

Pine Forest Board Meeting of September 12, 2017

Meeting time: 6:30 PM

Place of meeting: Conference Room of Harrison Benis Law Firm in Seattle

In Attendance: Board Members Jim Harrison, Bill Ellis, Jim Wurzer and by phone Heather Dean and Manager Brad Sawtell. Owners were Chris Bellas, Quinn Loucks, Cliff Oleszko and Harry Burkholder.

Jim Harrison chaired the meeting.

Fuel Breaks Forest Project: Heather reported on the outline of the Fuel Breaks Forest Project for Pine Forest (herein PF). It would involve thinning trees 60 feet in width in the right-of-ways. It is recommended by Fire Prevention experts that the width be at least 200 feet in width in order to act as an effective fire break. This latter would involve the approval of and payment by the adjacent property owners in order to perform the work to that width. Heather thought it would take about 3 years to perform the work. The specifics of the Project are in a report the Board will send to the PF landowners. Heather reported that Jerry (Western Processing) and Saul Labanauskas (Brother's Fire) were the only entities that showed interest in cutting trees in PF. The Board had asked for other people interested in doing the work. This was done by Forester Judy Swank. The biggest issues that limited interest in the work is working in areas that contain residences and the insurance and expertise that it entails.

Both Saul and Jerry would charge \$55 per hour to do cutting of timber. They were not interested in doing a bid for the work. Jerry was unwilling to differentiate pay between the sawyers and people doing slash clean-up. Saul said he would charge \$35 per hour for slash clean-up work. Jerry's crew would have to be provided housing or PF would have to pay for it.

As far as liability insurance Bill Berrigan said the firm doing the work would have to have "broad form" insurance to work in PF. Heather reported Jerry had it and Saul said he would be willing to get it. Saul said he has general liability insurance.

It is not clear what “broad form” is or even exists. Chris Hopkins called Bill Berrigan and told him he was suing PF and Berrigan for illegal use of PF funds to do the forest work. Berrigan was very concerned about this. Jim Harrison agreed to talk to Berrigan to allay his concerns. There was concern that Berrigan would work with Saul but that does not appear to be an issue. Jim Wurzer asked Heather if Shane Knowlton would work with PF being that he is now Berrigan’s employee. Heather thought that would be the case since he lives in Okanogan whereas Berrigan lives in Kettle Falls. Heather said Shane had been the DNR representative for PF’s prior timber work. Shane’s being closer would probably cost us less in transportation costs rather than having Berrigan travel from Kettle Falls.

Heather related that hauler(s) would have to be hired. Darek, the person who did the hauling last year, has raised his rates by 50% to \$135/hr. This amount is greater than what Palm Construction charged last year. But Darek’s truck was self-loading and Palm’s does not have one. There was some talk amongst attendees about full logging trucks being seen traveling east over the N. Cascades Hwy. Heather said there would have to be an on-site representative for PF in order to oversee the day-to-day work. Heather said she is willing to do this. The idea of the PF manager doing this work was brought up. Brad said he has limited time to do it and there would have to be a discussion of extra compensation if he had the time. He said he could be available to do things like replace Jerry’s equipment windshield last year but not a whole lot more. Jim Wurzer asked if Shane Knowlton would help Saul with setting up the contracts with the lumber mills. Heather said she thought he would do that. Jim Harrison asked about when Saul would be available. She said after fire season which is about mid-October.

Discussion on hiring a logger.: Even though Jerry’s crew did a good job last year his inability to distinguish pay for cutting vs. clean-up as well as the cost of housing his crew made it hard to chose his crew. Because Saul did not have these issues and because he is local made us favor his work. Heather said it is difficult to not hire Jerry because he and his crew did such good work.

Motion/Action: Jim Wurzer made a motion that Brother's Fire be hired to perform the cutting and slash work in PF for this fall. Jim Harrison seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.

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Water System: Jim Harrison asked Brad to report on the status of the water system. Brad said that Jake Whipple of Wolf Creek Well Service helped to replace the pump that went out at the mid-station. Jake expressed wonderment at the workings of the system. It is apparent that the wiring at the mid station as well as at the south pump station needs to be replaced. Brad asked Jake to obtain a bid to replace the electrical panel at the mid-station. Jake has not gotten back to Brad about it. Brad said it may cost about \$2,000 to design it with about \$500 in labor to replace it. Jim Harrison said that is not a large cost and should be considered. Brad said he would contact Jake again to get this bid. Brad also said he wonders whether the pumping of water through a two inch pipe up to the Nighthawk storage tank stresses the system, in particular the pumps at the mid-station. Jim Wurzer commented that a systemic review of the water system by an expert would help to define its condition and what work is needed to improve it. One problem is having the money to pay for it. No action was taken on this issue other than Brad getting back to Jake about the cost of the new electrical panel. Jim Wurzer said he will talk with Doug Hale of Alpine Environmental about what services he can provide PF for the water system.

Issue: Lack of culvert on the Dodge property lot #157.

Discussion: Brad said he talked to the Contractor Tim Smith and he will put a culvert in the road to the Dodge Property. Jim Wurzer asked why the road got built without the culvert. Brad said Tim Smith put the road in almost immediately after the Architectural Committee approved it. Brad said he did not get any notification from the Committee that the construction on the site was approved. Jim Wurzer asked that communication on such issues be formalized.

Issue: Recycling Brad said that Casey Bruchard of WasteWise Methow offered to provide 96 gallon containers to take away co-mingled recycling for PF. It would cost about \$200 per month. Someone asked what the cost is for garbage removal, it is \$350. Brad estimated that we might use the second dumpster for recycling which would save costs. But glass will not be recycled.

Action: The Board decided to take the Recycling issue under consideration as a action to fund in next year's budget.

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Issue: Whether to attempt to do Forest Health Program and associated thinning this fall.

Discussion: The Board discussed whether we have time to get liability releases signed as well as billing and payment for work on the Fuel Breaks Forest Project this fall. This includes the \$250 for cutting in the greenbelts and right-of-ways that every landowner would be billed as well the \$1500 for those who want the wider cut on to their property. Owners can also "opt in" to paying the \$1500 who want to contribute to the whole project regardless of occurs adjacent to their property. Heather said the date to pay such would have to be about two weeks. Heather was asked how long it took to get the releases from landowners in the last go around. Heather said about three to four months.

Motion/Action: PF should attempt to do the Fuel Breaks Forest Project this fall. Bill Ellis made the motion, Jim Harrison seconded it. The Board voted 4 to 0 to do the Forest Health Project this fall. The dates of the billing activity to be determined. The general consensus that the timing on the Project is highly ambitious. The first thing to be done is that Heather will determine the minimum number of landowners that will participate in the wider fuel break clearance before we can start the project this fall.

Input from the Landowners

Harry Burkholder said the Mill in Omak may be open for business. Jim Wurzer suggested Harry contact them to see if it this is true. Chris Bellas complained that the Board in 2006 did not allow them to thin the trees on there lot. The Board's sentiment on this is the issue is past. Chris Bellas expressed frustration that the Board now was changing the Forest Health Program activity. She and Harry Burkholder said that this is the first time they heard of the new forest program and they need much more information on it. The Board said that information is will be provided.

Meeting adjourned about 8:30.

Notes prepared by PF Secretary Jim Wurzer with review and approval by the PF Board.