

**WHITMAN COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION
Wednesday, January 8, 2020
7:00 PM
Public Hearing Minutes**

MEMBERS:

Chad Whetzel – Chair	Guy Williams – Member
Keith Paulson – Member	Robert Hill – Member
Brian Davies – Member	Gary Moore – Member
Russell Jamison – Member	David Gibney – Member

STAFF:

Alan Thomson – County Planner
Katrin Kunz – Assistant County Planner
Mark Storey – Public Works Director / County Engineer
Denis Tracy – County Prosecutor
Ginny Rumiser – Clerk

Audience: Chris Skidmore; Roger Myers; Lana Myers; Kathleen Parker; Georgia Wells; Ken Duft; Shelley Chambers; James Burton; Carla Burton-Keifer; Kathleen Lloyd; David Gang; and Zach Dauscher.

Chad Whetzel – Opened the public hearing for **ZC 19-02**. Has everyone read through the preliminary findings of fact?

Several members asked that he take a minute for them to read through the findings.

Katrin Kunz – Are there any questions? The zone change is for a 2-acre parcel. Roger and Lana Myers are the founders of W.H.E.A.T. They are the applicants and they are also the owners of this 2-acre parcel. W.H.E.A.T. is a non-profit organization and they send out packages to American troops stationed abroad. At this location and those buildings that are on site, they receive packages or donated goods, they pack them and ship them from there. They have 2-3 volunteers once a week for 2-3 hours. Impacts are very minimal to the surrounding area. Exhibit 6, when I sent out the findings, we had one comment received, one supportive comment, and now I have 3 more supporting letters. I received those today. Do you want to read them into the record?

Chad Whetzel – How long are they? Yeah, we should probably read those into the record. If you want I can read those in, or you can.

Katrin Kunz – Whatever.

Applicant: W.H.E.A.T. ('We Honor Every American Troop')

Requests: Zone Change from the Agricultural District to a Limited Light Industrial District.

Location: The parcel is located in the SW ¼ of Section 2, Township 15 N., Range 39 E., W.M., Whitman County, Washington.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Changes and additions to the Findings of Fact are in ***bold italic***.

1. A 2-acre parcel is proposed to be taken out of the Agricultural District and rezoned to a Limited Light Industrial District.
2. The parcel is located on the north side of LaCrosse Airport Road, just south west of the town of LaCrosse, in the SW ¼ of Section 2, Township 15 N., Range 39 E., W.M., Whitman County, Washington. (See **Exhibit 1**, Vicinity map, **Exhibit 2**, Aerial photo).
3. The applicant has requested a zone change from the Agricultural District to a Limited Light Industrial District for the location of a non-profit organization pursuant to Chapter 19.48 – Limited Zone Overlay and Chapter 19.04 – Amendments. (See **Exhibit 3**, Zone change application).
4. The 2-acre parcel is owned by Roger and Lana Myers, the founders of the non-profit organization W.H.E.A.T.. (See **Exhibit 4**, Whitman County Assessor's parcel map.)
5. The purpose of this request is to allow the non-profit organization to store and pack donated goods on site before shipping them to American troops abroad.
6. This Limited Light Industrial District will exclude the permitted uses listed in Chapter 19.30.020: (B), (C), (D), (E), (F), (G), (H), (I), (J), (K), (L), (M), (N), (O), (P), (Q), (R), (S), (T), (U), (V), (W), (X). All other listed permitted uses will be allowed and are listed as follows:
 - A. The manufacture, processing, compounding, storage, packaging, or treatment of food products.
 - Y. Unclassified Uses
7. The proposed re-zone is consistent with the Whitman County Comprehensive Plan per the Industrial Land Use Element.

8. The site is accessed directly off Lacrosse Airport Road with an existing driveway. The project will generate approximately two to three vehicular trips of volunteers per week.
9. The surrounding land to the north and west is zoned Agricultural District. To the east the parcel abuts the city limits of LaCrosse and to the south the parcel abuts LaCrosse Airport Road and, further to the south, the old railroad line.
10. The parcel is the former site of a trucking company. Currently there are 3 buildings on the parcel, one small office building and two metal storage sheds. (See **Exhibit 5**, Photos.)
11. All adjacent landowners within 300 feet of the project were informed of this request and hearing by U.S. mail. At the time of this hearing, ~~one~~ **four** comments ~~was~~ **were** received by Whitman County Planning concerning this notification. (See **Exhibit 6**, Letter from Eric and Lois Startin; **Exhibit 7**, **Letter from Tawnja Miller**; **Exhibit 8**, **Letter from John Kirkpatrick and Exhibit 9**, **Letter from Larry and Sandy Martin**.) Letters have been added to the record:

Exhibit 6, Letter from Eric and Lois Startin

To the Whitman County Planning Commission

To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing in support of the rezoning of land on LaCrosse Airport Road from Agricultural to Limited Light Industrial. (File # ZC19-02),

We own a 9-acre piece of property adjacent to the Roger and Lana Myers property being reviewed.

Rezoning the property will benefit our community. The newly formed W.H.E.A.T. nonprofit organization will refurbish the rundown buildings, clean up the lots, haul off the junk littering the property and then use the renovated facility to package and ship products to our military troops who are stationed overseas.

There is no doubt that this will be a major improvement to the grounds and our community.

Rezoning of the property will not affect any AG land or any way of life in the surrounding area.

We are in favor of the rezoning of the property and support the mission of the W.H.E.A.T. organization.

Please feel free to contact either of us with questions.

Sincerely,
 Eric and Lois Startin
 106351 SR 26
 LaCrosse, WA 99143
 509-549-3629

The following letters were read into the record by Chad Whetzel.

