



ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL

Jeanne Stewart's big week

Posted on October 23, 2015

by Kaitlin Gillespie



This continues to be the best photo of Councilor Jeanne Stewart that exists.

It was a big week for Clark County Councilor Jeanne Stewart.

On both Tuesday and Wednesday, Stewart showed she's not afraid to stand up to fellow Councilors David Madore and Tom Mielke. Stewart's tough words earned her a great deal of applause from the crowd at Tuesday's hearing, and on Wednesday, someone in my Twitter feed actually referred to her as "QUEEN," because apparently Stewart is Beyoncé now.

Let's review the play-by-play. On Tuesday, Madore presented brand new material to be considered for Clark County's Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update, at least some of which could trigger a complete redo of the growth plan. That's serious business given the pending June 30 deadline, and until about an hour before the hearing, no member of county staff or the public even knew Madore's ideas were coming.

This shouldn't be surprising at this point. Madore's proposed Alternative 4, his own alternative to the growth plan, came way out of left field earlier this year, too. It's highly unusual for one councilor to develop their own component of a growth plan. That's a job usually left to, well, planners.

Following a five-hour meeting, the council, in a move that should surprise no one, voted two to one to put off the selection of its preferred alternative, and to discuss Madore's latest ideas, to Nov. 24. Stewart cast the dissenting vote, but not before turning to Madore and laying down the law.

"I want to say that it is absolutely shameful the way that you have hijacked this process to get people to comply with your, and only your, will," Stewart said to Madore. "This is not good government. It's shocking and I'm ashamed of it."

Daaang, Stewart.

Let's go to the tape.

BOCC delays vote





Stewart kept her intensity up during Wednesday's board time. About an hour into what somehow managed to be a two-hour meeting that had hardly any agenda to speak of, Stewart, again, turned to Madore with some serious words.

"I sometimes get the feeling that the culture of this board is that staff is incompetent and that they need to be second guessed on just about everything," Stewart said. "And I don't think that's a healthy culture for us to bring to the table, that we can do everything better than the staff, and that we're smarter than the staff, and that we don't even really need the staff. Sometimes I get the impression that we underestimate the value of what we have in the staff."

Madore, however, didn't take this sitting down.

"I need to say something here," he said. "That is so inappropriate. I don't know who you're talking about."

"I'm talking about you and Tom," Stewart shot back.

"Okay, that's who I thought you were talking about—" Madore started.

"And let me be clear—" Stewart said.

"—And that is inappropriate," Madore continued. "If you can identify anything that I have said or Tom has said that has in any way filled the specifics of what you just said, by all means we need to hear it. Such general criticism that attack the characters and the motives we have is completely inappropriate, so if—"

"I could make a list," Stewart said.

This conversation went on for some time. You can listen to the whole exchange here.

These outbursts from Stewart have been a long time coming. She's been increasingly snippety at her fellow councilors for some time. But this week, in my opinion, represented a turning point for her. If there was any hope of a buddy-buddy relationship between Stewart and the boys, it appears to be gone at this point.

And I, for one, am looking forward to seeing what's next from her.



Kaitlin Gillespie

I'm the Clark County government reporter at The Columbian. Get in touch at kaitlin.gillespie@columbian.com or 360-735-4517.

Comments

28 Comments

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Steve Matthews

Thank you Jeanne for standing up to M&M! You rock! They suck!

Reply · 9 hrs



Marty Porter · Senior Consultant at Windstream Holdings

That board time audio is quite telling of just how inept and clueless Tom Mielke is. The part where he doesn't seem to understand that they don't budget by days any longer makes me shake my head.

Reply · 👍 1 · Oct 26, 2015 12:16pm



Susan Pitt-garland · Central Washington University

This is soooooo the Jeanne Stewart I know and voted for.....ethical, SMART and not afraid to take a stand for what needs to be said. I've had such respect for her for more than 30 years. She is truly what elected officials need to be HONEST

Reply · 👍 1 · Oct 25, 2015 12:43pm



Peter Harrison · Former Political Candidate at Community Activist

I set aside four hours to attend this meeting. When I got there, half or more of the chairs you can see on the video had people in them.

Thanks to Concilor Madore, who controls the meeting agenda and inserted a 45 minute long presentation for a brand-spanking-new bridge proposal (now where have we heard that before?) from the write-in candidate for County Council Chair that he has supported to the tune of a quarter-million dollars, and then added a half-hour-plus slide presentation of his own that shoots down the population projection assumptions the Planning Commission has been using to make their all their planning decisions.


Madore's population observations might well be important, but presenting them ON THE DAY THE PLANNING COMMISSION WAS SET TO PRESENT THEIR RECCOMENDATIONS was more than bad form. It demonstrates poor managment and planning skills.

In other words, presenting them at the last moment like this makes him look like an idiot.

Naturally the meeting ran rather long. So long that, even people like me who set aside FOUR HOURS to attend the meeting, had to bail out and leave before the meeting ended.

