

From: Council
To: Becky Boxx; Council Members; Kate Blystone; Rebecca Craven
Date: 9/22/2009 8:23 AM
Subject: Fwd: Public Comment on the UGA sizing issue

>>> <zajal@aol.com> 9/22/2009 8:09 AM >>>

David:

I spoke with Pete Kremen yesterday and he said that he never intended for any "Designated Forestland" on Birch Point to be included in a West Blaine UGA. He said he was very much opposed to its inclusion. He said he had made that opinion very plain to the County Council (and others involved in the UGA planning process), although, that concept if indeed he had it in mind was not clear at all to me from his letter. I think this is an important fact for all urban planners involved in the process to understand clearly, to know what the County Executive's intent actually was. He is definitely opposed apparently to including the Designated Forestland in a UGA, as he said to me recently.

However, including those two large lots in "West Blaine" that are west of the designated forestland would also violate the Growth Management Act (GMA) because "leap frogging" over rural area to add pockets of urban land makes no sense under the GMA's principles. A tiny pocket of acreage that is owned by only two individuals should not be zoned inconsistently from the surrounding area. The location of Birch Point which is located between two marine estuaries and completely surrounded by a "shoreline of statewide significance" would make this land's inclusion in its own separate UGA a clear violation of our GMA. The site is also about 30 miles from Bellingham and 10 miles from Blaine so the principle about being adjacent to an existing urban area is also violated. Unfortunately, UGA's and conservancy shorelines are ecologically incompatible.

Secondly, Pete said that you personally were responsible for his renegeing on the Birch Bay down zone which he first advocated then later reversed himself on. He said that you felt "the community" wanted urbanization. Since you were obviously not involved with the Birch Bay Steering Committee (BBSC) during those years, I thought I should explain from personal experience what it was like. The BBSC was comprised of people like Bill Grant, John Syre and Mike Kent. Many others had sources of employment that were involved with the residential housing industry or the building and finance trades. The developer's business' funds actually helped finance the consultant that wrote the plan itself. The consultant himself routinely violated the principles of our GMA. Some developers actually received "up zone" status to their company's or employer's own property while they sat on the Land Use Committee. The BBSC did not reflect the opinions of the majority of the citizens living in Birch Bay. Many citizens felt so threatened by the self-interested process that they sought to remove themselves and their properties from the Birch Bay Sub-area Planning area. In my opinion, the process was a "land grab" conducted by those that had a clear self-interest in the outcome of the planning process. I think the record speaks for itself in this regard. The Committee often made the citizens wait until the Committee had exhausted

themselves or until after 11:00 PM to have their three minutes to talk. The community was not allowed to join in the discussions of the Committee. As you are aware, most people have to work for a living and could not attend the meetings at all.

Pete Kremen also recently said something about it being the County's primary objective to protect our sensitive marine environments. Please do not reverse Pete's initial down zone of the Birch Bay UGA on grounds that the "community" desires urbanization. Such a conclusion would be false and a total miscarriage of justice. On the contrary, the vast majority of our community strongly supports the protection of the marine environment which is antithetical to expanding the UGA. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Lincoln Rutter

(360) 371-3134 Phone

(360) 371-8179 Fax

Email: Zajal@aol.com