



WASCO COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL SESSION
MAY 26, 2011

PRESENT: Sherry Holliday, Chair of County Commission
Scott C. Hege, County Commissioner
Rod L. Runyon, County Commissioner
Kathy McBride, Executive Assistant

At 1:30 p.m. Chair Holliday called the Special Session of the Board of Commissioners to order to interview candidates for the opening on the Columbia River Gorge Commission as Wasco County's Representative.

Ken Bailey was present since the Board invited him to assist the Commissioners in the interview process.

Rodger Nichols was the first candidate to be interviewed.

Chair Holliday explained that each candidate will be asked the same prepared questions. A copy of the interview questions is attached as Exhibit A.

Chair Holliday will be asking each candidate the prepared interview questions.

In summary Rodger Nichols stated that his experience is with covering the Gorge Commission in both print and radio. He has attended more meetings than nine of the Gorge Commission Members. He also attends Executive Sessions. He has lived in The Dalles for 34 years. Wasco County is one of six counties located in the scenic area. Wasco County has its own plan, while Klickitat County does not. The Gorge Commission does the application reviews for Klickitat County. The two scenic area goals are co-equal. The Gorge Commission is moving, most recently, in allowing things not inside the urban growth area. If you had a pre-existing business before or a business on the national registry, or eligible to be on the registry you could have some economic benefits. The Gorge Commission has done a good job on protecting the view corridors.

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Nichols stated if appointed he would represent the Board of Commissioners. He would hope to consult with the Planning Department to see if there are any problems. He has not seen a lot of involvement with the Gorge Commission Staff and the Commission. The Gorge Commission started out on one side. He feels they are getting closer to a balance on the Commission. He is seeing that people are willing to compromise.

Nichols stated that no one can match his experience but Doug Crow. Crow has not been attending any meetings since his term on the Gorge Commission expired. Nichols feels he would hit the ground running, if appointed.

Nichols stated that the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center is in Wasco County. It still needs to be fully paid for as promised. He feels that Wasco County is different than the other counties in terms of land structure, climate, etc. He feels that the Gorge Commission has been unbalanced for a long time. They are getting closer to being balanced. Nichols feels that Jill Arens, Executive Director, is doing a good job. He feels there should be time set aside once per month to find out what is happening on the Gorge Commission. Nichols wants to make sure that he knows what the Board of Commissioners want.

As to a minor amendment; the test he would use would be similar to a recount of someone being elected, one-fifth of the vote. He would consider a minor amendment being one-fifth of the total acres of property located in the national scenic area. The Gorge Commission can only do so much if they don't have the money. They need to make a stand on the urban growth boundary expansion for the City of The Dalles.

Chair Holliday asked Nichols if he has heard anything since the State of Washington closed their session last night.

Nichols has not heard anything regarding the funding of the Gorge Commission from the State of Washington.

Commissioner Hege asked Nichols what has to happen to start moving the issue of expansion forward.

Nichols responded by stating that a bucket of money and more staff will get the issue rolling.

Bailey asked Nichols if he is appointed how he would deal with the perceived conflict that someone talking to you won't end up being quoted in an article if you are still in the reporting business.

Nichols stated that he would treat the conversation as an executive session.

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Bailey stated it is not just you. Could other people talk to you and trust that it would not be reported?

Nichols replied that he would tell them anything that is private will remain private. What he reports on is the decisions of the meetings.

Commissioner Runyon asked if there is anything that he wants to ask the Board of Commissioners.

Nichols stated that he is not in it for the money. He has spoken to Dan Manciu, his boss. Manciu said to go for it.

Some general discussion occurred.

The next to be interviewed was Kenneth McBain.

In summary Kenneth McBain stated that he lived here from 1992 through 1995. He is very supportive of the intent and objectives of the scenic area. McBain noted his background as a cattle rancher and dealing with land use planning and zoning. He has dealt with land use and economic development issues for four years. There are many conflicts between the two purposes of the scenic act that are probably challenges for the Gorge Commission and all entities; to maintain and preserve the environment and ecology and the needs of the agriculture community. Balancing it and doing it fairly is a real challenge.

