

DEC 28 2011

EXECUTIVE  
DEPARTMENT

To: Nicole Oliver, Bellingham Planning Dept.

We are concerned about the Draft Fairhaven Village Plan and proposed changes to the area north from Mill to the Fairhaven boundary, between 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. Presently, heights are limited to 35'. According to the proposed changes, vacant parcels as well as older buildings along Finnegan Way and 11<sup>th</sup>, could be developed with 66' tall buildings. In the past 10 years, 5 buildings have been built along 11<sup>th</sup> and Finnegan Way and all had to adhere to 35', with design review for compatibility. Given the scale of buildings in this area, including the historic Kulshan and Library, as well as adjacent Village Inn, Village Green, Village Books and Judson Plaza, buildings of 56' - 66' (nearly double the size of existing buildings) will overwhelm. The existing 35' height limit, allowing for 3- story buildings, should remain in place and any new construction should continue to be included in the design review process.

The issue of heights is not simply a view issue, although this is important to those who have invested recently with the expectation of protected views due to height restrictions. 66' buildings in this area will block sun and visually overshadow existing buildings and those enjoying our Village Green. If, as the draft states, the goal of the new plan is to have "new development compatible" then the 35' height limit should be maintained in this area as all surrounding buildings have been built to that standard and this area's historic Kulshan is a two-story building with a peaked roof.

The draft plan proposes *interior* height restrictions - minimum of 14' for 1<sup>st</sup> floor, 12' for 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, 10' for 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. Fairhaven has recent examples of compatible buildings without 14' ceilings. Since building heights are a concern for many neighbors, removing these proposed interior requirements allows for denser development at lower heights. It is possible to have a 5 - story building with the 56' height limit. Also, excessively tall ceilings will demand greater energy resources for lighting and heating which is counter to our need for greater energy conservation. By removing the interior height limits, we can achieve our required density without having to increase heights in the area north of Mill.

As Fairhaven property owners, we oppose this arbitrary and unnecessary height increase.

*Nilgun Zana*

*Happy New Year!*



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