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CIVIL ENGINEERING & LAND-USE PLANNING

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May 4, 2012

Skagit County Planning & Development Services
1800 Continental Place
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Re: Public Comment Submittal to Planning Department & Planning Commission
Bill Wooding Comprehensive Plan Amendment PL 11-0250

Dear Staff & Commission Members:

A Comprehensive Plan Amendment application has been submitted to Skagit County for P19168, which consists of approximately 35 acres located on the easterly side of Rosario Road approximately 0.4 miles south from the intersection with Marine View Drive. Presently, the subject property is zoned Rural Resource – NRL, with a requested change to Rural Reserve. Adjacent north of the subject property is another parcel also owned by Bill Wooding, containing a gravel permit.

When the subject property was first purchased by Mr. Wooding in May 1993, it was residentially zoned with a density of four dwelling units per acre. At that time, the property's potential was for approximately 140 residences. In the late 1990s, the property was rezoned to its current status of Rural Resource – NRL, having a residential zoning density of 1 lot per 40 areas. Barring the fact the property has no attributes of forestry, mining, and agricultural, Skagit County zoned the property Rural Resource – NRL more as a buffer to the adjacent gravel pit property to the north.

Through a precise examination of the property's soil conditions, wooded conditions, and size; it clearly does not meet Skagit County's requirements of what constitutes Rural Resource – NRL. This fact is not disputed by Skagit County Planning Department, as they have provided support of this application to both the County Commissioners and the Planning Commission.

At the Planning Commission hearing on Tuesday May 1, 2012, some of the public testimony given was against this proposal to change the property's designation. Reasons against this proposal were not so much density driven, but rather, allegations of increased storm water runoff and unfounded assertions the property has resource value. In its present state zoned Rural Resource – NRL, a maximum of 3 residential lots could be created using a CaRD process. Once assigned the correct designation of Rural Reserve, the property's maximum density using a CaRD would support no more than 7 residential lots; all located in the southwesterly half of the property to maintain the required 0.25-mile setback from the existing gravel pit operations to the north.

For many years, there is known to have been drainage problems in this area of South Fidalgo Island. Skagit County has since investigated these drainage problems, and has made considerable drainage improvements. The fact there has been drainage problems, and some may still exist, is not a justified tool in denying the change in designation from the subject property.

Whether the designation stays or changes, neither dictates whether logging can occur on the property. It is a fact the owner has no intention of clear cutting the property, and through his nearly 20-years of ownership, has been an exceptional steward of the land. The highest portion of this parcel was even donated to the local water district for water storage tanks.

If this property is residentially developed to its maximum extent, a total 7 lots could be created, and due to the limited lot sizes, these 7 lot areas could only consume 20% of the property, with the remainder left as an open space. The fact has been overlooked that a corrected designation of Rural Reserve still does not have the capacity to create an impact.

Undisputed Facts:

The subject property does not conform to Skagit County's criteria for RRc-NRL.

Only a portion of this property contains a marginal soil quality supportive of forest growth.

This Comprehensive Plan Amendment is proposed as a correction in designation, not a change.

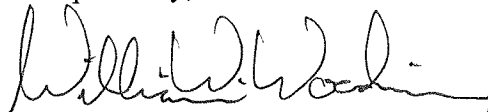
There is sufficient utility infrastructure in the area to support residential development.

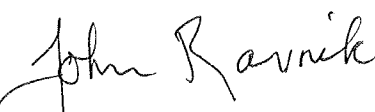
At its maximum level of residential development, this property does not the capacity to create any significant impacts.

The vast majority of public comments against this comprehensive plan amendment were unfounded, non-factual, and clearly not justifiable. The application meets all criteria of being Rural Reserve and should be corrected to this designation.

We respectfully request support from the Skagit County Planning Commission to recognize that this property should be correctly designated as Rural Reserve.

Respectfully,


William Wooding


John P. Ravnik, P.E.