

# **MT. BAKER FOOTHILLS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION**

Meeting – October 18, 2006

Carole MacDonald, Chair  
Carole Sharpe, Glacier  
Jan Eskola, Glacier Water District  
Phil Cloward, Foothills Chamber  
Rebecca Boonstra, Citizens of Col Valley

Rob Staveland, Aiki Homes Inc  
Joann Melzark, Maple Falls  
Kevin Hoult, WWU Small Business  
Matt Aamot, PDS  
Roland Middleton, PDS  
Sharon Digby, PDS

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Call to order by Carole. Welcome and introductions made.

## **OPENING COMMENT SESSIONS**

- Jeff mentioned that the South Fork Valley Flood Zone Committee is meeting on October 26 from 7:00-9:30pm. A proposal from the Nooksack Tribe for a salmon restoration project at Todd Creek will be discussed.
- Phil announced that the Foothills Advisory Subarea Plan Committee meeting is tonight at the Kendall Elementary School.
- Carole said she has talked with Dodd Snodgrass from the Port of Bellingham about the possibility of high speed internet continuing up valley from Maple Falls. Dodd will look for infrastructure maps. Sharon said that the South Fork Valley also lacks high speed internet and asked to have Dodd's research extended to the South Fork. Jeff mentioned that there are two fiber optic cables in the Valley.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

### **East County Update - Matt**

- Matt said that the Foothills Subarea Subarea Plan Committee is progressing with the update process for the Foothills Subarea Plan. There was a workshop on October 14<sup>th</sup> to discuss the Columbia Valley Urban Growth Area (UGA), where some good ideas were discussed. There will be a workshop on November 16<sup>th</sup> to discuss policies for the whole subarea.
- Matt said that there is a policy in the Comprehensive Plan that states that the Kendall Small Town commercial area be fully developed before zoning changes are considered to allow additional commercial zoning in the Columbia Valley UGA. Matt will be asking Committee members for a recommendation in November.
- As of yesterday, 156 Foothills Subarea questionnaires have been received by the Planning Department.
- The consultant, Studio Cascade, is expected to have a rough draft of the subarea plan ready by the end of the year. The committee will review this document and make recommendations to the Planning Commission by the end of March.
- The next important issue for Aiki Homes is SEPA review. It has not been determined yet if they will have to do an environmental impact statement.
- There has been a rezone request submitted to Planning for 80 acres within the Columbia Valley UGA, from Rural Forestry (RF) to Urban Residential 4 (UR4). The application was submitted by S.C. Goshen, and Holly and Associates. The names on the application are Kevin Zender and Richard Dawson.
- The appeal hearing of the Secret Harbor determination is tentatively set for December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Marketing** – Russ  
Not present.

**Infrastructure** – Phil

Phil reported that Water District 13 has a proposal on the November ballot to increase the number of commissioners from three to five. Norma Otto has been appointed as a commissioner to Water District 19. Improvements are moving along in both districts – District 13 is continuing to work on their comprehensive plan and District 19 is repairing leaks. He also reported the Puget Sound Energy is replacing power poles on highway 547.

### **Recreation and Trails – Jeff**

Jeff reported that the radio station in Van Zandt is mostly on hold due to lack of people willing to work on the project. However, the application for an occupancy permit triggered the need for septic review and it was determined that a new system is needed. The system would incorporate the neighboring Nazarene Church. The County has committed to \$6,000, but Jeff is not certain where the additional funds will come from to complete the project. He emphasized the benefit of the station to the tourist trade and emergency management.

Jeff reflected that County officials missed the boat for exploring the potential for a trail along the gas pipeline corridor as a new pipeline was laid this summer. Rob thought a trail/pipeline corridor was an interesting idea and said that the Aiki Homes development will need a gas line brought in, either from the Sumas direction or up Mt Baker Highway. He said he would keep the trail idea in mind as they pursue extension of the pipeline.

### **Sustainability Committee – Alan**

Not present.

### **Steering Committee – Carole**

Carole said the Steering Committee met last week. Linda Dorset facilitated the meeting. The results will be presented the next meeting which is the annual general meeting (AGM).

### **Cell Phone – Carole Sharpe**

Carole reported that she had written a letter of thanks to Andrew Nenniger of T-Mobile . Phil reported that he accompanied Kim O’Keefe to a potential site for the Kendall tower on Sumas Mountain. The problem for the site is that it is 6.2 miles from the nearest power source, although, there is an old logging road that would greatly decrease the distance. Phil will talk to the owner of the alternative access. Phil also pointed out that the cost of a new tower will be shared with other companies that will use the tower.

### **Other Business**

- Matt asked about progress of the Mt Baker - Foothills Chamber of Commerce Welcome Center. Carole responded that Charles Anderson Landscape Architects has been hired as lead for the project. They will be working with 2020 Engineering, Inc., The Henry Klein Partnership, Architects, and Northern Economics, Inc. They met, along with Gordon Rogers of Whatcom Council of Governments for three hours to discuss the contract. They hope to be able to meet with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) next week. When the contract is signed, work can begin, including determination of location for the Center.

Rob asked if the Highway 542/547 intersection is being considered. Carole responded that it is still on the list of 5-7 possible sites, but is at the bottom of the list because the WSDOT recommended against that location. Rob stressed that the need for a community gathering place at Kendall was one of the main points that came out of one of Foothills Subarea Plan workshop. He said that Hal suggested it would be a good site, provided that the intersection traffic issues were addressed by WSDOT. Carole pointed out the access to the Center would have to be from Casey Road.

Roland Middleton has been assigned to the Welcome Center Committee.

- Jeff suggested sending a letter of commendation to Rick Gantman, in response to an article in the Bellingham Herald reporting that the Mt Baker School District has the highest on-time graduation record and the lowest dropout record of all schools in the County. Carole will write the letter.
- Carole reported that the Foothills Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring a Foothills Harvest Fest benefit for the Mt Baker Foothills Chamber of Commerce, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1 to 4pm. The event is a luncheon

wine tasting and live music auction. It will take place at Mt Baker Vineyards. Ten dollars from each ticket will go to the Deming Food Bank. The cost is \$55 per person. Food will be catered by Fools Onion Catering.

- Rebecca reported that the Citizens of Columbia Valley have been working on the ballot proposal to increase the number of commissioners in Water District 13. They are also working with the Interfaith Community Health Center to establish a satellite office in Columbia Valley. She mentioned that there will be an auction at the Hopewell Grange November 11<sup>th</sup>, from 4-6pm to benefit Kelli Lootens. Music will be provided.

**NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday, November 15, 2006 at 10:00 am in the Mt. Baker School District Office.

Submitted by: Sharon Digby