

**COMMISSIONERS' MINUTES  
KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON  
KITTITAS VALLEY EVENT CENTER  
901 EAST 7<sup>TH</sup> - SUITE 1  
ELLENSBURG, WA  
SPECIAL MEETING**

**THURSDAY**

**6:00 P.M.**

**AUGUST 18, 2016**

Board members present: Chairman Obie O'Brien; Vice-Chairman Paul Jewell; and Commissioner Laura Osiadacz.

Others: Julie Kjorsvik, Clerk of the Board; Mickey Webb, Event Center Director; Certified Spanish Translator; Neil Caulkins, Deputy Prosecutor; Brett Wachsmith, Treasurer/Rodeo Board Member; Jerry Pettit, Auditor Judy Pless, Budget & Finance Manager and approximately 120 members of the public.

**PUBLIC HEARING                      SHADY ACRES MOBILE HOME PARK                      COMMISSIONERS**

At 6:00 p.m. **CHAIRMAN O'BRIEN** opened a Public Hearing to consider the funding and authorization to purchase the Shady Acres Mobile Home Park.

**NEIL CAULKINS, DEPUTY PROSECUTOR** provided a Staff Report. He reviewed the history of the Purchase and Sale Agreement that contained various conditions in which most of them have been met. He noted a Phase 1 Environmental review had been conducted with no findings, as well as an appraisal conducted by Kidder Mathews. The Title Report of the property was also reviewed.

**JUDY PLESS, BUDGET & FINANCE MANAGER** reviewed how the Finance Committee had been meeting regarding the potential purchase. She provided various funding options and said according to policy, the Board would need to make a formal decision on the funding request within 60 days. She noted the purchase was within the County's financial means.

**COMMISSIONER PAUL JEWELL** reviewed a power-point presentation relating to the updated Master Plan; acquisition of property which was originally included in the 1997 Master Plan; importance of the location of property; opportunity of sale noting the owner approached the County; use of proposed improvements to property; County assistance and relocation planning for residents; and the future of real estate closing, closure notice and redevelopment.

**APPROVED**

9-6-2016

**THOSE PRESENT & TESTIFYING:** **BOB MARTIN** supported the County purchasing the property and felt if they didn't take advantage of the purchase now, a private person would buy it and they would most likely bypass the one year notice requirement for current residents renting the property. **JULIE SORENSON, REPRESENTING THE 4-H LIVESTOCK COMMITTEE** supported purchasing the property and expansion of the Fairgrounds. She said they participated in 2 long range planning periods and reviewed the lack of space for events at the Fairgrounds. **HEATHER HARRELL, KITTITAS COUNTY FAIR BOARD MEMBER** supported the recent purchases of residential and commercial property. They support long term strategic planning. **BECKY McDOWELL, KITTITAS COUNTY FAIR BOARD MEMBER** said they had reviewed the plan that was conducted years ago and they are experiencing safety issues due to growth. She reviewed the survey and plan that was done by Beckwith Consulting. She expressed her support of the Barton's sale of their property to the County and felt it would benefit all residents of Kittitas County. **ROYLENE CRAWFORD, KITTITAS COUNTY FAIR BOARD MEMBER** said she supported the Barton's right to sell their property to Kittitas County. She also expressed support of purchasing the mobile home park. **BECKY SHIRLEY** spoke in favor of the purchase and felt the County was being generous to the residents. She also felt the purchase is in the best interest of the County. **WILMA PRATT, KITTITAS COUNTY FAIR BOARD MEMBER** said they needed to acquire the mobile home park and improve the facilities. She said it's been going on since she joined the group which was 40 years ago. **BILL ALLISON, KITTITAS COUNTY FAIR BOARD MEMBER** said he has seen every corner of the Fairgrounds being used. He supported the purchase and expressed concerns of the resident's conditions not being up to standards including snow load, unsanitary conditions and fire hazards (old wires, etc.). He felt the residents should be living in safe and sanitary conditions. **RANDY CHAPMAN, REPRESENTING THE ASSOCIATION OF MANUFACTURED HOME OWNERS** said they have been working with the residents of Shady Acres and have helped them form a homeowners association. They also assist other Latino families in other Counties for property being used for other issues. He felt government should help by providing housing for those in need, and not evicting them from their homes. **JERRY LAEL, FAIR BOARD MEMBER** expressed his support of the purchase and also supported property rights. He acknowledged how the County has been purchasing property through the Master Plan's recommendations for some time. He sympathized with the residents losing their homes, but acknowledged the County has been working on more affordable housing needs for their citizens. **JERRY JARNIGAN, FAIR BOARD MEMBER** explained how many 4-H Horse kids have been

