

**COMMISSIONERS' MINUTES
KITITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON
HOME ARTS BUILDING/COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS
PUBLIC HEARING**

TUESDAY

6:00 P.M.

FEBRUARY 4, 2003

Board members in attendance: Max Golladay, Perry Huston & Bruce Coe

Others: Julie Kjorsvik, Clerk of the Board; Warren Beed, Facilities Director; David Bowen, Auditor; Gene Dana, Sheriff; William Holmes, Probation Services Director; Rob DeGroot, Undersheriff; and approximately 50 members of the public.

PUBLIC HEARING

JAIL FACILITIES/OPTIONS

COMMISSIONERS

At approximately 6:00 p.m. the public hearing was opened to consider recommendations submitted by the Citizens Advisory Group, for options relating to the jail facilities.

CHAIRMAN GOLLADAY commended the Citizens Advisory Group for their hard work. **COMMISSIONER HUSTON** gave an overview of the Citizens Advisory Groups research and findings. He said to build a completely new Law & Justice facility out at the west-interchange of Ellensburg, it would cost approximately 40 million dollars. The other option included remodeling and expanding the current facility. He indicated that of most groups surveyed on the options, the results were split down the middle.

THOSE PRESENT & TESTIFYING: **LEE BATES**, spoke in favor of phasing out the project. He suggested studying the option of building the facility out at the County airport. **JAMES ROBERTS** spoke in favor of enlarging the jail, but wanted to take a more conservative approach. **MARTIN KAATZ**, said he was a member of the Downtown Task Force. He read a letter into the record, which supported the siting of a new county Law and Justice Center, in downtown Ellensburg. He explained there would be a number of hidden costs associated with re-locating a new Law and Justice Center on the west-end of Ellensburg. He felt it would be the most prudent and beneficial choice to expand the needs adjacent to the present Courthouse. **ROGER CLERF** said it would cost a lot of money with either option, but was in favor of expanding the current downtown location. He was concerned with the current tax burdens facing the citizens including the other bond issues that have recently been passed (new high school, hospital and library). **DON DAVIS** said he was a member of the Advisory Group, and disagreed with Mr. Bowen's estimate for

building a new facility at \$200 per square foot. He felt the facility could be built for much less, for approximately \$100 per square foot. **CHARLES WEIDENBACH** spoke in favor of expanding the downtown location. He felt the Courthouse needs should also be addressed in the near future, (a new heating system, better windows, etc.). **STEVE LACKODY** spoke in favor of the downtown option. He expressed concerns with the growth of economic development. **ROGER WEAVER** discussed the lack of parking in the current location and was in favor of relocating the Law & Justice facilities to the west-end of Ellensburg, and to expand the services within the Courthouse to include the Health department etc. He urged the Board to not further add to the congestion in downtown Ellensburg. **CLAY MEYERS, SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT** announced there were 105 inmates currently in the jail, which was built as a 45-bed facility. He noted of the 105 inmates, 52 of them were felons. **BERT MARX, SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT** explained the difference between felony's and misdemeanors. He said they would feel comfortable if they had 8 or 10 "hard cells" in the new facility to hold the more dangerous inmates. **PAUL BENNETT**, representing himself, felt the Board should look at a 50-year window, instead of a 20-year window. He questioned if the downtown was capable of handling the expansion. **FRITZ GLOVER** expressed concerns of safety, cost, and flexibility. The Advisory Groups approach was to look at a 20-year window, and not 50-years. He was in favor of the keeping the facility in the downtown area. **DEZ KNUDSON** recognized the need for immediate attention for the current facility, but questioned how the County would pay for it. He felt property owners pay too much already. **DICK ELLIOTT** was in favor of keeping the facility in the downtown area, and felt government operates more efficiently, if offices are all centrally located.

COMMISSIONER COE reviewed taxation options. He voiced his opposition to funding a jail facility by increasing property taxes. He felt Kittitas County does not currently have a large enough tax base, and that spending 20-40 million on a facility would be way beyond their current means. He realized expanding the jail is critical, and announced he was leaning more towards keeping the facility in the current downtown area. **COMMISSIONER HUSTON** explained the location of the site would be a policy decision by the Board. He reviewed several key issues with the current jail that needed to be addressed as soon as possible, including a larger Sally Port, additional beds, safe transportation with the Courtrooms, and larger kitchen and laundry facilities. **COMMISSIONER GOLLADAY** agreed that the current facility's needs should be addressed, but said the expense of relocating the jail would be very costly, and acknowledged the parking issue would need to be addressed.

COMMISSIONER HUSTON moved to continue the public hearing to Tuesday February 18, 2003 at 4:00 p.m. in the Commissioner's Auditorium, Room 109, County Courthouse, Ellensburg, Washington, the record to remain open and at that time, a decision may be made to direct the Citizens Advisory Group to pursue details for construction styles, for the option of the expanding the facility at the downtown site. **COMMISSIONER COE** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

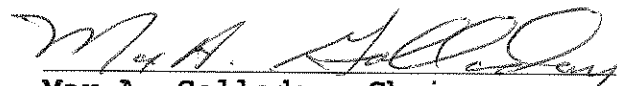
The Board expressed their appreciation to the Citizen's Advisory Group's hard work in serving their community.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

CLERK OF THE BOARD

**KITTITAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON**


Julie A. Kjorsvik


Max A. Golladay, Chairman