

February 18, 2009

Dear Planning Commission Members:

I have reviewed the *Draft Whatcom County Planning Commission Findings of Fact & Reasons for Action, Conclusions and Recommendations Relating to the Columbia Valley*. Many findings lack substance, accuracy and relevance to the conclusions drawn.

I've selected the following finding from the Draft for my commentary.

8. Whatcom County Planning and Development Services, in conjunction with the Foothills Subarea Plan Advisory Committee and planning consultant Studio Cascade circulated a questionnaire in October and November 2006. The results of the questionnaire are presented in the Foothills Subarea Plan questionnaire Report (January 2007).

The questionnaire that the Planning Commission is presumably basing some of its findings on was unscientific, and it's finding should be given no weight whatsoever in determining the planning choices for the Columbia Valley. This questionnaire was distributed in numerous sites throughout the Foothills and on-line, but there were no controls in place to prevent a respondent from submitting more than one response. The result is that at best, any finding based on the survey could be badly skewed in favor of a particular outcome, and in the worst case completely spurious. In addition, the actual results that were tabulated show a disproportionate number of responses from outside the Columbia Valley. Remember, the Columbia Valley is by far the densest population in the Foothills Subarea. I'm not going to speculate as to why there wasn't greater participation by Columbia Valley residents, but I have personally gone door to door in the Columbia Valley and helped collect over 300 signatures supporting the FSPAC recommendation to retain the UGA and allow commercial & residential development. This type of information is completely reliable and carries much stronger weight than the scientifically unreliable survey mentioned above.

This item is similar to many of those contained in this document from #13 to #32. The statements appear to be valid, but upon closer examination, vital information is either missing, inaccurate or completely unreliable.

Thus, it is my opinion that Finding #8 is flawed to the extent that it fails to consider that the survey relied upon by the Planning Commission is completely unscientific and unreliable. Therefore, it should not be used as part of any analysis by the Planning Commission to rescind the UGA status of the Columbia Valley and reclassify it as a LAMIRD.

Sincerely,

Richard Banel
Business Representative, FSPAC

From: <rfbanel@aol.com>
To: <rboxx@co.whatcom.wa.us>
Date: 2/18/2009 4:08 PM
Subject: comment to planning commission
Attachments: Letter to Whatcom Planning.doc

Dear Becky,

See attached comment to Planning Commission.? Please submit a copy to every Planning Commissioner and enter into the public record,? Please acknowledge your receipt of this letter by return e-mail, and thank you in advance.

Richard Banel
Business Representative
FSPAC