Theresa Rice

From: Bainbridge Citizens [gary@tripp.net]
Sent: Thursday, July 28, 2011 12:52 PM
To: Theresa Rice
Subject: Planning Commission Should View with Caution and Great Skepticism

To Planning Commission

In the SMP update process, the city Staff has acted as a special interest lobby pushing one extreme point of view, RESTORATION of the shoreline to its original condition. The Planning Commission should view with caution and great skepticism the policies, regulations, and legal and scientific justifications presented by staff.

Why do I say this:

1. Representatives from the primary stakeholder group (shoreline homeowners who have the most to lose) were outnumbered on all staff selected committees 2 to 1.
2. Decisions on prescriptive buffer sizes, bans on docks and prohibitions on repair or construction of bulkheads were already made before any problems with the shoreline were defined and before related science was considered.
3. Staff wrote all draft policies and regulations without meaningful input from citizens.
4. Discussions and decisions on the major issues (buffers, nonconforming status, law and science) were delayed until the last couple of Citizen Work Group meetings and then rushed through.
5. There was no attempt to balance private property rights and the need to protect the environment; and,
6. In the end the draft policies and regulations produced by staff are designed to remove human uses from the waterfront and RESTORE the shoreline to an idealized pre-settlement condition.

The goal of the SMA and Bainbridge's SMP is not Restoration, but the balancing of water dependent uses (single-family homes are a preferred water dependant use), private property rights, and protection of the environment.

Taking private property for the creation of an Open Space vegetation buffer between the property owners and the beach and Puget Sound they love is wrong.

There is no science showing normal low-density residential uses are causing any harm. The attempt to compare our developed shoreline with undeveloped shoreline is an attempt to make the SMP about restoration of the shoreline to a natural state. Restoration is not the goal of the SMP and is not required by any regulation.

Because staff has not been honest brokers in the process, disregarded shoreline property owners input in favor of their predetermined goals, and acted as a special interest lobbying group, the City Council should reject the policies and regulations and begin the process over again in an honest matter.

IMPACT STATEMENT: The first step should be to mail a statement of the potential impacts of the SMP update to every shoreline property owner. The Impact Statement should contain drawings and restrictions of the range of potential buffers, under what conditions (remodeling and rebuilding) these buffers will be imposed on existing residences, proposed restrictions on bulkheads, and bans on docks and floats.

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