

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SPOKANE COUNTY NO SHOOTING AREAS**

**MINUTES OF THE HEARING**

**MARCH 5, 2024**

| <b>Advisory Committee on Spokane County No Shooting Areas Members Present</b>  | <b>Spokane County Department of Building and Planning Staff Present</b> |
|--|---|
| Robin Ball, Chair<br>Thomas Miller, Vice Chair<br>David Bray<br>Jeffrey Ewing<br>Mike Britton<br>Jeffrey Meyer<br>Clark Bergerud | Elya Miroshin, Clerk<br>Robert Brock, AICP, Planner                     |

**CALL TO ORDER**

The March 5, 2024, hearing of the Advisory Committee on Spokane County No Shooting Areas was called to order by Chair Robin Ball at 5:30 P.M. A quorum was present.

The hearing was accessible to the public in the Commissioner’s Hearing Room, Lower Level, Public Works Building, located at 1026 West Broadway Avenue, Spokane, WA, and via Zoom with web and telephone links provided on the Building and Planning website and in a public notice published in the Spokesman-Review on February 20, 2024.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

Committee members briefly introduced themselves.

**NS-01-23:** Mr. Brock reviewed the applicant, Randall Duff’s, proposal to establish a No-Shooting Area on approximately 116 acres totaling 26 parcels. A petition supporting this proposal had been submitted by the applicant with sixteen valid signatures from property owners accounting for 61.5% of the 50% required for a public hearing of the Advisory Committee on Spokane County No Shooting Areas. A review of this application by the Building and Planning Department found it generally consistent with Chapter 6.06 of the Spokane County Code and the public notice requirements have been met.

Chair Mrs. Ball opened public testimony for NS-01-23.

**COMMENTS**

Mr. Duff, the applicant, said his reasoning behind the petition was due to the occurrence of more frequent shootings with unknown time frames. Being an owner of horses and his wife being a horseback rider, safety is Mr. Duff’s primary concern.

Scott O'Leary shared pictures of debris and rock up against a berm that is built at 105 East Gem Lane and is actively used for target practice, as well as pictures of rock removal upon receipt of the Legal Notice. Living 476 feet off the berm, Mr. O'Leary supports the No-Shooting Area proposal and is not against shooting but is against someone potentially dying or getting hurt from unsafe shooting practices.

Kent Chadwell, a gun-owner himself, supports the No-Shooting Area proposal. Mr. Chadwell commented on his concern regarding frequent gun firing activity at 105 East Gem Lane, located just a few feet from his east property line and roughly 500 feet from his home. He states that the close proximity shooting activity, within a developed neighborhood with animals, is inappropriate for this area while significantly impacting quality of life by limiting the ability to enjoy his own property.

Pete Blackwell stands in opposition to the No-Shooting Area proposal. Living on 22 acres and being the owner of horses, his main concern is creep. Mr. Blackwell sees no safety concerns with the berm on 105 East Gem Lane, stating it provides significant protection from stray bullets. He doesn't believe that the neighborhood safety concern is legitimate due to the boundary requested only coming to one side of the petitioner's house.

Joseph T. Woodford, a resident of 105 East Gem Lane, stands against the No-Shooting Area proposal. A graduate from Eastern Washington University with a bachelor's degree in economics and a private pilot since May 18, 2019 who is currently pursuing training to become a firefighter pilot. Mr. Woodford listed his firearm handling skills, knowledge, and experience, confirming the regular maintenance of the shooting range berm that he had dug up himself. The shooting range has been inspected and approved by multiple sheriff deputies while the boulder was still visible. He also confronted the four complaints that were called in on the property.

Tom Murphy, residing directly north of the shooting range berm, stands for the No-Shooting Area proposal. Mr. Murphy commented that no one is keeping track of new developments coming in since the shooting area was established. With grandkids and kids visiting, Mr. Murphy states that this is no longer safe considering the backstop is approximately 1,100 feet away.

Douglas Woodford, a resident of 105 East Gem Lane, stands against the No-Shooting Area proposal. Mr. Woodford stated that he had not once been contacted about this proposal by the applicant until receipt of the legal notice in his mail. Mr. Woodford confirmed his sons, Joseph Woodford's, comments regarding the dimensions of the shooting range berm and treating gun safety rules as paramount. As a courtesy to neighbors, a text message is sent out at the time of shooting (to the ones they have phone numbers to) and is willing to add those who wish, commenting that this proposal moving forward would be overreach in a rural community.

James Bunke, a property owner within the proposed No-Shooting Area, is against the No-Shooting Area proposal. He commented that regardless of removing shooting within this proposed area, there will still be others shooting within the surrounding areas. Mr. Bunke states that he has a son whom he is currently teaching firearm safety using a BB-gun and a crossbow. If NS-01-23 was to go through, that would no longer be an option on his property, which would be impactful due to the reason why he purchased the property in the first place.

Mr. Bray questioned the audience if they were aware of this shooting range when moving into the area. A member of the public, outside of the proposal, commented that the berm has only been around for 3-4 years and that most times the shooting can go on for a couple of hours with hundreds of rounds at a time, creating a lot of noise volume suggesting they go to The Spokane Gun Club.

Mr. O'Leary added that Sergeant Travis Hanson from the Sheriff's Department stated that he doesn't have the qualification nor the training to decide if the shooting range/berm/backstop meets the criteria. Mr. O'Leary suggests that if the sergeant doesn't, then most likely the deputies that came out didn't either.

Mrs. Ball asked the Woodfords the type of guns they use for shooting. Mr. Woodford listed them.

Mr. Bray asked if any reports of injuries or property damage have been reported. Mr. Woodford confirmed that the Sheriff's department shows no record of reported bullets leaving their property.

Mr. Brock made a point of clarification that the properties characterized were in fact 2-5-acre sizes and not 5-10.

Samuel Adams Hensley stated that he shot with Joseph Woodford, and gun safety is taken very seriously.

JaLaina Strand commented that residents within this proposal knew they were moving into a shooting area and thus should have been aware of the dangers.

**MOTION**

Mr. Miller moved to continue written public testimony until Friday, March 8, 2024, at 4:00 PM; seconded by Mr. Britton. No Discussion. Motion passes unanimously.

**MOTION**

Members unanimously agreed to meet at a public meeting for deliberation on March 18, 2024, at 1:00 pm.

Mrs. Ball asked Deputy Pendell to go and look at the property in question. Mr. Pendell reminded the audience that even if the no shooting application passes, residents are allowed to apply for a shooting variance.

**MOTION**

Mr. Bray so moved to close the public hearing; seconded by Mr. Bergerud. The public hearing was unanimously adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

Robin Ball, Chair *Robin Ball* Date *Mar 18, 2024*

Elya Miroshin, Clerk *Elya M.*

*MGP*