



ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL

## Councilors look to testify to Planning Commission

Posted on May 6, 2016 by Karlin Gillespie

Frequent readers of this blog and The Columbian – and really just anyone even a little tuned in to county politics – are well aware of where each of the Clark County councilors stand on the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update

But Councilors David Madore and Tom Mielke, Republicans, seem bent on making sure the Planning Commission knows exactly what their opinions are

Mielke asked at Wednesday's board time meeting if the councilors will have the chance to testify at the Planning Commission's June 2 deliberations, where they'll make a final recommendation to the county council on what to adopt as its final growth plan

"No," came the answer from Chair Marc Boldt, no party preference "That does away with the independence of the planning commission "

Madore piped up

"Do the county councilors have an opportunity to interface with the planning commission in their processes or is that a conflict?" Madore asked the Clark County Prosecutor's Office representative, who declined to answer

Remember, the county's attorneys aren't advising the board on land-use matters in the wake of Madore's ongoing accusations that they've lied about the growth plan. She deferred to the Home Rule Charter for more details

Councilor Jeanne Stewart, a Republican, joined Boldt in disagreeing

"It almost seems inappropriate for us to go and tell the planning commission individually what we want," Stewart said "I think it would be confusing because when we come back to make final decisions, will a consensus have already been garnered?"

Madore, however, pressed on, saying "freedom of speech" gives councilors the right to "participate in any county affairs "

"That First Amendment right, I think, belongs to all of us," Madore said. "We ought to be able to testify to the degree as any other citizen to the planning commission "

There wasn't an official answer on this issue I see what Madore and Mielke are saying, but it's problematic What happens if a third councilor shows and wishes to testify at this meeting? Doesn't that constitute debate under the Open Public Meetings Act?

Madore and Mielke's request also seems unusual given that, unlike their constituents, the final decision on the growth plan rests with the Clark County council That's kind of the whole deal with representative government They have the ability to reject or revise the Planning Commission's recommendation.

And having sat through my fair share of four-hour hearings in recent months, I'm fully expecting we'll hear plenty of testimony from all five councilors on the matter



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**David Clark**

Kaitlin---"What happens if a third councilor shows and wishes to testify at this meeting? Doesn't that constitute debate under the Open Public Meetings Act?"

ME--- It is a public meeting and publically noticed.

Kaitlin---"They have the ability to reject or revise the Planning Commission's recommendation "

ME --- Isn't that like the president telling congress what he would or would not sign?

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