



ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL

Thorpe's role in county growth plan

Posted on December 4, 2015 by Kaitlin Gillespie

Many questions remained Tuesday and Wednesday about who exactly this R.W Thorpe and Associates group is and what their involvement might be in the the Clark County Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update.

But it now sounds like their involvement will be less than originally perceived.

I received a call from Robert W. Thorpe, president of the Mercer Island-based firm, who told me his goal for the firm, if hired, is to provide an analysis of where things stand now and offer some direction going forward regarding the late introduced planning assumptions. Think of it as a chapter in the current environmental impact statement offering fresh eyes on the assumptions and how they may apply to zoning alternatives

It will not be a new environmental impact statement, he said, saying it would be unethical to jump in when the county has an ongoing contract with another firm

"There's an opportunity maybe to help, but my caveat is I don't want to step on or over the consultants," Thorpe said.

As I wrote earlier this week, Councilor David Madore reached out to the group late last month to bring them in as a consultant for the final environmental impact statement, and brought forward a purchasing agreement with the firm at Tuesday's council meeting to have them come down and give a pitch.

I wasn't the only one blindsided by the purchasing agreement. When I asked Deputy Planning Director Gordy Euler the next day about the purchasing agreement, he told me he'd only seen it minutes prior to my call, and that he wasn't entirely sure what the group's role might be going forward. Would they work with the current consultant? Would they provide a whole new environmental impact statement? It was unclear, and ultimately the final decision rests with the county council.

But Thorpe, who has been involved in land-use planning since 1968, said he has no intention of rewriting the final environmental review.

"I'm known as being pretty direct, and I will not bend my ethics and I will not bend my integrity," he said.

The county has the authority to hire another firm to do so at this point, however. Euler said earlier this week that the council is well within its legal rights to terminate its \$141,000 contract with Environmental Science Associates and bring in new people. But it sounds like Thorpe and his firm will have no part in that if that's the case.

The agreement will be considered at next week's Clark County council meeting agenda at 10 a.m.



Kaitlin Gillespie

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Comments

3 Comments

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Val Alexander

Thanks Katie for your excellent reporting. Your writing is not only accurate, it's interesting, so hopefully more people will pay attention when it comes to voting. I hope everyone who voted for Madore and Mielke will spend 2 hours a day trying to get from Portland to Vancouver, and everyone whose property taxes go up and up, will realize it's because of these clowns mostly. Wait until you see what happens to our county roads. Madore says they're just fine. What do the rest of you who live in rural areas think? Our roads aren't wide enough to stripe so in the fog it's anybody's guess as to where the middle is.

Reply Dec 5, 2015 7:42pm



Michele Wollert

Yesterday, I predicted this might happen. It was so obvious that Madore was simply shopping for an opinion and an expert he could control! Ethical consultants aren't for sale. I wonder how Madore will spin this.

Reply 3 Dec 4, 2015 10:41pm



Steve Lappier Ridgefield High School

I'm fairly sure he'll say Thorpe was "unavailable." That's all. Semi-true. That way he can justify to himself that he's told the truth.

Reply 1 Dec 5, 2015 9:49am



Bob Verrinder · Chief Executive Officer at Retired

As always, thank you, Katie!

Reply 4 · Dec 4, 2015 10:31pm