

From: J & C Barnes [<mailto:maggiedrum.hm@gmail.com>]
Sent: Sunday, April 29, 2012 10:10 AM
To: Planning & Development Services
Subject: Skagit County CP Amendment: PL11-0250 (Lake Erie Trucking)

Dear Skagit County Planning Staff,

It is disheartening to see the continued chopping up of the ever dwindling rural resources that remain in the S. Fidalgo Island area. It is always in the guise of providing a better and more suitable use of the subject property by the applicant. The actual driver of course is not for the betterment of the remaining un-gentrified land, but for the benefit of the owners' bank account. This is, of course, is a very common and understandable bit of human nature.

However, these owners purchase property that is sold to them with a particular zoning, at a substantial discount, and then they request a rezone to make it a more valuable property to sell to others even if it is not part of the plans for the area. This is harmful though to all the others who live and own property in the area which they purchased with the expectation of protection of their own use of their properties and their inherent values. It also is a severe detriment to the large number of others who are residents of Skagit County, and to the thousands of visitors who value the nature of the south part of the Island without more and more houses popping up along a scenic corridor. The tourism industry of our county is extremely significant as it provides livelihoods for many thousands who do not even reside in the South Fidalgo Island area. Tourists do not come to admire the subdivisions which replace our scenic areas, or the overall character of our beautiful location.

Of course, the land was originally zoned as Rural Resource with the view that it would be used per RR permitted uses. This is supposed to be the inherent value of these areas for a purpose. If a particular parcel is not overly valuable for resource development then it would ordinarily be valued for the worth of these resources. Rezoning for higher residential density is not a permitted use, and nor should it be. For someone to purchase property, however long ago, with the hope of increasing its value through an undesirable rezone, is pure speculation on the expectation that they can get away with it. Speculation is not a bad thing unless it causes more harm than good to all of us who value this area. This is the case for this application.

There is always the concern that denser developments will also be detrimental to the environment, i.e. the watershed, plant and animal life, erosion, impact on ground and other water supplies, septic runoff, etc. etc. This is always a concern for new developments and one which should be examined under a jaundiced eye.

If this were the only development proposal on the whole island, and there would never be any more, it might be easier to stomach. Unfortunately, every exception that is granted to one is assumed by the others, as a precedent is set which is always a thrilling event for the other owners who hope to substantially revalue their properties, and, for the vast population of land use attorneys.

I would urge Skagit County, in the strongest terms, to deny this application for a rezone. The developer, Mr. Wooding, is an honorable person who has been a tremendous asset to Anacortes, Fidalgo Island, and Skagit County for many decades. He is well-respected and has been a good steward of our Island in most cases. However, there are times when boundaries must be set and enforced to protect our dwindling resources, in all the meanings of resources.

Respectfully,
Joe Barnes

Member of the Board of Evergreen Islands, 2107 11th Street, Anacortes, WA 98221