I note that, at the end of the meeting when discussion of the Planning Commission Reccomendations is still going on, there are sixty chairs, yet only six people in the audience. That demonstrates a complete lack of respect for the people's time.


Councilor Madore does not respect the people he is supposed to be representing. Councilor Madore has got to go.

Reply ·  9 · Oct 24, 2015 8:45pm · Edited



Michele Wollert


That presentation should have been delayed until after the election, Peter. It would have removed most of the controversy about it being electioneering. The only "rush" to get it done that day, was to give candidate Pike a chance to campaign using public resources before November 3. Her handout looked like a glossy ad. It was a glossy ad.

Reply ·  5 · Oct 24, 2015 7:49pm · Edited



Peter Harrison · Former Political Candidate at Community Activist

Yup. Electioneering, plain and simple.

Reply ·  2 · Oct 24, 2015 8:46pm




John M. Kowalski · Camas, Washington

There should be a sitcom about Clark County politics. It could even use the same actress who plays Ashley Alexander in "Fresh off the Boat" ...

Yeah, seriously. Mielke's kind of a Sgt. Schultz character from "Hogan's Heroes." Madore is basically channeling an Evangelical Christian American version of any number of characters John Cleese has played. And Jeanne Stewart would be played as a sort of female old school Republican local politician channeling Eddie Albert in "Green Acres." Kaitlin Gillespie plays herself, the way George Burns played himself on the old Burns and Allen show, without a cigar however.


By Void, this is the next Portlandia...

Reply ·  6 · Oct 24, 2015 6:11pm · Edited



Tom Gibson · Camas, Washington


Dude, you could use the same actress that plays Liz Pike in Olympia!

Reply ·  2 · Oct 25, 2015 8:47pm



Michele Wollert


Mielke in the posted tape segment: "What I've been reading in the law books....." Now that's a scary thought.

Reply ·  11 · Oct 24, 2015 5:47pm · Edited



Bob Verrinder · Chief Executive Officer at Retired


My councilors. Gag alert.

Reply ·  4 · Oct 24, 2015 4:58pm



Bob Verrinder · Chief Executive Officer at Retired


Little stenographer??? Gag alert.

Reply ·  7 · Oct 24, 2015 4:58pm



Linda Noble Tubbs · Vancouver, Washington

"And thanks to our little stenographer." Really? What century are we in? Sorry boys, Mrs Stewart and the stenographer are grown women, able to carry out grown up tasks. Really.

Reply ·  16 · Oct 24, 2015 3:49pm



John M. Kowalski · Camas, Washington

And Liz Pike really looks like Ashley Anderson from "Fresh off the Boat" in the video from the other parts of that meeting.

Reply · 2 · Oct 24, 2015 3:16pm

Carol Levanen

The fact-finders should be audited as a matter of protocol. Perhaps the Columbian can run their own research on the data? They're only numbers and can be verified.

Reply · Oct 24, 2015 2:49pm



Terry Whipps Conner · Owner at Owner of Fishers Landing Hypnotherapy

What in the world are you speaking to, Ms Levanen?

Reply · 5 · Oct 24, 2015 2:56pm



Steve Lappier · Ridgefield High School

They are audited. Is Mr. Madore an auditor. No. Next imaginary conspiracy please.

Reply · Oct 25, 2015 1:16pm



Tom Gibson · Camas, Washington

I don't think anyone could sit through many board meetings with David Madore and Tom Mielke and remain sane. It's hard enough to listen to the meetings. Having to participate in them must be maddening. That reminds me of reports of how Pike interacted with the rest of the Camas City Council and how much everyone hated having to deal with her there. She took away from everything that needed to be taken care of and made it more difficult without adding anything to either the process or the knowledge.

Add another numbskull to the mix of this ship of fools with Liz Pike and things will go from bad to worse. It is becoming so blatantly obvious that Madore is doing whatever dance he is bidden to that anyone that comes into this group with actual governing in mind as opposed to fulfilling his pre-ordered mandates is going to become frustrated and angry. If Madore succeeds in buying Pike the Chair seat this will be some of the most appalling examples of corrupt government ever. Madore is still pushing the No Tolls message and apparently it is playing well in the tribal foothills but why are these same people ignoring how hard he is working to sell them out for his developer friends? Vote the ballot. No write-ins.

Reply · 5 · Oct 24, 2015 1:06pm



Carolyn Crain · John Adams High School

Facing losses opponents usually double down in their resolve and become frightened or angry maybe both. Tossing any reasoning to the side and pushing harder than ever. All I can say is some of this negative display will be over in just 10 more days. As for the rest, 2016 cannot come soon enough. I am praying for peace and strength for Mrs. Stewart. Join me and get out the ballots while you're at it please!

Reply · 6 · Oct 24, 2015 12:59pm



Honua Dee

Alas, I fear that Jeanne Stewart is one of the last of a dying breed - a "Rational Republican".

Reply · 6 · Oct 24, 2015 11:27am



Kevin Healv



"I need to say something here," he said. "That is so inappropriate. I don't know who you're talking about."

"I'm talking about you and Tom," Stewart shot back.

