

OPINION

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 1882-1941

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 1923-1998

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 1929-1978

In Our View



GROWTH PLAN GOOD TO GO

Majority of Clark County council showed leadership, common sense on issue

In last week's decision by the Clark County council to adopt a 20-year growth management plan, a couple of items stand out from the elongated deliberations

One is that a majority of the council opted to act in what they think is the best fashion for a majority of Clark County residents. Another is that councilors — most notably Julie Olson — have expressed a desire to balance this public good with the needs of rural landowners. In the end, the board forged a reasonable decision from the wreckage created by years of contentious negotiations.

Most important is that the council, through a series of 3-2 votes with David Madore and Tom Mielke consistently in opposition, adopted a plan born of a vision for a quickly growing county. There are provisions for a gentle alteration of the county's rural areas, allowing for some smaller lot sizes and for an expansion of urban growth boundaries for some cities. Increased population will call for increased density throughout the county in order to ease the housing crunch that already is in evidence.

This approach belies the demagoguery demonstrated by Madore. In an effort to cater to rural landowners who desire to subdivide their parcels, the councilor unilaterally developed an alternative plan that would have led to rural subdivisions while providing scant attention to the need for infrastructure in those areas. The council, along with the county planning commission, wisely rejected Madore's ill-conceived plan while recognizing that all citizens are stakeholders in the issue and should not be beholden to the desires of one small homogeneous group.

Throughout a seven-hour meeting Tuesday that resulted in the final adoption of the plan, Madore persisted with a childish harangue and said, "What this plan does is, it unnecessarily imposes burdensome restrictions on the citizens. It adds extra regulation, extra red tape. It strips citizens of the private property rights they thought they had."

In truth, it sets reasonable management policies for Clark County's rural areas. It reminds residents that if they bought a farm, they own a farm, not two dozen 5-acre parcels. It acknowledges that allowing for the division of large properties also would require infrastructure such as additional roads, water service, sewers, and other amenities of civilization. When a property owner divides their property for the construction of new homes, that construction does not happen in a vacuum, it alters the nature of their neighbors' properties, as well.

Meanwhile, the council also recognized the needs of rural landowners. Since the county adopted a 1994 plan under the state's Growth Management Act, many residents have complained that their property rights have been diminished. Olson pledged to revisit rural zoning issues, suggested the creation of a rural lands task force, and recommended greater flexibility for those who have owned property since before 1994. "This isn't going to be the end of conversations as it relates to rural landowners," she said.

Of course, conversations are not the same as actions. County government should, indeed, pay attention to the desires of those who have been longtime landowners and have seen their options limited. But in considering additional options, the importance is in catering to the needs of all residents and recognizing that growth affects the entire county.

The Clark County council was wise to adopt a reasoned, well-thought-out land-use plan and wise to reject what would have amounted to an extension of urban sprawl.

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Our Readers' Views

Reflect what's true for your vote

Is truth important any more? It seems that in politics these days it is a fading commodity, in both local and national. We all know "if it sounds too good to be true it most likely isn't." It follows that "if it sounds too wrong to be true it most likely is."

I first came to Vancouver in the 1920s so I have seen a lot of good and bad. The bad times of the 1930s are still fresh in my mind, but it was a time when people helped each other and truth and civility prevailed.

I suggest that we listen to both sides of each political argument then decide if it sounds too good or too wrong to be true. I recommend we all vote for "true" in November.

Al Sullivan
 VANCOUVER

Demand action in gun legislation

I am sick and tired of the National Rifle Association and its fear-mongering tactics in an effort to protect profits in the gun industry. I don't care about ideology anymore, I care about the pain and sadness of those affected by gun violence.

Our Congress should be ashamed of themselves for their lack of action and failure to pass gun safety legislation. We need to care more about people than guns and what is really happening in America, 91 people are killed every single day by gun violence.

We need food, water, shelter, and love, not firearms and hate.

Please, please contact your Congressperson today and tell them to either pass common sense gun legislation or to simply pack their bags when you vote them out of office.

Julia Berreth
 VANCOUVER

Oil is going the way of coal

The really insurmountable problem for the Tesoro, Savage oil terminals is that the global oil market has changed forever.

Bloomberg New Energy Finance notes that we now have a worldwide surplus of energy. New sources of oil have increased supply, while vehicles with higher efficiencies or zero emissions are destroying oil demand. Capital investments for renewables now surpass capital spending at oil and gas companies.

Bloomberg forecasts that by 2023,

electric vehicles (EVs) will reach cost parity on capital cost alone, and EVs are already far cheaper to fuel and maintain. By 2023, EVs will have grown to displace about 2 million barrels of daily demand. That approximates the current glut that is depressing oil prices. By 2040, half of all new cars could be electric.

Oil prices will generally decline from extra supply and decreasing demand. Oil will do what coal is doing now, but with a louder crash. Since 2012, 50 U.S. coal companies and 69 oil and gas companies have gone bankrupt.

A big oil terminal would become a stranded asset within about 15 years. Longview has a simpler terminal decision — the coal companies have bailed out, creating a stranded asset even before the environmental impact statement is done.

Eric Strid
 WHITE SALMON

Outsiders influence local elections

A shadowy group of Republicans has been sending negative mailings attacking Tim Probst, candidate for 17th Legislative District Senate seat. The group behind the mailings is called Good Government Leadership Council. But it is anything but a proponent of good government, receiving its funding from out-of-state donors and hiding its origin.

Its main donor is the Leadership Council of Olympia. But that group's largest donor is the Republican State Leadership Committee from Washington, D.C. Almost none of that group's funding comes from in-state contributions, according to a reporter for Seattle's public radio station (google Who's Buying the Washington State Senate, KUOW News).

Top contributors to the RSLC in 2014 included Altria and Reynolds (Big Tobacco), Las Vegas Sands (gambling), the infamous Koch brothers, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, as well as health care and pharmaceutical corporations.

The goal is to elect Republicans who favor corporate interests to state legislatures across the nation. If you favor clean government, please reject the message of the Good Government Leadership Council.

They use name-calling, lies, and misrepresentations to smear their opponents. Let's stop outside inter-

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We encourage readers to express their views about public issues. Letters to the editor are subject to editing for brevity and clarity. Limit letters to 200 words — 100 words when endorsing or opposing political candidates — and allow 30 days between submissions.

Include name, address and daytime phone number for verification, only the name and hometown will be published. Email is preferred.

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ests from influencing our elections with such tactics

Judy Bumbarger-Enright
 VANCOUVER

Broaden focus on candidate choices

Every election season, there are candidates beyond Democrats and Republicans. The Green Party is gaining momentum in this particular season. Americans are interested in other choices. In a May Data Targeting poll, 55 percent said they would favor an independent challenger to Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. In a June ABC News/Washington Post poll, 70 percent viewed Trump unfavorably and 55 percent viewed Clinton unfavorably.

Despite gathering only a fraction of the money these candidates have and no media coverage, Green Party candidate Jill Stein is gaining a following. People are tired of entrenched politics and the same old money-trading games. Stein is gaining a following because she articulates a reasoned, values-based progressive vision with bold solutions to the problems our country faces. Stein believes politicians should be beholden only to voters, not big-money special interests. This is what the majority of Americans are echoing back. Media and other politicians need to listen.

Stein's campaign is working to get on the ballot in all 50 states to give voters another choice in November. If this is a democratic society, the media should take their responsibility seriously to inform voters about all of their choices, not just the big-money ones. Give the Green Party an equal voice in the election.

Kelly Kirk
 VANCOUVER