In Our View: Cheers & Jeers

Compassion abounds on Thanksgiving; wrong approach on country growth plan

By The Columbian
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Cheers: Huzzahs are warranted for the many people in Clark County who worked to provide a Thanksgiving dinner for those who otherwise would go without. When Chronis’ Restaurant and Lounge closed its doors in April after 48 years in business and 30 years of serving a free Thanksgiving meal, there were some concerns about where the homeless, poor, or lonely would go this holiday season. But several organizations and hundreds of volunteers stepped up.

Ohana Farms put together a free meal at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church, and even organized daylong shuttle service between the church and downtown Vancouver. “We want it to be a party atmosphere,” organizer Carolyn Carpio said. “We want to celebrate. We do have so much to be thankful for.” Share House, the Proto-Cathedral of St. James the Greater, and others also provided meals. Most important, the largesse served up some dignity for those who are struggling.

Jeers: County Councilors David Madore and Tom Mielke approved an update to the Clark County Comprehensive Growth Management Plan that is problematic on many levels. First is the fact that Madore ignored input from county staff and recommendations from the county’s Planning Commission. Second is the fact that Mielke blindly went along with the proposal without providing much thought or input.

Critics have said that Madore’s plan to shrink the minimum allowable parcel size for subdividing some rural, forest, and agriculture lots will lead to drawn-out legal struggles for the county. Time will tell whether those criticisms are valid, but Madore’s unilateral approach is troublesome enough. So is Mielke’s approval of that approach.

Cheers: Mount Hood recreation areas have opened for the season, which is good news for skiers and might be good news for everybody else. While there are concerns that a strong El Niño winter is in the forecast, Dave Tragelthon of Mount Hood Meadows told The Columbian that is not necessarily a bad thing.

“Strong El Niños ... actually bring near average, or even way above average, snow,” he said. Considering that snowpack — or lack thereof — is the first indicator of future drought conditions, we remain hopeful for plenty of snow in the mountains this winter. Irrigation, wildlife habitat, and many aspects of the economy depend upon a strong runoff when the spring thaw hits.

Jeers: The need for changes at Western State Hospital in Lakewood, near Tacoma, has been highlighted by a report from the Associated Press. Between 2010 and 2014, injured employees missed 41,301 days of work, and on-the-job injuries forced staff to move to other jobs for a total of 7,760 days. Workers’ compensation insurance, meanwhile, paid $6 million in wage and medical cost to injured hospital workers between January 2013 and September 2015.

Hospital officials say they have made improvements to satisfy the demands of federal regulators, wh
have threatened to pull federal funding over concerns about safety for patients and employees. We hope so. The ongoing problems have cost taxpayers millions of dollars.

**Cheers:** Vancouver's Uptown area just got a little more hip with the opening of a record store at 17th and Broadway. That's records, as in the old vinyl things your parents used to play, and the new store joins Everybody's Music to give Vancouver two record stores.

Audiophiles claim that vinyl provides a more pure sound than digital MP3 players or compact discs. For longtime music lovers in the area, it might be time to dust off that old turntable in the garage.
Greg Bergman Great job Sir!

Tracy O. Doriot Thanks David Madore for taking the initiative to correct a very serious incorrect assumption in the growth projections for Clark County. If the 20 year plan does not allow for additional buildable lots, the viability of even remotely affordable housing in our county is in jeopardy.

Anna Miller Very few people will ever know the hundreds of hours it took, working with staff and others, day and night to get to this point. Rural land owners owe a debt of gratitude to Councilor Madore for being willing to listen to their cry for help after 20 years. And to Councilor Mielke who also stepped up to right an injustice done to these property owners. Well done!

Gary Cole Thanks, David. I am looking at the map on clark.wa.gov and it shows alternative 1, 2, 3, 3.1, and 4 for the 2016 Plan Update. Is it alternative 4 that was approved?

David Madore Gary Cole, the selected plan is a hybrid of each one including all of Alternative 4.

Gary Cole Thank you for the work you put into this, David.

David Clark Good job. But thinking long term, this plan needs to be rolled back to the minimum intrusion on people's rights and to make as much land as possible available to keep the cost of housing low and to promote the economy.

Remember this overriding truth: planners usually do more harm than good - just look at what perfectly planned Portland (THE national model for planning!) has achieved: unaffordable housing driving minorities out of their historic neighborhoods, massive subsidies to developers to get them to build things that are UN-economic without subsidies, crappy schools because of taking money from schools for development, high crime because of taking money from police to give to developers, world class traffic congestion because of spending most transportation money on transit which is used by about 5% of the people leaving the other 95% stuck in congestion, and their crowning achievement: affordable 500 sqft apartments!

This is Clark county's future if you follow the planners.
David Madore  
November 24 at 7:39pm · Edited ·

Got 'er done! New life for rural property owners:

Today was a milestone day. Our hearing lasted 6.5 hours from 10:00 am through nearly 4:30 hearing testimony and deliberating on the plan that sets the future for the next 20 years for Clark County citizens. Success!

So many citizens participated in this process. We've learned so much along the way. All that input made our plan better and better for the last several years. We've worked on Alternative 4 for nearly a year by itself starting in January.

Now we need to make sure that our staff has everything they need to succeed with the plan. The next step will include ensuring that the Final Environmental Impact Statement can be done well, on time, and affordably. We will focus more on that Tuesday as we moved that to the agenda.

Thank you to all who worked so hard – staff, citizens, stakeholders, and rural citizens including Carol Levanen, Susan Rasmussen, Don McIsaac, Jim Malinowski, Jerry Olson, and more. Thanks also to Tom Mielke for his support and trust.

Thank God! Yea Clark County!

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1 share

John Ley It was a wonderful day for rural land owners and personal property rights. Thank you for digging into so many of the details. Thank you for educating citizens on so many of the "assumptions" as well as the history of the 1994 GMA plan. We have gone a long way to "right a wrong". Bravo & well done!