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The Reflector

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December 2, 2015

Councilors adopt Alternative 4

Controversial plan passes in the face of heavy opposition

JC CORTEZ staff reporter

VANCOUVER - The Board of Clark County Councilors voted 2-1 last week to adopt modified planning assumptions and a preferred alternative to the Growth Management Plan Update which includes a revised version of the controversial Alternative 4.

"I believe we would be negligent if we did not fix what is so broken," Councilor David Madore said of the current comp plan, which would have remained in effect under the plan recommended by the Clark County Planning Commission. The commission voted twice to recommend Alternative 1, along

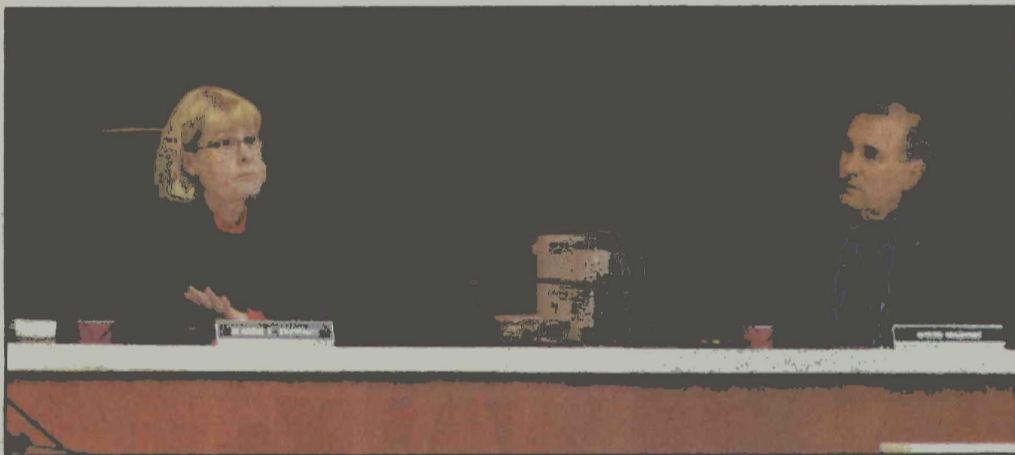


Photo by JC Cortez.

THE BOARD OF CLARK County Councilors voted 2-1 last week to adopt new planning guidelines and a preferred alternative to the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan which included provisions voted down by the Clark County Planning Commission. Shown here at the meeting are councilors Jeanne Stewart (left) and David Madore (right).

with certain changes requested by cities, and to reject all parts of both the original and amended versions of Alternative 4.

"In my opinion, it's prema-

ture to approve anything," said Councilor Jeanne Stewart, who cast the lone dissenting vote. "So much of what has been offered has been offered by one

councilor and offered within the last two or three weeks."

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Hockinson board approves replacement levy for ballot Measure to appear on February ballot

BRUSH PRAIRIE - Members of the Hockinson School Board approved a replacement levy ballot measure during a regularly scheduled meeting Nov. 23.

The levy is designed to help bridge the gap between what the state pays and what it costs to operate schools.

"This levy will help Hockinson School District continue funding essential student programs and services," said Board Chairwoman Katherine Davis. "Local funding is critical to our overall school operations."

The 2017-19 levy for School Programs, Maintenance and Operations would replace two levies that are expiring in 2016. The levy requests \$4.105 million in 2017 (\$3.56 per \$1,000

activities and athletics.

The levy would make it possible for the district to replace kitchen equipment that is past its life expectancy, make roofing repairs, upgrade lab computers and servers, resurface the High School athletic track and replace fiber cable to the Elementary School, among other improvements.

The measure will appear on the February ballot.

ALT 4

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The final vote happened near the end of the more than six hour meeting after hours of deliberation, fiery testimony from multiple Clark County residents, and even an inflammatory poem.

The decision defied pleas from the cities of Battle Ground, Camas, La Center, Ridgefield, Washougal, Vancouver and Woodland and numerous citizens across the county for the Board to reject Alternative 4. Opponents fear land deregulation by Alternative 4 could lead to development of urban sprawl which would overload local infrastructure - or that it could spark expensive lawsuits from opponents who believe the plan does not comply with Washington's Growth Management Act.

Madore dismissed fears about litigation.

"One thing that we've heard ... is 'you can't do this because we're gonna get sued and we're gonna lose and it's gonna be really bad,'" he said in a mocking tone. "I believe that whatever we do, every plan that's ever been adopted by this county, someone's sued. Multiple people sued. There will always be lawsuits; I'm taking that for granted."

Opponents also worried that changing planning assumptions - the basis for the formulation of the Alternative plans - so late in the update process may require a complete reboot of the environmental review process. Several residents criticized the Board for moving too quickly from revising Alternative 4 and proposing new planning assumptions to adopting the policy before it could be properly studied.

Stewart said she agreed with some parts of the policy but questioned the process by which

it was created.

"One of the things we're trying to do is ... correct the inaction and negligence of other boards of county commissioners who ... should have been looking at natural progression of some rural land development," she said. "That should have been done incrementally each year. I think it's too ambitious to try to fix that in one plan in our current year."

Madore disagreed. "One of the things that I feel like we cannot continue to do is to fault previous boards for inaction when we ourselves would end up just kicking the can down the road," he countered.

As a next step, the Board will send the preferred alternative to be studied in a Final Supplemental Impact Statement. The final deadline for the updated plan is June 30, 2016.

A copy of the policy adopted last Tuesday is available at <http://www.clark.wa.gov/thegrid>.

We sincerely love The Reflector!

Kenneth Amboy, WA

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