McBain stated it would be difficult for him to answer what has been successful under the National Scenic Act without taking the time to review and analyze all that has happened over the last 20 years. As time moves forward the demands will be met with a decrease in flexibility. In his conversation with Dan Durow regarding the City of The Dalles and the urban growth boundary; they don't meet the requirements. How they acquire property for future development that complies with state and federal regulations will be a real challenge.

McBain feels that the makeup of the Gorge Commission is reasonable and fair. The needs of the six counties involved are different in many respects. Each county representative is there to represent the county that they come from. They need to be open to fair and reasonable interpretation of the rules. McBain feels that the demands on the Gorge Commission and the Management Plan as it has been adopted and revised will do nothing but increase the flexibility to accommodate many of these requests and changes will be less and less flexible. As to the recent Supreme Court decision; they are very sensitive and difficult to deal with for growth and expansions. We need to rely on the letter of the law.

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McBain feels that he would bring a new perspective to the Gorge Commission if appointed since he lived here for four years and was gone for 16 years. He does not have any preconceived ideas, nor does he have ties that would influence the role. McBain stated that he has a diverse background; 40 years as a Chief Executive Officer. He has lived most of his adult life in rural areas and rural health was his specialty.

Wasco County is more diverse as compared to the other gorge counties. We are the hub of the economic base as to medical, dam and power generation. We serve as the largest community in the scenic area.

McBain stated that he could not address the balance in terms of the current Gorge Commission membership. He thinks it is a never ending question. He is open and fair minded in dealing with the issues. McBain feels that the County's representative would report back regularly to the Board of Commissioners.

As to the expansion of urban areas; the challenge varies by county and by urban area. The urbanized area of Dallesport, Washington is huge, while the City of The Dalles is under constraints. McBain stated that he lives in a rather unique area. There is open space within the urban boundary that cannot be annexed to the City of The Dalles. The open space abuts the City and the individual lots do not. Sterling is a private street which serves the subdivision where he lives.

McBain stated that he has no opinions as to what is a minor amendment. He does not know of a specific definition that would be minor. Minor would be in the eye of the beholder. If he was appointed to the Gorge Commission he would have to recognize that any urban communities that are out of compliance for space for development would have to have a meeting of the minds. He is not afraid to make decisions. He is retired and has no limitations on time and energy.

There were no further questions or comments.

The final candidate to be interviewed was Dan Ericksen.

Bailey noted at the beginning of the interview that he and Ericksen worked on land use issues together since the 1970s.

In summary Dan Ericksen stated that his experience goes back to when the County was adopting the Ordinance for the scenic area. He moved from the Board of Adjustment to the Wasco County Planning Commission. He got firsthand experience in working with the scenic area process. He was a member of the County Court/Board of Commissioners for 14 years and five years on the Planning Commission.

Ericksen stated that the scenic area goals are equal. Supporting the economy of the gorge is equally important as the preservation of the area. The two have to be in

balance. Historically they have not been balanced; there is a strong push for preservation. The Friends of the Columbia River Gorge has been a strong presence. We got to figure out a way how communities can grow and businesses can thrive. Preservation has been the most successful and to a limited degree the development of homes in the scenic area. There has been a set back by the Supreme Court's ruling as to the cumulative effect of development. The Gorge Commission is being sent back to the drawing board to develop a method for cumulative impact.

Ericksen feels it is important for the County's appointee to be aware of Wasco County issues and to bring those before the Commission. The Commissioner needs to support the County's issues and to stay within the overall requirements of the act. Washington State did not have land use rules when the act was adopted. The Ordinance is closer to what Oregon State previously had. Being able to accommodate both states and the counties is an issue that needs to be worked on.

Ericksen stated it is hard to balance property rights and the preservation of the scenic, natural, cultural and recreation resources of the scenic area. The rules are written in black and white. If there is a gray area Wasco County could give more flexibility to the land owner.

