



Whatcom County Planning & Development Services

Point Roberts Community Meeting Summary –

April 19, 2005

Overview

Whatcom County Planning & Development Services hosted a community meeting in Point Roberts to obtain input from community members on County services, economic development projects and capital facilities. Point Roberts community members shared their perspectives regarding key issues impacting the community and identified priority areas of focus for County services in the next three to five years. The following summarizes community members' input; the comments have been grouped into specific areas of focus for Whatcom County departments' follow up. The sequence of comments does not reflect any prioritization by community members or staff.

Infrastructure

Roads

- Address road safety requirements – place a four-way stop at Mill and Johnson, maintain all-season standards, note many roads do not have sidewalks, horses and pedestrians on roads
- When roads are improved put in bike lanes and trails
- Caution on use of chip seal; asphalt is preferred
- Maintain reasonable road allowances, keep them clear
- More street improvements at main intersections (sidewalks, lights, etc.) – caution that Point Roberts is not an urban setting
- Put a left turn lane on Tyee and Johnson and add a street light for nighttime visibility
- South Beach - need all season roads and clearance for emergency vehicles
- Ensure equitable road maintenance and improvements
- Who is responsible for private road standards?
- Public transportation improvements – the WTA van service is not sufficient (no access to Canada)

Drainage

- Drainage on Meadow Lane near Maple Beach was not addressed when re-paved (road drains wrong way)
- Create Drainage Plan for Point Roberts and communicate to property owners prior to activity
- South Beach – address drainage on five ways, north side, cul-de-sacs, and ditches
- Drainage maintenance on Rex Street was poorly done and resulted in standing water – concern about mosquitoes

Water and Sewer

- Improve water availability
- Improve water quality
- Public sewer - is there truth to rumor? Look at the potential impacts and fees of residents

- Look at implications of sewers on community character and nature of development – concern about the type of development that sewer might facilitate
- Small Town Commercial (STC) zoned land is limited by critical areas – sewer would help
- Need to have good drainage and sewer to support economic development

Government

Communications

- If there is not going to be a Point Roberts Advisory Committee, consider a Whatcom County Ombudsman or a satellite office in Point Roberts to maintain ongoing communications
- Changes unique to Point Roberts should be heard in public meetings/hearings held in Point Roberts (i.e., Planning Commission)
- Value uniqueness and isolation of Point Roberts
- Expand the existing Point Roberts Character Plan Committee to function as a communication aid in Whatcom County activities
- Increase full-time resident communication with Whatcom County
- Use the "All Point Bulletin" to alert the community regarding Point Roberts related issues and/or actions, consider a Whatcom County page
- Be responsive to all groups that exist in Point Roberts
- Improve communication regarding land use:
 - Put the Point Roberts Sub-Area Plan on the Whatcom County Planning Department website
 - Increase home/business owner conditional use permit notification from 300' to 1000'
 - Use the Character Plan Committee, support and empower them appropriately

Zoning, Regulations, Permits and Enforcement

- Enforce Whatcom County zoning and regulations, if you have them, enforce them
- Improve the timing, responsiveness and ease of accessing and processing permits
- Enforce laws consistently, equitably across community
- Need to be persistent with Whatcom County enforcement staff to achieve success
- Concern that Whatcom County does not have capacity to enforce new and additional regulations given the number of new regulations
- Consider adding a soil stability analysis for permits and list this under "Trees and Wetlands"
- Concern that special interest groups drive Whatcom County actions
- Encourage Whatcom County to explore the use of an "outside" expert for permit review and processing issues; authorize them to approve permits

General comments

- Keep rural feel and current character in Point Roberts
- Maintain fiscal responsibility for public spending
- Need Whatcom County's continued support for Hospital District, including funding, for Health Clinic services
- Use Whatcom County leverage to help the Point Roberts community access state money
- Plan for the impacts and opportunities of the upcoming Olympics
- Put a maintenance person on site in Point Roberts
- Support getting gas/tobacco taxes back to Point Roberts

Environment

Recreation/Parks

- Increase child/teen activities both cultural and after school activities
- Increase senior activities
- Build a Community Center with capacity to grow into
- Develop a trail network to connect areas of community
- Evaluate acquisition of Lily Point east of Claire Lane for park and trails – concern about current trails through private property
- Explore pier project's pros and cons – suggestion to drop the pier project
- Install memorial bench on Bayview Drive (need assistance in obtaining "revocable encroachment permit")
- Install a public phone at Lighthouse Park
- Maple Beach - open space and public park improvements
 - Needs public amenities (parking and restrooms)
 - Improve public access and parking
 - Bring the Maple Beach parking up to current parking regulations
 - Provide clear direction and information to property owners regarding Maple Beach access and enforcement
 - Improve enforcement at Maple Beach – consider how residents can be involved
 - Maple Beach and Lighthouse Park are decreasing in beach size - examine impacts from Roberts Bank? Scientific information and support is needed to present issues to other parties.

Trees and Wetlands

- Small Town Commercial (STC) zoned land is limited by critical areas
- Tree retention is important to Point Roberts – ensure retention of trees. Clear cuts' impacts include erosion and storm water. Stop clearing now and plan.
- Be cautious with blanket Whatcom County code regulations in Point Roberts, especially regarding tree retention
- Conduct a forestry analysis to identify critical areas to focus on tree retention
- Develop a Reforestation Plan to compensate for clearing and development in Point Roberts
- Use Whatcom County relations to keep pressure on the Department of Natural Resources to enforce replants
- Logged area by the Fire District and School was a loss of creative options with County due to regulations and the processing approach used
- Conduct a wetlands inventory for Point Roberts
- Wetlands are part of the landscape and what Point Roberts is naturally
- Include a soil stability analysis as part of permit process
- Coal dust is an environmental concern on West Point Roberts

Next Steps

- Community comments have been distributed to applicable County Departments and Divisions for review and official response
- Post the April 19th meeting summary on the Whatcom County website: www.co.whatcom.wa.us
- Provide Point Roberts community members the results of the April 19 meeting and review County progress and responses at the July meeting.
- The community requests quarterly meetings with Whatcom County staff in Point Roberts.
- The next meeting is scheduled on Thursday, July 21st at 7 p.m. at the Point Roberts Community Center