

**WHATCOM COUNTY JAIL PLANNING TASK FORCE**  
**Thursday, February 9, 2012**  
**7:30 a.m.**  
**Garden Room, 322 North Commercial Street, Bellingham**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Task Force Members Present:** Pete Dworkin, Chair, Lisa McShane, Co-Chair, Ray Baribeau, Doralee Booth, Marianne Caldwell, Dave Christensen, Caleb Erickson, Wendy Jones, Erik Ramstead, Barbara Sternberger, John Wilson.

**Task Force Member(s) Excused:** Pete Dawson, Anne Deacon

**Others Present:** Bill Elfo, Sheriff, Joy Gilfilen, Richard Maneval, Irene Morgan, Richard Maneval, T. Terry, Bruce Van Glubt, Kathy Mohebbi.

**Roll Call**

Pete Dworkin welcomed everyone and asked that they please sign the attendance roster. The attendance roster is attached.

**Approval of the Draft Minutes**

The December 15 meeting minutes were tabled.

**Public Comment Period**

**Joy Gilfilen, President, Whatcom County Re-entry Coalition:** I am pleased that we have a jail planner and that things are moving forward. I am also very pleased at the amount of work, dedication and “heartfulness” that I have seen with the Jail Planning Task Force. I do feel that it’s absolutely imperative that whatever jail planner we have and whatever work proceeds with the jail, we truly make a commitment. I also think that it is absolutely imperative that we are responsible to the citizenry of the county and that we look at how to reduce the consumption of jail services. We must reduce consumption. It is not sustainable for our society and we need to include this in our jail planning, how to reduce consumption, reduce recidivism and reduce the demand for jail services. Thank you very much.

**Irene Morgan: Founder, Whatcom County Re-entry Coalition.** I have copies of the Re-entry Coalition’s first newsletter, which shows what we are doing and how we are progressing. I am very pleased and honored to be able to attend and speak at the JPTF meetings. I agree that we cannot sustain what is going on with a million dollars a week spent on Law and Justice services in our county. We have some pretty awesome programs that have been developed and implemented and have good success. I hope that you all, with your efforts, are listened to and some of your proposals are put into action. I think that you have done a really good job. Thank you.

**Location of Jail Checklist: Report from the AD Hoc Subcommittee on the Checklist.**

**Pete Dworkin:** The Jail Planning Task Force has been going through the bullet points that we were asked to address for our recommendations, that will ultimately be assembled into our final report to the County Council. The Ad Hoc subcommittee consisted of Lisa McShane, Wendy Jones and Pete Dawson. .

**Lisa McShane** referred Task Force members to the **DRAFT Site Selection Criteria, February 8, 2012.** The Task Force reviewed, discussed and revised recommendations concerning the following criteria:

**Section # 1 Size:** The ideal site would:

- a. Accommodate the 500-700 bed capacity and enable future expansion.
- b. the site must permit the design of a facility that adheres to modern. Accepted jail practices and standards.
- c. The site must accommodate adequate recreational facilities.
- D. Accommodate space for jail programs. (see section 9)

Add to Section #1, f. Provide space for storage and jail maintenance.

**Section #2 Cost-Operational costs for facility on site(s):** This is the largest long term expense for the county. The ideal site would:

- a. Enable/allow the most operationally efficient facility/complex to be developed and constructed on site.
- b. Target a facility design to result in minimal increase of personnel.
- c. Include design features that could result in sustainable savings for power, storm water management, water use, waste management, etc.

**Discussion:** Marianne Caldwell asked Pete Dworkin and Lisa McShane about their meeting with Executive Louws. They responded that it was an informal meeting and that there was no commitment from the Executive that hiring a jail planner will be the next step the County takes. He was clear that he wants to make a new jail a priority.

**Lisa McShane:** We are not the first community to build a jail. There is a process that is recommended nationally and the Jail Planning Task Force recommendations are in line with this. From my perspective, one of the problems with the last process is that sites were chosen early and it seemed like an inside deal. If we go with the site selection first without the jail planner on board, it will again feel like the cart is before the horse, that we are not approaching it in a thoughtful standard way, doing the planning process, recommended by the National Institute of Corrections.

Doralee Booth suggested inviting Executive Louws to the next Jail Planning Task Force meeting. It was agreed by consensus to contact the Executives office to schedule a meeting with the JPTF.