left out for many years from the annual Fair because of the lack of room for their projects. He said he's never seen a decrease in the amount of people going to the Fair but rather attendance has only increased each year. **JODI SCHEYNER, FAIR BOARD MEMBER** supported the purchase of the property. She said she is the Director of the Horse 4-H and that kids have not been allowed to participate in the annual Fair for more than 40 years due to the lack of room. She expressed support of the North end expansion, new arenas, and new barns. **JESSIE BLACKWOOD, FAIR BOARD MEMBER** commented on the lack of space at the Fairgrounds and how expansion has been talked about for many years. She supported the purchase of property. **CL CLARK, FAIR BOARD MEMBER** expressed her support of purchasing the property, especially for the youth of Kittitas County. **JEFF FALTUS, PRESIDENT OF THE ELLENSBURG RODEO** spoke in favor of the Kittitas County Long Range Plan. Personally, he felt the Barton's should be allowed to sell their property to Kittitas County. He was in favor of the purchase and assisting the residents. **BILL BOYUM** explained how there had been 2 comprehensive plans done on the Fairgrounds. He supported the plans when they were made and that once a plan has been put in place, the County should carry it out. **LARRY LOWTHER** felt the proposed plan could be modified when additional information has been obtained. He said he didn't recall receiving information about the Shady Acres purchase. He thought it was a functioning neighborhood with a sense of community and should be considered by the Commissioners. **HOPE AMASON** spoke in opposition of the purchase. She thought it was unethical that the County would destroy a vibrant neighborhood. She expressed concerned about residents and their stress. **RIVER MELOS** objected to County tax dollars being used to put people out of their houses and would be voting accordingly. **CAROL MILLER-RHODES** said the closure of the mobile home park would dislocate people from their homes. She questioned if that was in the plan and asked if an RV park was more important than the residents including elderly, children, and the disabled. She indicated mobile homes were a part of affordable housing in Kittitas County, and thought the County Commissioners have disregarded the Homeless & Affordable Housing Committee's recommendations. **NAN DOOLITTLE** opposed the purchase of the mobile home park. She said she was concerned the Barton's may have been misguided. She thought if the Housing Authority purchased the property, the Barton's could save money by not having to pay sales tax, and they would also not be using tax payer's money to purchase the property. **CARL NELSON** felt the issue should not be framed as Shady Acres versus Fairgrounds as it is unfair. He didn't feel the Fairgrounds were at risk and there is a 20 million dollar budget, which is well funded. He felt the County should reconsider purchasing the property,

noting how there is currently a crisis of affordable housing needs. **ROB FRASER** opposed the purchase of the property. He said the appraisal on the property said its best use of the land is to keep it as low-income housing with new trailers. **GUADALUPE HUITRON, FRIENDS OF SHADY ACRES** urged the Board to follow the recommendations of the Homeless & Affordable Housing Committee, and the Ellensburg City Council. She explained how there was an affordable housing crisis in the County, and how the survey only had a 4 percent return. She felt people should have reached out to residents of Shady Acres and have it available in Spanish. **RODRIGO DE LA ROSA** representing the residents of Shady Acres said their families have lived in the community throughout many years enjoying the Fair as well. The residents believe it will be different this year because the Fair will cost them their home in order for it to grow. He questioned who would be paying for the effort of moving as it will be very difficult for families. The purchase will have an effect on every resident and asked the County to reconsider purchasing the property. He asked the County to find a way to help them through the situation and take into consideration the needs of all of their families. **SUSI WEISS** opposed the purchase of the mobile home park. She expressed concerns over the amount of Upper County homeless people and was appalled the County would be spending 1.4 million dollars on an RV park when homeless is a problem all over the County. She stated the people in Upper County were not in favor of the purchase either. **KELLI CONNER** spoke in opposition of the purchase and felt the mobile home park was not affordable housing, but rather low-income housing. She thought the County was being irresponsible in purchasing the property. **BRETT HOLLAR, FAIR BOARD MEMBER** said he was involved in 4-H and spoke of the benefits of the various events held at the Fairgrounds. He indicated the Fairgrounds needs to grow and how the property has been looked at for years, and therefore supported the purchase of the mobile home park. **RON McCLELLAN** felt if the County purchased the mobile home park it would be taking away the residents dream and explained how they have all struggled to pay off their trailers. He referenced the 2015 housing needs assessment of Kittitas County. **STAN BLAZINSKI** challenged the Commissioners and questioned where the legal authority was to provide a mass entertainment such as the Fair at the tax payer's expense. He noted there was no word of Shady Acres mentioned in survey and thought the County was hiding something from their constituents. **JARRED FUDAZ, FAIR BOARD MEMBER** said he supported the purchase of property and that he grew up as a member of 4-H and has a lot of experience throughout the Fairgrounds. He reviewed the constraints for the 4-H program and how difficult it is to continue to grow if there is not adequate room. **LYNN**

