

Meeting to discuss I-1639

February 4, 2019

2:00 p.m.

Present: Commissioner Jackson, Commissioner Stamper, Commissioner Fund, Sheriff Rob Snaza, Undersheriff Wes Rethwill, Chief Dusty Breen, Chief Civil DPA Eric Eisenberg

Guests: Various members of the press and public as well as various county employees

Recorder: Rieva Lester

The commissioners introduced the meeting.

Sheriff Snaza said a number of sheriffs across the state voiced their concerns regarding Initiative 1639 when it passed.

Sheriff Snaza said Lewis County will not actively go after violations related to I-1639. Sheriff Snaza said he feels I-1639 is an infringement on citizens' rights. Sheriff Snaza discussed firearms safety. He said the state shouldn't be telling citizens how to store their firearms. He said I-1639 chips away at citizens' rights.

Scott Bannister asked Sheriff Snaza's thoughts on domestic violence cases in which weapons are confiscated. Sheriff Snaza said there are times when the courts require the removal of weapons. Sheriff Snaza said cases are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Sheriff Snaza said his twin brother, who serves as Thurston County's Sheriff, shares his concerns about I-1639. Sheriff Snaza said sheriffs are sworn to both the state Constitution and the federal Constitution. He urged citizens to voice their opinions on the matter.

Mark Jensen of Yelm said he appreciates Sheriff Snaza's efforts. He asked whether the sheriff will post his views. Sheriff Snaza said information regarding his position was posted Nov. 20. Commissioner Fund noted that the topic has been reported on by The Chronicle.

Brian Green of Onalaska asked if rights are permissive or whether they're inherent. Sheriff Snaza said citizens' rights are inherent rights. He said I-1639 is a law for which the county should dig in its heels.

Chief Civil DPA Eric Eisenberg said something passed by statute is assumed to be legal until or unless it's overturned. He said the best way to challenge the legality of a statute is to file suit.

Eric said there are limitations about what can be done regarding initiatives that have been passed.

Commissioner Stamper said five counties of the state's 39 counties passed the initiative. He said there's a deep concern that citizens' rights are being eroded and taken away.

Commissioner Stamper said he feels the county needs to get advice from its counsel before taking any steps. He noted that he personally agrees with Sheriff Snaza's stance.

Commissioner Jackson noted that he voted against I-1639. He said he fully supports Sheriff Snaza's stance. He said the quandary the BOCC faces is that it has been passed as a law and that county commissioners are bound by state law.

Sheriff Snaza said police chiefs in the small outlying areas have indicated they share his concerns. Sheriff Snaza said the sheriffs throughout the state will meet later in the month and will discuss the matter then. He said

Scott Bannister said the legislation is paramount to treason. He asked why Eric thinks it's a law when it's a statute. He said the bar isn't committing treason. He said it's a regulatory. Eric said the bar license is

Brian Green said he and Scott went to the bar association and were told that there aren't licenses.

Eric said to be a lawyer, you have to submit materials, be licensed, etc.

Brian said it's like a Costco membership.

Bill Jones read excerpts about the second amendment from the U.S. Constitution and the state Constitution. He challenged the commissioners to declare Lewis County a sanctuary county.

Bob Bozarth said the term "sanctuary" doesn't quite fit the matter. He thanked the sheriff and commissioners for protecting citizens' rights. He noted that 70 percent of the county voted against the initiative. He said 12 sheriff's departments across the state have come out in opposition of I-1639.

Nancy Keaton discussed her concerns regarding I-1639. She said convicted felons lose their rights to vote and own guns. She noted that her son is affected by I-1639.

Commissioner Jackson left at 2:38 p.m.

Scott Bannister said he is proposing an ordinance. He said 12 counties already have signed on. He said he hopes Lewis County and Thurston County also will sign on. He said the nation is losing its first and second amendment rights.

Mark Jensen thanked the commissioners for hosting the meeting. He thanked Sheriff Snaza for taking a bold stand.

Commissioner Jackson returned at 2:41 p.m.

Mark Jensen of Yelm discussed the Bill of Rights. He said he is looking for a bold step from the county commissioners to stand up to what he said amounts to tyranny.

Brian Green praised Eric Eisenberg and asked that he be tasked with protecting citizens' rights.

Peter Auvil discussed citizens' inherent rights. He said the Constitution tells government what citizens' rights are. He questioned Eric's statement that initiatives are deemed to be constitutional until they're proven to not be constitutional.

The meeting adjourned at 2:48 p.m.