**Marianne Caldwell:** Are we a formal group anymore?

**Pete Dworkin:** We are working on the final report. The group had a task and a timeline and that timeline is finite. Unless the County Council passes a new resolution to say the jail task force should continue, the Task Force no longer exists. Even if they hire a planner the County Council and executive can choose to not continue the Task Force and work with the planner themselves. If people here are interested in continuing being involved in the process, call the County Executive and tell him that, individually.

**Section #2, Cost-Operational costs for the facility on site (s):**

- Task Force members agreed with section #2.

**Section #3, Criteria: Cost-cost and effort to purchase the site:**

- a. Revise to have “reasonable” net acquisition cost.
- c. Condemnation for part or all is an option but certainly not desirable.
- e. add f. Revise to be available for “timely” development.

**Section #4, Criteria – cost to develop, build and potentially expand on site:**

- Revise to format consistently

**Section #5, Criteria-Location-Safety:**

- b. Be accessible to medical facilities, change “with less than 15 minutes driving time” to with less than 10 minutes response time for emergency medical care.”
- d. Include space for area of refuge (evacuation zone)

**Section #6 Location-Operational Convenience – County:**

- a. Change “close proximity” to “reasonably” close to I-5.

- b. Centrally located in the county
- c. Change “less than a 10 minute drive” to a “reasonable” drive to the courthouse.

**Section #7 Location-Transportation:**

- Everyone agreed with section #7

**Section #8 Location-Environmental consideration:**

- Remove item c, “be suitable for redevelopment rather than farmland or timber.”
- a. Add “avoid easily mitigate” impact on unique, sensitive or critical areas.”

**Section #9 Location-Site offers potential for inmate programs:**

- a. Close proximity to educational institutions deleted.
- b. “In – house” should be “on-site:” “Space for on-site programs such as horticultural or other programs.”
- c. Add “space for classrooms for basic education, life skills training, etc.”

**Section #10 Location-Neighborhood considerations:**

- Remove the phrase “if the location is not...”
- Add note: “The operational planning will help mitigate the impact to the immediate neighborhood. “
- Title Section #10 “Neighborhood considerations” not “oppositions.”

A bullet was added to Location-Transportation “maximize the use of technology to reduce trips to and from the jail.”

**Section #11 – Other considerations and overall opinion of site:** “This will allow some points for subjective thoughts that aren’t necessarily factored in above.” Pete Dawson suggested adding this section. Dave Christiansen suggested wording, to include: “unintended consequences, need for other users to be nearby, long term impact, impact on adjacent parcels both positive and negative, and gut feeling for the sustainability of the new jail.” He will e-mail Lisa suggested language to Lisa.

Possible additions to the Site Selection Criteria were discussed including.

- The site must have adequate space to provide all infrastructure needed for the ultimate build out, including space for areas of refuge in case of emergency evacuation.
- Accommodating ancillary buildings to be essential to the functioning of the jail, determined to be essential to the functioning of the jail. They may include, but not limited to power substations, storm water detention facilities water supply, emergency fuel storage and facilities management support.

The Sheriff’s Office and a Mental Health Triage Facility were also discussed.

- It was agreed to add a note to Section #1-Size, the ideal site would be: While outside the scope of the Jail Planning Task Force, if the county decides to co-locate the Sheriff’s office with the jail, the site should include space for a new headquarters and parking.
- Additional Notes, proposed language: “The Mental Health Triage Facility is part of the Jail Planning Task Force charge and we recognize that this is important. While we have restricted ourselves to the jail for the purpose of moving a new jail forward, we recommend that space be included either on or off-site for a Mental Health Triage Center.”

**Lisa McShane:** There will be a meeting of the Ad Hoc subcommittee to determine the weighting, so we can bring you a finished draft to vote on at the next meeting. Joy and Irene had a suggestion for the final report, which we will look at before the next meeting. Their suggestion includes: the jail planner be charged with the responsibility to consider #1. Reducing jail consumption and include this as part of expenditures #2. Plan for current needs, and for expansion, worst case, and best case scenario.

It was agreed by consensus to schedule one more Jail Planning Task Force meeting. Lisa will distribute the noted revisions by e-mail for comment. Members can then review, revise and give a “weight” to each section discussed. The “weighing” AVG total will add to 100 points.

The meeting was adjourned @ 9:25 a.m.