Exhibit 7, Letter from Tawnja and Terry Miller

To whom it may concern,

My name is Tawnja Miller and my husband, Terry and I own pasture ground that borders the property recently purchased by Roger and Lana Myers. We are in full support of their plans for the property. Already the work and clean-up they have done has been very noticeable in the short time they've been there. That can only benefit our property and our town. However, our main support is because we believe what they are doing in caring for our military troops and we cannot think of a better use of that property or buildings. This is accomplished by volunteers only and all proceeds are gifted to our deployed troops. This is a great service that has been started and we hope it will continue to grow with support and backing of Lacrosse and Whitman County. It has also helped our Community by allowing our Community members and even student volunteers at our local school to be involved in preparing the boxes to send to a worthy cause, something they believe in. If you have any questions please feel free to call either one of us.

Sincerely,

Tawnja Miller

Chad Whetzel – I will not read their phone number into the record. If someone wants to contact Ms. Miller or her husband, they can contact the County Planning Department.

Katrin Kunz – Shall we make this Exhibit 7?

Chad Whetzel – Yes, I believe that is the next exhibit number.

Exhibit 8, Letter from John Kirkpatrick

To Whom It May Concern:

The saying “I am proud to live in the United States of America and I am Proud to American” is a statement that comes from the fact that this truly is the greatest place on this Planet to Live. Yet these statements would mean nothing if over the years we didn't have the Greatest Military in the world to allow us the Freedom that so many Men and Women have so dearly and bravely fought for us all to live in the land of the free The United States of America.

I am also proud to say that living in LaCrosse is a place where Freedom support and genuine care for each other shows time and time again in so many ways through the people who know and show their true dedication and meaning to the word Freedom.

WE/LaCrosse, Whitman County have been blessed to have a New Organization W.H.E.A.T. (We Honor Every American Troop) as a new part of our Community. Yet none of this would be possible without the commitment of people like Roger and Lana Myers (They are the true example of what it means to be a Dedicated Proud American).

It is amazing and sad to me that our Men and Women who fight for our Honor and Freedom are in such dire need that we as the United Government do so little to supply them with their basic needs to help them to survive with their day to day activities to live to fight for us throughout the world. Yet with the help

and support of Whitman County, communities like LaCrosse and surrounding communities' support, commitment we can make a difference to help our Armed forces be supplied with these basic needs.

But it takes not only commitment, dedication from people like Roger and Lana it takes a Facility to house and distribute the supplies needed to support our troops' needs. It also takes the support of Whitman county and a Community (through volunteers, donations, and many needs to not only see that these needs are and can continue to be met for years to come, A VISION), yet to grow LaCrosse in a positive, economical way for today, tomorrow and our future.

Roger and Lana came to this community with a Vision not only because they love it here, but they saw how supportive and committed the LaCrosse community truly is. They have shown this by immediately getting involved to help make LaCrosse a safer, better place to live not only for us but for future generations.

W.H.E.A.T. is just another example of their true commitment and dedication to reach out for those in need and once again why we all can say we are "Proud to be an American." Recently, Roger and Lana purchased land and buildings (funded out of their own money) to house this vision of W.H.E.A.T. This is not only a distribution place, but a place for people to volunteer, get involved and support this Great New Organization. I am personally proud to not only get to know Roger and Lana but I am also dedicated, committed to help ensure that this organization succeeds but that it grows beyond anyone's wildest dream and can and will help to grow LaCrosse in a positive healthy way today, tomorrow and the future for many years to come.

I would hope and pray that Whitman County, LaCrosse Community would and will continue to support Organizations like W.H.E.A.T. and any Organization, businesses to sustain the future of LaCrosse.

Sincerely,

John Kirkpatrick

Chad Whetzel – So that will be Exhibit 8.

Exhibit 9, Letter from Larry and Sandy Martin

Dear: Whitman County Planning Dept.

We, Larry and Sandy Martin, are adjacent landowners and support Roger and Lana Myers' nonprofit organization. Which sends care packages to our troops. We do not feel it will harm the agricultural life of LaCrosse, WA in Whitman County. We applaud their efforts.

Sincerely,

Larry and Sandy Martin

Chad Whetzel – Okay, that will be Exhibit 9. Aside from that, are there any other questions?

12. A SEPA checklist was submitted with this Zone Change application, and a Determination of Nonsignificance (DNS) was issued on December 12, 2019. The comment period ended December 26, 2019. No SEPA comment was received.

Guy Williams – I move...

Dave Gibney – Guy, before you make that motion, we need to change Finding 11, from received one to received four comments and list Exhibits 6-9.

Guy Williams – Good point.

Motion by Guy Williams and seconded by Dave Gibney to approve the findings of fact as written and amended, with the amendment to Finding 11, change one comment to four comments and See Exhibits 6-9.

7:15 p.m. – Motion carried.

CONDITIONS:

This request is consistent with both the County's Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance.

At this time, unless there is substantial new evidence introduced which would change the findings of fact, it is recommended that this zoning code amendment be accepted with the following conditions: that all outdoor lighting will be full cut-off.

Motion by Dave Gibney and seconded by Guy Williams to adopt the recommendation that this is consistent with both the County Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance.

7:16 p.m. – Motion carried.

Motion by Dave Gibney and seconded by Guy Williams that at this time unless there is substantial evidence introduced that would change the findings of fact, I recommend that we forward this onto the Board of County Commissioners, that this zoning code amendment be accepted with the condition that all outdoor lighting be full cut-off.

Roll Call Vote: Dave Gibney – aye; Russell Jamison – aye; Gary Moore – aye; Brian Davies – Aye; Robert Hill – aye; Guy Williams – aye; Chad Whetzel – aye; Keith Paulson – aye.

7:16 p.m. – Motion carried.