

**KITTITAS COUNTY
CDS STUDY SESSION MINUTES
COMMISSIONERS' AUDITORIUM, 205 WEST 5th ROOM 109
Regular Meeting**

MONDAY

2:30 PM

April 14, 2025

Board members present: Chair Laura Osiadacz, Vice-Chair Cory Wright and Commissioner Brett Wachsmith.

Others: Chad Bala, Jamey Ayling, Jeremy Johnston and Shannon Johnson, Community Development Services; Josh Fredrickson, Arden Thomas, Public Works Department, Stephanie Hartung, Prosecuting Attorney's Office, and four (4) members of the public.

At 2:37 pm Chair Osiadacz opened the Community Development Services Study Session.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Pat Kelleher, 6530 Wilson Creek Road, Ellensburg, WA, introduced himself at the podium and spoke against the hiring/creating of a new position, discussed county revenue and expenses, and stated that although he is a big supporter of recreation, he doesn't see how this position will help him in that venue.

Chair Osiadacz noted that the BOCC also received written comments in email form from Mr. Kelleher and these will be made part of the record.

SHORT TERM RENTAL (STR) SURVEY RESPONSE DATA & RESOLUTION #2024-049

Long Range Planner Jeremy Johnston presented his staff report, summarized STR committee background history, and gave a progress update. On March 5, 2024 The BOCC created the Kittitas County Short Term Rental (STR) Committee through Resolution 2024-049. The Committee studied short term rentals throughout the course of 2024 and developed a community survey which went live on February 4, 2025. CDS shared preliminary survey results at the regularly scheduled CDS Study Session held on February 24, 2025. The survey has received 894 responses as of April 2nd and has provided some insight into the perception of short-term rentals in Kittitas County. These results were shared with the Planning Commission for their review and feedback at their regularly scheduled meeting on April 8, 2025. The primary goal of the survey was to determine whether there was an appetite for STR regulations in Kittitas County. Johnston discussed individual survey question feedback results and provided research information from other county jurisdictions. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Wachsmith spoke about his experience with STR's within his neighborhood and noted that he would like to see the STR committee work on some level of regulations. Vice-Chair Wright discussed some results he found interesting, and was in favor of regulating the STR's, however, he wanted to see the noise element taken off the table because it is regulated separately.

He asked about total number of STR's within the County. CDS Director Chad Bala approached the podium and introduced himself for the record. He reminded the Board of the AirDNA data from the Chamber of Commerce and informed that one of the STR Committee members had been working on collecting additional data, including HOA information which would be discussed at an upcoming STR committee meeting. He explained that the data needed to be vetted out a bit more. He also reminded the Board of the STR scenario within Suncadia Master Plan Resort. Within their development agreement, they have a no contact enactment section in which no new regulations can be applied, therefore, he plans to schedule this discussion with legal counsel.

Vice Chair Wright assisted to provide clarity and direction to staff that Board was in favor of creating an updated resolution to expand the duties of the STR Committee. Commissioner Wachsmith further clarified that a joint BOCC/Planning Commission meeting opportunity to discuss STR regulations as proposed by CDS Director Bala meeting was favorable as well.

LAND USE & RECREATION PLANNER POSITION

CDS Director Chad Bala presented his staff report and provided background history. In 2021 the Board adopted the 2021 Kittitas County Recreation and Tourism Plan (Resolution 2021-116). The 2021 Recreation and Tourism plan identified priority actions for implementation by Board employees utilizing County financial and human resources. These priorities included direct implementation of trail systems, resource parks, and special purpose facilities and advancing a strategic approach to open space, trail, park, and recreation facilities and recreation services both in a direct implementation role and facilitation role. The Board had a previous discussion at a joint CDS/DPW Study Session on November 12, 2024, whereby, the Board was in favor of allocating resources for Parks and Recreation Development and stressed the importance of coordination with CDS for long range recreational planning and to include current Parks and Recreation plans in all future planning. There has been ongoing joint discussion with the Public Works Department along the way throughout the process of creating a skeleton mapping of the position to protect each other and ensure each department retains existing programs and grants.

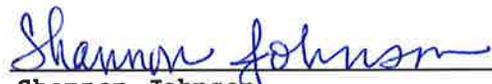
Vice-Chair Wright asked questions about existing planning staff's skillset. CDS Director Bala informed that he does have an existing Planner highly skilled in recreation, with over 20 years work experience at CWU, and previous National Park experience. Chair Osiadacz noted that she was in favor of the position and noted her concerns over the real specific challenges involved with recreational public lands. She asked if this position would be able to assist with these issues. Director Bala answered yes, this position could be a liaison to attend the various meetings and forums and bring recommendations back to the Board. Vice Chair Wright asked if the current planning position would need to be backfilled. Director Bala answered yes and discussed Planner I/II succession. Chair Osiadacz asked if it could help solve garbage and other issues on US Forest lands? Director Bala answered no,

however, it doesn't mean it couldn't help to initiate other solutions. He gave an example of digital card readers and explained how this could be the starting interagency piece in participating with our partners on recreational aspects including land use recreation planning. He addressed the Public Works Department staff in the audience and clarified that it's good that they express their concerns, that there is no intention to eliminate grants and activities including fishery enhancements etc. Commissioner Wachsmith asked about tourism funding. Director Bala spoke about funding option scenarios, including what was proposed in November. Chair Osiadacz spoke about the strategic tourism plan and the need for some mitigation to be done within the County and this could possibly be incorporated, including signage. Commissioner Wachsmith added to the conversation noting that they go hand in hand and posed questions about HR and DPW departmental assistance. Director Bala offered to continue working with DPW, and HR to meet in the middle and get this position off the ground and running. Vice-Chair Wright and Commissioner Wachsmith proposed that Director Bala continue to refine the scope of responsibilities and funding, then bring back in a month at the May 12, 2025 CDS Study Session.

OTHER BUSINESS - No Action to be taken

There was no other business.

Meeting concluded at 3:06 p.m.



Shannon Johnson

KITTITAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON



Laura Osiadacz, Chair