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Planning

April 22, 2015

CP16#0719

Councilors move forward with Growth Management updates

Controversial Alternative 4 moves on to SEPA process along with other three proposals

ANNIKA DARLING
for The Reflector

After a nearly six hour public hearing on April 14, the Clark County Board of Councilors unanimously determined Alternative 4, a late addition to Clark County's Growth Management Plan, would be approved for the next phase in the planning process, the environmental review phase of the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) phase.

Alternative 4 proved to be a controversial alternative to the Growth Management Plan on Tuesday, with dozens of Clark County residents speaking out in opposition of the plan. The alternative presents a drastic adjustment to the minimum lot sizes in Farm zones, Agricultural zones and Rural zones Community Planning, staff estimates, the adjustment could create nearly 8,000 new lots overnight.

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process requires us to consider a variety of options for possible inclusion for the future plans of our community," said Councilor David Madore told *The Reflector* after the April 14 meeting. "Our proposal includes (Alternative 1) do nothing/no change; one city plan (Alternative 3), one rural plan that provides a little more flexibility (Alternative 2); and Alternative 4, the correction to



Photo by Annika Darling

THE CLARK COUNTY Board of Councilors unanimously approved the addition of Alternative 4 to the three previously proposed alternatives to the county's Growth Management Plan at an April 14 meeting in Vancouver. The four plans, displayed here at the meeting, move on to an environmental review phase.

the 1994 massive downzoning of rural properties.

Alternative 4 has proven to be the most important and most supported proposal for rural landowners. Madore said "None of these alternatives are set in concrete, none are all or nothing options, none are take it or leave it options. Rather, they provide broad proposals.

Among those who spoke against moving Alternative 4 to the SEPA phase were Mayor Jim Irish of La Center, Mayor Shane Bowman of Battle Ground and Mayor Ron Onslow of Ridgefield. Irish asked the councilors to drop Alternative 4, because "it

See **ALTERNATIVE 4** on Page A2

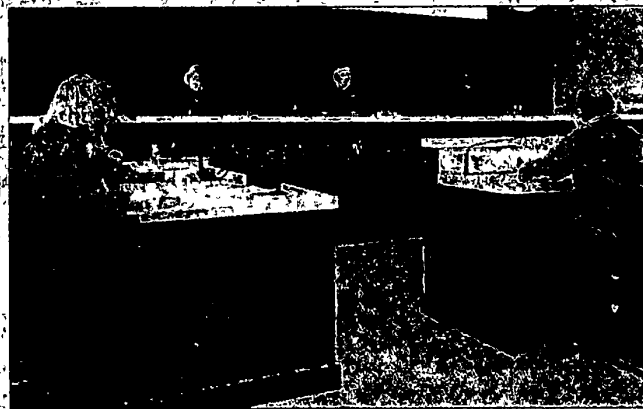


Photo by Annika Darling

CLARK COUNTY COUNCILORS Jeanne Stewart (left), David Madore (center) and Tom Mielke (right) listened to several hours of public comments during an April 14 meeting. The councilors then voted 3-0 to allow Alternative 4 to be added to the proposals for updates to the county's Growth Management Plan.

Owners of Yacolt's Spanish Sonrise Dairy opt to close

Decision comes after possible listeria scare

JOANNA MICHAUD

staff reporter

After recalling all of their natural raw cow milk, natural raw goat milk and natural raw cream due to a possible contamination of *Listeria monocytogenes*, the owners of Spanish Sonrise Dairy in Yacolt have decided to close down the dairy.

"My husband and I had already decided we were going to sell it (the dairy) in one to five years or so anyway, so we just decided why not do it now," said Tina Rodriguez, who owns the dairy with her husband Jose. "It's a bittersweet thing for me, I'm going to miss them (the cows) and I feel bad for the customers because now they're going to have to pay really high prices elsewhere."

A press release issued by Rodriguez on April 14 stated that they decided to recall the products after routine sampling by the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) discovered that the raw cream was potentially contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes*. *Listeria monocytogenes*, bac



TINA RODRIGUEZ

Alternative 4

Continued from page A1

puts a noose around our neck and gives us nowhere to grow but up."

In Onslow's testimony, he outlined the financial burden of Alternative 4 on cities, saying, "Much of the transportation needs to serve these additional lots would fall on the cities, greatly impacting our ability to adequately serve our citizens in the manner they expect and deserve."

Bowman shared his compatriots' concerns, adding that because Battle Ground is surrounded by rural lots - that are adamantly against annexation into the cities and shrinking lot sizes - that the challenge would be great.

"It costs a lot to bring those areas in, to annex them and provide the services we need," stated Bowman. "So, what we're asking for, at a minimum, is nothing within a mile of the Growth Boundary to be divided up."

Madore said he was sympathetic to the mayor's views.

