of Operations & Capital Programs

The following five changes are compiled into Change Order #6 for the new Administration Building for a total cost of \$16,732.19 plus WSST: 1) Modifying the location of fire dampers in the HVAC system between floors to place the dampers in a position where they will be accessible for future maintenance; 2) Additional supports for the smoke evacuation fans; 3) Removal of the bathroom paper dispensers, which will be provided at no cost by our current paper products supplier; 4) Additional data locations to accommodate wireless access points and additional data needs in the conference rooms; and 5) Adding a lintel above the north stair and grinding the stair stringers, to correct an omission and design error. **The Board moved and seconded to approve Change #6 with Banlin Construction, LLC for the new Administration Building project increasing the contract by \$16,732.19 plus WSST for a new contract amount not to exceed \$13,603,906.28 plus WSST. Motion carried.**

Vaccination Site Update – Matt Rasmussen, Deputy County Administrator

Staff gave an update to the Board regarding the mass vaccination site located at the Fairgrounds. A lot of last-minute changes and direction have occurred, with the initial announcement of the site from Governor Inslee on January 18, 2021, which prompted questions and confusion from the community. Under direction from the State Department of Health, the County is collaborating with the Benton Franklin Health District and the regional Incident Management Team (comprised of local emergency response agencies) to coordinate and set up logistics for the vaccination site, including signage, law enforcement, vaccine receipt and distribution, etc. During setup last week, the team was operating on the understanding that vaccination sites were to be operated on a first come, first served basis then eventually into a pre-registration-based site, but that no appointments would need to be made. This direction changed with no prior notice yesterday morning (January 25, 2021) around 10 AM, when the State Department of Health issued another press release announcing that appointments were available and were required for vaccines. This announcement came after the Fairgrounds parking lot was already full, to capacity, for the number of allotted vaccines for the day with people waiting in line to receive their vaccine. These individuals had been diverted from 10th Avenue to reduce traffic impacts, prior to the time the site was supposed to open. Later in the day, people that had made appointments for the day were understandably frustrated when they arrived and there were no vaccines available for them. As of right now, the site has transitioned to an appointment-only distribution. However, there is currently no limit through the State's registration system to limit the number of available appointments based on the number of vaccines available. At 6 AM today, there were cars lined up on 10th Avenue waiting to get into the site because they were under the impression that the site was still on a first come, first served basis. This has caused immense confusion and frustration for the public, as well as created a safety and traffic hazard for our law enforcement partners and volunteers running the site. We wish to express our sincerest apologies to our community members for the undue frustration and confusion that has been caused due to the lack of communication that is occurring between the State Department of Health and our local vaccine site operators. Our local team is working as hard as they can to make this site as streamlined and efficient as possible, but the constant changes have made this more difficult than necessary. Our local team working tirelessly to implement the mandated changes that are driven by the State and is thankful for the community's patience and understanding as we work to get the vaccine distributed. Despite the challenges, yesterday, Benton County vaccination site had the highest throughput in the entire state for COVID-19 vaccinations. **No Board direction/vote.**

Horse Heaven Wind Farm – Commissioner McKay

Commissioner McKay has requested to hold a townhall-type meeting to hear from community members regarding the Horse Heaven Wind Farm that is being proposed by Scout Clean Energy to get a feel for where the public is at concerning this project. Commissioner Delvin supported the idea and suggested a special meeting be held sometime in the evening to allow people to call in to voice their support or opposition to the project. To reiterate, the County Commissioners do not have the authority to make final decisions regarding the project's approval or denial. At this time, the County has not received any applications for this project, but it appears that Scout Clean Energy has opted to bypass the County's local permitting process and is instead working directly with the [Washington State Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council \(EFSEC\)](#) to permit the project, which is a provided option under [RCW 80.50](#). The EFSEC process does require public meetings and a land use hearing for all projects and Commissioners wish to remind those wishing to voice their opinion to do so at the state level as well. **The Board gave staff direction to work with its Civil Prosecuting Attorney to determine the best date and timing for such a special meeting, to be set at a later date.**

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