Ericksen stated that he can offer years of experience dealing with the issues. He understands the rules and implementation of the rules. He can view the implementation to provide protection and have some lenience for the applicants. It is important for Commissioners to view themselves as not just policy makers; they are also decision makers. Commissioners need to take a stand in a less intrusive manner. He has the experience to convince the Gorge Commissioners of alternatives and options that they have.

Ericksen stated that Wasco County will be the lead county on the issue of urban growth boundary expansion. One of the biggest issues will be trying to establish the rules for urban growth boundary expansion. There are also agricultural issues such as with labor housing and buildings.

Ericksen feels that the economic enhancements have been overlooked. The Friends of the Columbia River Gorge have a large amount of influence and has kept the issue of balance to the preservation side. Staff has become pragmatic. They have had some dissention in bringing support to the economic side. Supporting staff will continue to move the Gorge Commission to the right direction.

Ericksen noted how Judy Davis took a lot of heat for her decision on the View Point Inn in Multnomah County. The position she took was at the request of the Wasco County Court. The County requested that the Commission provide the same opportunity for the other counties. Her vote stopped the process. The Gorge Commission ended up

adopting an ordinance for the entire gorge. Had she not followed Wasco County's recommendation we would have spot zoned the View Point Inn.

As to a minor amendment it is more than an acre. In reading the act he thinks there are some criteria that have been ignored that could be used to develop the mechanism to do an urban growth expansion. It is relative to the size and needs of the community and the impact to the expansion. The amendment should be by a case by case basis. It is not listed as a criteria; it is only mentioned.

Bailey asked if they could do it without an amendment to the Management Plan.

Ericksen replied that they should be able to develop an Ordinance from the act. It may take an amendment to the Management Plan to adopt the Ordinance. The second piece is that they do not have the funding to do that; it will be critical in the next few years to get things done. It would be a minimal amount of money for this project. It is possible that Representative Greg Walden or Senator Ron Wyden could move the project forward for funding. During the next two to five years getting adequate funding to keep the Gorge Commission doors open will be a challenge.

Bailey stated that he understands that Ericksen applied to the Governor's Office for appointment to the Columbia River Gorge Commission. He asked Ericksen if he has heard anything.

Ericksen stated that there are only two applicants. He does not expect to be chosen. The other applicant is a member of the Democratic Party who has worked as a preservationist in the gorge. Ericksen stated that he thinks he has a lot to offer.

Bailey noted that most of the Governor's appointments have come from the preservation community.

Some discussion occurred.

Chair Holliday asked Ericksen if there was anything else that he would like to address to the Board.

Ericksen noted his involvement in a number of scenic area issues, such as Polehn's cold storage building, Webb's property development, and Charter Communication's permit application process.

Chair Holliday noted that the Board of Commissioners is hoping to make a decision by no later than June 15, 2011.

The Board and Bailey did a quick overview of the candidates interviewed for the Columbia River Gorge Commission.

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Bailey noted that he placed the seven candidates in three categories. McBain and Jones are interested with not as much knowledge as the other candidates. Nichols, Silver and Van Valkenburgh have a lot of information but he is not sure if they collectively or individually have the political push. Ericksen and Crow have the most experience and can be the most effective.

Bailey stated that Crow is willing to serve but he is recommending Ericksen for appointment. Bailey stated that he has known Ericksen forever. He likes Ericksen's position on a lot of the land use stuff. Bailey feels he would be most effective because of his knowledge, his understanding of the County and his dealing with the County Planning Department.

Bailey stated that this is his first view of the candidates. All of the candidates are capable and able to do this.

Commissioner Runyon stated that he had McBain and Jones in about the same spot.

Chair Holliday stated that Ericksen has a list of contacts that most of the other candidates wouldn't have.

Bailey stated that Crow and Ericksen have the political understanding. Ericksen has experience at the County level; knowing the individual cases and how they worked.

Chair Holliday stated it is a plus for Ericksen as to the urban growth boundary expansion.

Bailey noted Ericksen also has the relationship with the County and City staff to work with the local concerns. He said Nichols would be ok. Bailey was not sure if Nichols has the political side down.

Commissioner Hege stated that he generally agrees. The answers that Nichols gave were insightful. Maybe he sees it from a different view. He hadn't thought of the political situation; he would agree with Crow.

