



Clark County Board of Commissioners
P.O. 5000
Vancouver, Washington

October 31, 2014

Re: 10-30-14 Open House - For the Record

On October 30, I attended an Open House in Ridgefield. The meeting was conducted by Clark County staff, and guests were to consider Alternatives to the DSEIS in the 2016 Comprehensive Land Use Plan update. I drove a half hour in heavy rain, cross country, to attend. When I arrived at 5:20 PM, the small parking lot was full, so I parked along the curb. I signed in and entered the meeting room, only to see there were only about 20 to 30 chairs in the room. I mentioned to staff they might need more chairs, but, the comment was ignored. I asked why the location was so far from landowners and so small, but got only vague answers. Many cars were driving into the parking lot, only to leave again, because all available parking was gone. I complained to Steve Stewart, Ridgefield City Manager, who asked the fire chief to allow use of the fire apparatus driveway. But, that was too late for dozens of cars that had already left.

The room was small and stuffy and quickly filled to over capacity with people standing tightly in any available space, with some outside and in the entry. It became increasingly hot in the room. One woman became faint and had to leave the room. The presenter began and someone asked who he was and why he was the presenter. He answered and went on with his presentation. Another person asked what was the county going to do with all the five acre lots in the rural areas. The question was answered vaguely, and the presentation went on. Another person asked another question, and again answered vaguely, followed by the presentation. Some people left the room and went home. The room continued to become increasingly warm as dozens of people stood shoulder to shoulder in the room. The presenter spoke for approximately an hour and ten minutes, with all those people standing in the hot room. It reminded me of a steaming cattle car headed to the slaughter house. Is this any way for staff to treat the public?

These people are tax paying, landowners and professional people of the community who braved the weather to come to a county meeting to get answers about their land. An electrical engineer, from California, asked staff a question and was given abrupt comments. He was determined to get an answer, but none was forthcoming. A retired bank executive and business owner tried to discuss a land use topic and was informed by staff that all the land in the rural lands was gotten by land grants. Another well known construction company executive braved the long presentation that made no sense to him at all. I heard no mention from staff about the comment box that was on the table. This was the most inconsiderate public meeting I have ever attended, and I have attended many of them. Citizens have a right to know, and staff has a responsibility to respectfully give the right answers.

Sincerely,

Carol Levanen
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Board of Commissioners

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