

# MT. BAKER FOOTHILLS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Meeting – March 16, 2005

Alan Seid, Cascadia Training & Mediation  
Phil Cloward, Mt. Baker Foothills Chamber  
Carole Sharpe, Glacier  
Lou Piotrowski, Foothills Chamber  
Joseph Garcia, Mt Baker Trailhead Lodge  
Dodd Snodgrass, Port of B'ham  
Jeff Margolis, Everybody's Store  
Hal Hart, PDS Director

Joanne Cloward  
Jeffrey Utter, Home & Energy Solutions  
Leslie Golden, Realtor, JLS  
Richard Gantman, Mt Baker School Dist  
Matt Aamot, Whatcom County Planning Division  
John Carter, Port of Bellingham  
Sharon Digby, PDS

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## OPENING COMMENTS

Call to order by Alan at 1:02 pm. Welcome and introductions made.

Matt Aamot, Senior Planner, PDS was introduced. He will be replacing Amy Pederson.

## Open Comment Session

- Phil brought up the issue of taxpayers paying for the partial cleanup of Foothills Recycling on Nooksack Tribal land. He agrees with the need to remove the garbage, but doesn't think taxpayers should pay for the cleanup.
- Jeff U announced he is going to be the new proprietor of the Welcome store. He encouraged local businesses to help each other.
- Lou stated that the website is up and running and that he would like feedback. [www.foothillseda.org](http://www.foothillseda.org)
- Hal shared that he receives a monthly building permit report and that he will make sure it sent via email to EDA members. He stated that he will try to get this information for the foothills area.
- In response to Phil's comment about the eastern part of the county losing infrastructure, Hal stated that the eastern part of the County is underserved in infrastructure and that he has been making an effort to share information with other entities such as the Port and WSDOT. Joe stated that in his grant writing capacity he would like to see the building permit information broken down by small towns.

## PRESENTATIONS

### Sustainable Connections – *Michelle Long*

Michelle was unable to attend and will be at the April meeting.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Recreation Committee:

#### 1. Chain of Trails – *Jeff Margolis*

See committee report. Jeff says that the Chain of Trails is a low priority for the County. Jeff stated that two years ago the Kendall community, when presented with the Chain of Trails concept, was not interested. He said that may change with the predicted growth spurt. In the meantime, he decided to concentrate on a trail in the South Fork Valley, perhaps from Rutsatz Road to Acme, parallel to Highway 9. He proposed as an alternative to the County as lead, that EDA take this over. The first step would be to contact property owners along a possible trail route. He suggested hiring Mary Jane Anderson to research property owners and addresses.

Hal suggested 1. EDA support the Bike and Pedestrian Committee and make that support known to the Executive, and 2. work with Joe Rutan in Engineering. Take the tact that since Engineering is strapped for resources, they should consider hiring a consultant to help with the C of T project. Jeff will 1. Speak to Joe Rutan, 2. create a map with a possible location for the trail and 3. send a letter of support to the Executive.

#### 2. Scenic By-Way – *Jeff Margolis*

The next round for application of Mt Baker Highway into the Scenic By-way Program is in two years. This gives EDA plenty of time to apply. Jeff stated that it is important to have something to offer, for example, interpretive or educational projects. Jeff said he talked with a WSDOT rep and was told the Program does not place land use restrictions on private property owners.

Phil stated that this needs to be checked further. He heard that the landowners on Highway 101 on the Olympic Peninsula were greatly impacted by this designation.

### **3. Washington Commerce Corridor – *Jeff Margolis***

Jeff states that although the commerce corridor is officially dead, he is concerned by a transportation bill in the legislature that deals with raising money for projects, possibly through privatization of some projects. He suggests that a majority of the truck traffic on Highway 9 is there to avoid the truck scales on I-5, since from Nugent's Corner it is essentially the same distance to I-5 in Skagit Valley, going east or west on Mt Baker Highway. Consequently, Jeff proposed a truck scale in Sumas, reasoning this will alleviate truck traffic on Highway 9. He contacted Sumas City Hall and says that truck scales would benefit Sumas and help to maintain the "green" orientation of east Whatcom County.

Hal discussed the recent County Planning Commission decision to approve part of a Sumas request for a rezone from Long Term to Short Term Planning Area, but disapprove the portion pertaining to a truck stop south of the city, next to the proposed City park expansion. WSDOT is not in favor of the truck stop because of access issues. Rerouted Route 9, to be started in 2006 will be limited access and will not provide easy access to the proposed truck stop. Sumas would have to construct costly access to the site. He suggested a different location for the truck stop and that perhaps the port could be involved.

John Carter stated that the transportation issue is very complex. He suggested networking at the April International Mobility and Trade Corridor (IMTC) general assembly meeting. He suggested that Jeff M should speak with Jim Miller, Executive Director of the Whatcom Council of Government (WCOG). IMTC meeting: April 1<sup>st</sup>, Best Western Lakeway Inn, Bellingham, 9am-3pm.

Dodd cautioned that David Davidson, Sumas City Administrator, should be contacted first before using the City as part of the reasoning/support for truck scales in Sumas.

### **Charter Review Update – *Jeffrey Utter***

Jeff stated that the "leaks" about some of the more controversial ideas being discussed by the Commissioners have increase public interest. He encourages public participation. The Commission meets the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday from 7-9pm of the month at the County Annex. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday is held at a remote location. They will be meeting at Kendall on June 9<sup>th</sup>.

A decision will go before the County attorney the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday in July and will go to the voters in November 2005.

### **Kendall Intersection Update – *Hal Hart***

Hal has been in contact with Todd Carlson of WSDOT about the redesign of the Kendall intersection. A design charette will be scheduled within the next couple of weeks.

### **Infrastructure, Governance and Sustainability Committee**

See handout reports.

### **Cell Phone/Tower Ad Hoc Committee – *Carole Sharpe, Dodd Snodgrass***

Carole supplied Dodd and the consultant (Strategies 360) with a list of contact names. The consultant is in the process of contacting these people. They are meeting with Verizon to discuss the issues. The goal for the next meeting is for the consultant to have compiled a report and the Port to have reviewed the report. The consultant contract ends at the April meeting.

### **PDS Work Update**

Lou asked about the impact of the change in office assignments. Hal responded that PDS is very busy due to an active council and the increase in building permits. He also pointed out that PDS just lost two employees. He stressed that as of now, the review of the Foothills Subarea Plan is still on course.

**Meeting Adjourned** at 2:40pm.

### **NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday, April 20, 2005 at 1:00 pm in the Mt. Baker School District Office

Submitted by: Sharon Digby