Commissioner Hege stated that he has received a lot of input that is not good about Ericksen. There are a lot of people troubled with him being our County Representative. It is impressive that we have a lot of qualified people. He would agree that they all could do the job. Crow, Ericksen and Nichols are his three top candidates. That is not taking away anything from the other candidates.

Commissioner Runyon stated that his top three candidates are Crow, Van Valkenburgh and Nichols, not in that order. The other candidates he is not interested in for various reasons.

Commissioner Runyon stated Nichols knows exactly what to ask; he is very insightful.

Bailey stated his concern is how other people would deal with him. That is a question that he sees.

Chair Holliday had three top candidates; Ericksen, Crow and Silver. All of the candidates are good.

Bailey stated that he has no problem with any of the four candidates mentioned. He felt that Ericksen and Crow would be better with working with the Commission. The draw back with Silver is that she has not been a resident of the County as long as the others.

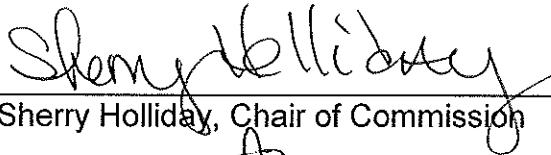
Some discussion occurred regarding the selection process.

Commissioner Runyon thought it would be good for Bailey to make a presentation regarding the quality of the process.

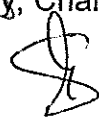
The Board agreed to schedule a time on June 8, 2011 for the appointment of an individual as the County Representative on the Columbia River Gorge Commission.

The Board adjourned at 3:33 p.m.

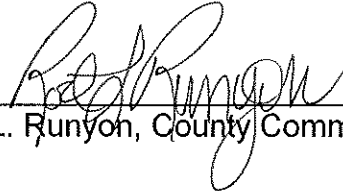
WASCO COUNTY BOARD
OF COMMISSIONERS



Sherry Holliday, Chair of Commission



Scott C. Hege, County Commissioner



Rod L. Runyon, County Commissioner

WASCO COUNTY REPRESENTATIVE ON THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE COMMISSION
RODGER NICHOLS

QUESTIONS

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1. What is your experience with the National Scenic Area? What do you think Wasco County's role is within the framework of the NSA?

2. The first purpose of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area is "to protect and provide for the enhancement of the scenic, cultural, recreational and natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge". The second purpose is "to protect and support the economy of the Gorge by encouraging growth to occur in existing urban areas and by allowing future economic development in a manner that is consistent with protection of scenic, cultural, recreation and natural resources". How do you feel about these two goals and what is the relationship between the two?

3. What do you feel are the parts of the National Scenic Act that have been successful?

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<p>4. What do you perceive as the role of the Wasco County appointed Gorge Commission Position in relation to the Board of Commissioners and the County Planning Department?</p>					
<p>5. The Gorge Commission is presented with many volatile land use issues and is constantly challenged with balancing property rights and preservation of the Scenic, Natural, Cultural and Recreation Resources of the National Scenic Area. How would you achieve this balance as a Gorge Commissioner?</p>					
<p>6. What distinctive abilities, skills, experiences, or perspective would you be able to bring to the Gorge Commission?</p>					
<p>7. What do you feel are the unique interests of Wasco County and how would you represent them as a Gorge Commissioner?</p>					

8. We often hear that the Gorge Commission is not balanced and is one-sided toward protecting resources at the expense of supporting our economy. What are your thoughts on this statement? If you feel the Commission is properly balanced, how would you explain that to the citizens of Wasco County? If you do not feel it is balanced, how would you work to provide balance to the Gorge Commission?

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9. As an appointee of the Wasco County Commission, how would you plan to keep the Commissioners and the citizens of Wasco County informed about the activities and actions of the Gorge Commission?

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10. What are your thoughts regarding the expansion of urban areas within the Scenic Area? Do you have any opinions regarding what is a minor amendment?

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11. The City of The Dalles is applying for a UGB Expansion and to date the Gorge Commission has not even found a way to get the process started. How would you go about moving this issue forward?

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