**HARRISON** asked the Board to hold off on the decision. She noted the 4-H and Fair supporters were supporting the extra space for the Fairgrounds, but the County said it would be for RV parking. He said the Upper County had not had the opportunity for real input and a Public Hearing should be held in that area as well. **RAVEN GARCIA** said she was a resident of the property and appreciated the fact that the County wanted to purchase the property in order to expand the Fairgrounds, but couldn't help be concerned with what would happen to the residents. She explained how she had went to Housing Authority and filled out application for housing and was told she qualified for a 4 bedroom and there were only 4 homes at that size. She asked the County to reconsider purchasing the property. **LUCY TEMPLE** commented on 4-H and the RV park which would displace residents. She reviewed the 4-H program's mission and didn't think kids would vote for it. **NICK COLLIN-MURPHRY** supported the Fairgrounds expansion but also felt bad for the residents. He reviewed the importance of community and how the residents needed to be together as much as possible. He encouraged the County to take their time and not rush any decision. **MICHELLE CAWLEY** said she was a Community Health Nurse and lived in fear that her son who is a Fire Fighter would be in danger if a fire broke out in the Shady Acres neighborhood. She said she visits the residents often, and although they love their homes and take as good of care of them as possible, the trailers are not safe. She said she supported the growth of the Fairgrounds and 4-H programs but believes a decision can be reached which would satisfy both the County and the residents of Shady Acres. **THERE BEING NO OTHERS REQUESTING TO TESTIFY THE PUBLIC PORTION OF THE HEARING WAS CLOSED.**

**COMMISSIONER JEWELL** moved to authorize funding and move to close on the purchase of the Shady Acre Mobile Home Park; grant authority for the Chair to sign closing documents; and direct Staff to prepare enabling documents declaring official intent regarding the expenditure for purchase. **COMMISSIONER OSIADACZ** seconded.

**COMMISSIONER JEWELL** addressed how the timing was important and the potential of purchasing the property had been a consideration of the County for decades. The negotiations with the Barton's had been in the works for nearly 2 years, and the Purchase and Sale Agreement had been signed by the Board in April with a closing date of September 9<sup>th</sup>. He indicated the County was not in a hurry to send out closure notices to the residents and they were committed to helping find some long term solutions that would provide for safe and affordable options for

the current residents. He believed they can have both the Fairgrounds expansion and affordable housing options for the current residents. He noted how the Barton's were approached with the opportunity to have the Housing Authority purchase the property, but they did not want to relieve the County of their Purchase and Sale Agreement, as their intent was to sell it to the County. He thanked everyone for their participation in the process and noted it was not the end of something, but rather the beginning of a lot of work ahead. He encouraged citizens to remain involved in the process as there would be future opportunities including a task force, etc.

**COMMISSIONER OSIADAZ** said the issue became a topic of conversation during the Agenda Sessions just after she had been appointed to the position in April. She explained how she had spent countless hours looking at the pros and cons along with different scenarios. She said it was not an easy decision to make as she cares deeply about people and the County. She said she is committed to not giving residents a closing notice until there is a plan in place for all who live there and wanted to build relationships with them to see what they can do to help. She noted how she has yet to have a conversation with any of the actual residents of the mobile home park and so all she can go by is public comment and materials that have been provided to her. The expansion was important noting the amount of work and public process that was done creating the plan, and believed a solution would be mutually beneficially to Fairgrounds, residents, and the County.

**CHAIRMAN O'BRIEN** said he is fully aware of the lack of affordable housing in the County. He indicated he did not have any intention on closing the park until an option was available for the residents and that the County would continue to actively work on the situation.


Motion carried 3-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

**CLERK OF THE BOARD**

  
Julie Kjorsvik

**KITTITAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

  
Obie O'Brien, Chairman