"The mayors from each city within Clark County testified against Alternative 4 because they want the parcels of land just outside of their Urban Growth Boundary to be large to ensure that that large businesses can provide jobs and local employment," Madore said. "We agree. The solution is not to oppose Alternative 4 county-wide, but to make it better with that provision."

Among the area residents who testified against Alternative 4 was Heather Tischbeim, of Salmon

Creek. Tischbeim objected to Alternative 4 saying, "Alternative 4 is bad for the quality of life and the quality of democracy in Clark County ... It undermines the protections in the GMA against the inherent degradations of urban and suburban sprawl."

She further commented that Alternate 4 would drive up the cost of land and thus farming for local food production.

A representative from Slough Foods, Warren Neds, also spoke at the hearing expressing concerns associated with affects the Alternative would have on food production, namely its impact on mid-sized producers.

"Alternative 4, in my view," says Neds, "is really opening the floodgates to development in our rural lands. By creating the R1 and R2.5, which is a blanket upzone in our rural areas, it puts market pressure on the larger parcels of land that mid-sized farmers need."

Clark County Citizens United (CCCU), a nonprofit group that pushed for Alternative 4, spoke with *The Reflector* in March, at which point Susan Rasmussen, a La Center resident and member of CCCU, commented: "These lands have been ignored for 20 years. The style of farming has drastically changed. We have vibrant 4-H, and equestrian communities. We have avid gardeners, active retirees, and multi-generations living together. All require 1-, 2.5- and 5-acre parcels. Rural lands deserve better attention."

For those residents concerned with the implications of the decision to move forward with

Alternative 4, Gordy Euler, program manager with Clark County Community Planning, assures that this is only a minor decision in a much larger process.

"The decision that was made today provides the counselors with information to make a decision," Euler said. "The whole point about today, was just to get Alternative 4 decided on so we could resume the environmental review process. Nothing has been decided upon, except to go study Alternative 4."

Alternative 4 was added in January in response to rural land-owners who expressed interest in added flexibility to their land. What Alternative 4 suggests is that Forest zones move to 10- and 20-acre minimum lots (currently, they are at 40), eliminate the existing 10- and 20-acre minimum in Rural zones, moving them to 1- and 2.5-acre minimum lots, and in Agricultural zones changing the minimum parcel size from 40 acres to 10 and 20 acres

Clark County residents will have another chance to voice their opinions once the SEPA process is complete and a supplementary document is presented, estimated to take place by late summer.

Upon presentation of the supplementary statement, there will be a 45-day window for comments, concerns, and opinions to be voiced by the public. A formal hearing will follow.

At that time, Euler says a preferred plan will be decided upon, which in all likelihood will be a combination of all the Alternatives.

"They will take the information and whatever comments come in and they will craft a preferred Alternative," Euler said. "Then the preferred Alternative is what would become the 2016 Comprehensive Growth Management plan update."

Madore told *The Reflector*: "I share three words of encouragement: 'Make it better.' As good neighbors working together, we

can assure that our community has ample affordable, useful, manageable, and highly productive land for our future. And we can do so with thoughtfulness and full compliance with state law."

For more information and to follow the planning process and access ways to voice your opinion go to: <http://www.clark.wa.gov/planning/2016update/alternatives.html>.

Dairy

Continued from page A1

with the expiration dates of April 16 through April 21 were voluntarily recalled by Rodriguez and her husband. The milk was sold in half gallon and gallon plastic containers, and the cream was sold in pint and quart plastic containers. Rodriguez said the possible listeria contamination was only found in the cream, not in the milk.

Rodriguez said they were able to act quickly when they were told about the possible contamination and recalled all of the milk and cream with those expiration dates. Out of 112 gallons with those dates, she said they were able to recover 102 gallons. There are

currently no instances of anyone getting sick who drank milk or cream from the dairy.

Recalled raw milk and cream was sold in Amboy, Battle Ground, Camas, Vancouver and Yacolt.

Currently, Spanish Sonrise Dairy is home to about 30 head of dairy cows. Rodriguez said they do have a potential buyer in Oregon who is considering buying the cows and would continue to use them to produce milk.

Rodriguez said both she and her husband are sad to sell the dairy.

"We're both sad because we put a lot into it, with the dairy itself and the babies (cows)," Rodriguez said. "We've done really well with what we've had and we're sad to see it go, but it's a new chapter in our life."

Consumers with any questions about the recall can call Rodriguez at (360) 931-7283 between the hours of 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Kim

Continued from page A1

job performance and enhance delivery of county services and information to the public.

"I am thrilled that Sam is joining our high-performing management team," McCau-

formation technology engineer to director of worldwide product development.

Kim currently is studying for a doctoral degree in Workforce Development and Organizational Leadership at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He earned a Master of Science in Engineering in Management of Technol-

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