"Okay, that's who I thought you were talking about—" Madore started.

Seriously: who did he think she was talking about? Is he so arrogant as to think he is above reproach?

Reply · 9 · Oct 24, 2015 11:23am



Honua Dee

I watched the tape. She was looking right at him while she spoke. Duh!

Reply · Oct 24, 2015 3:30pm



Joy Imboden Overstreet · Image Consultant at ColorStyle / PDX

I often wonder what it must be like to be Mrs. Madore and to live with a petty tyrant like this. If I were she I'd either slit his throat or my own

Reply · 5 · Oct 24, 2015 11:16am



John M. Kowalski · Camas, Washington

Either way it'd be a mercy killing.

Reply · 3 · Oct 24, 2015 5:54pm



Deb Nelson · California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly)

Staff people dearly need Councilor Stewart's advocacy and support. They should be getting support from the county Manager and Councilors, but just the reverse is happening. Councilors Madore and Mielke aren't listening to attorneys, budget office, county manager, policy analysts, department directors or staff. They question consent agenda items, don't read staff reports, don't give time for staff to prepare reports or do research. Major proposals are developed behind closed doors, budget decisions are made without utilizing staff expertise, jobs are being threatened for speaking to the public or attending community forums, public health policies are being rewritten by Mr Madore with a political agenda, opposing best practices. I am extremely concerned about the large number of good staff members and leaders who feel their work is disregarded, disrespected and dismissed and the frightening high number of excellent employees who have left. Thank you, Councilor Stewart. Please stay strong!

Reply · 9 · Oct 24, 2015 10:23am



Jared McClanahan

We don't need county planning staff or an auditor for that matter because we have the real experts from ALEC's local government offshoot ACCE willing to it for free and David Madore eagerly serving as their conduit.


Reply · 5 · Oct 24, 2015 9:45am



Mike Briggs · CEO at Ex-Candidate WA

This is a good post and a good article. I am gratified to see County Councilor Jeanne Stewart, dig in her spurs. Councilor Madore has used his position with arrogance and condescension and a willingness to not work with others. Mrs. Stewart is very correct in calling him on this particular move. Councilor Mielke is again just falling line line with what Madore wants. He has betrayed his office. I am quite confident Councilor Mielke will not be in that chair after 2016.

Mrs. Stewart is winning my approval with her pointed actions.

Reply ·  6 · Oct 24, 2015 9:11am



Karl Johnson · Paradise High School


...but Liz Pike may be. Promises made promises kept!

Reply · Oct 25, 2015 4:23pm · Edited



Robert Ives · Vancouver, Washington


Morale at the county building has plummeted since Madore/Mielke/Benton and their factotums arrived. The exodus of solid department directors was good evidence that crummy bosses were suddenly in charge. The ensuing climate of disgruntled angst among the employees who know better is impossible to hide. Councilor Stewart has the tough job of speaking truth to power. She is calling it as she sees it. Long may she run.

Reply ·  8 · Oct 24, 2015 4:34pm · Edited



Mike Briggs · CEO at Ex-Candidate WA

Robert, I believe this is precisely how former County Commissioner, Steve Stewart, must have felt for much of this time with Madore and Mielke.

Reply ·  6 · Oct 24, 2015 9:05am



Betty Sue Morris · Vancouver, Washington

I suspect Councilor Madore no longer refers to her as "my little princess." Hooray Jeanne Stewart!


Reply ·  14 · Oct 24, 2015 8:45am



John M. Kowalski · Camas, Washington

Man, Mielke looks like he's posing for a mug shot. And Madore is an arrogant twit.


Their attitude is simply disgusting.

Reply ·  3 · Oct 24, 2015 8:39am · Edited



Ketcham Kate


Mr. Madore does not value staff. One example is right here in this tape. "I'd like to thank our little stenographer." Really!

Reply ·  9 · Oct 24, 2015 7:36am



Glenna Rose · Wapato Senior High School

T'was pretty condescending, wasn't it!

Reply ·  2 · Oct 24, 2015 10:26am



Glenna Rose · Wapato Senior High School

Could have left out the word "little" or used "patient" or "capable" if he needed to embellish with an adjective.

Reply · Oct 24, 2015 11:22am



Michele Wollert

The Clark County staffers and managers deserve someone on the 6th floor to champion their expertise and to protect them from the hostile work environment that has "prospered and thrived" since 2012. The residents of Clark County need someone on the 6th floor to watch over ALL of our best interests, not just the chosen few. Jeanne Stewart does both tasks very well, even though she

is currently the minority voice. But, oh, my, she speaks clearly, assertively, and articulately!

Reply · 👍 9 · Oct 24, 2015 7:24am · Edited



Nick Ruark · Vancouver, Washington

Thank you, Jeanne E. Stewart!

Reply · 👍 8 · Oct 24, 2015 7:12am · Edited



Melanie Kenoyer · Vancouver, Washington

board time clark county clark county council comprehensive growth management plan David Madore

Jeanne Stewart Tom Mielke