

NEWSbriefs

Shoreline application moratorium extended

FERNDALE – Awaiting approval from the Department of Ecology on the city's revised Shoreline Master Program, the Ferndale City Council voted Monday to extend the moratorium for shoreline applications for another six months. In effect, this extension prevents residents from submitting applications to build on areas falling into the "conservancy" category. Several council members voiced concerns that residents should be allowed to build on their own land. However, the vote passed 5 to 1 with Council Member Mike Reilly voting against the moratorium extension.

— Dana Blozis

Kendall elementary water safe to drink

KENDALL – Officials advised students and staff at Kendall Elementary School not to use the tap water on September 17. The water, provided by the school's own well, tested positive for the presence of *E. coli* bacteria, which can cause a variety of symptoms including diarrhea, stomach cramps, nausea and vomiting. While the problem was being diagnosed and treated, the school's meals were made off-site and bottled water was provided for use by students and staff. The water has now been treated and deemed safe to drink by the Washington State Department of Health, according to Bob James at the state's Office of Drinking Water. The school resumed consumption of its tap water last Friday. The school's water source is not related to water provided by Evergreen Water-Sewer District #19.

— Dana Blozis

Mayor breaks tie in annexation vote

FERNDALE – The Ferndale City Council held a public hearing Monday night to discuss the annexation of a three-acre parcel of land on the east side of Church Road. According to Associate City Planner Michael Jones, the realistic maximum for building on this parcel is 11 single-family homes. The owner of the property, Peter Klootwyk, spoke on behalf of the project, noting that this parcel of land is part of Ferndale's urban growth area (UGA). In addition, he said that he anticipates fewer than 11 lots on the parcel and plans to include a pond. There were no public opponents to the annexation. Council members Susan Cole, Marianne Elgart, and Mike Reilly voted against the project, citing concerns about infrastructure and the city's capacity to service additional residents. Council members Ron Wilson, Carol Brumet and Steve Oliver voted in favor of the annexation. Mayor Jerry Landcastle broke the tie, voting in favor of the project.

— Dana Blozis

Revised rules on air-emission permits proposed

OLYMPIA – The Department of Ecology is accepting public comment on a proposal for incorporating a new federal regulation on air-emission sources into state air-quality regulations. The regulations apply to new or existing industrial facilities that want to generate or increase air emissions. The change will combine two sets of conflicting requirements into one common set, to improve clarity and consistency. It also will allow similar types of businesses to be covered under a general permit, without requiring a separate review of each facility's emissions. The draft rule also expands public notification requirements for these types of permits, and it clarifies what facilities must do to avoid penalties if they violate their emission limits. Environmental standards for the facilities will not be diminished, but they will incur less review time and smaller fees if they choose to be covered by a general permit instead of a site-specific permit," said Stu Clark, who manages Ecology's air-quality program. The draft rule is available on-line at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/laws-rules/activity/wac173400.html> or may be obtained by contacting Todd Todd at ttod461@ecy.swa.gov or (360) 407-7528. Public comment on the draft regulation will be accepted through November 19. Comments may be submitted by e-mail to ttod461@ecy.swa.gov or by mail to Tom Todd, Department of Ecology, Air Quality Program, P.O. Box 47600, Olympia, Wash., 98504-7600.

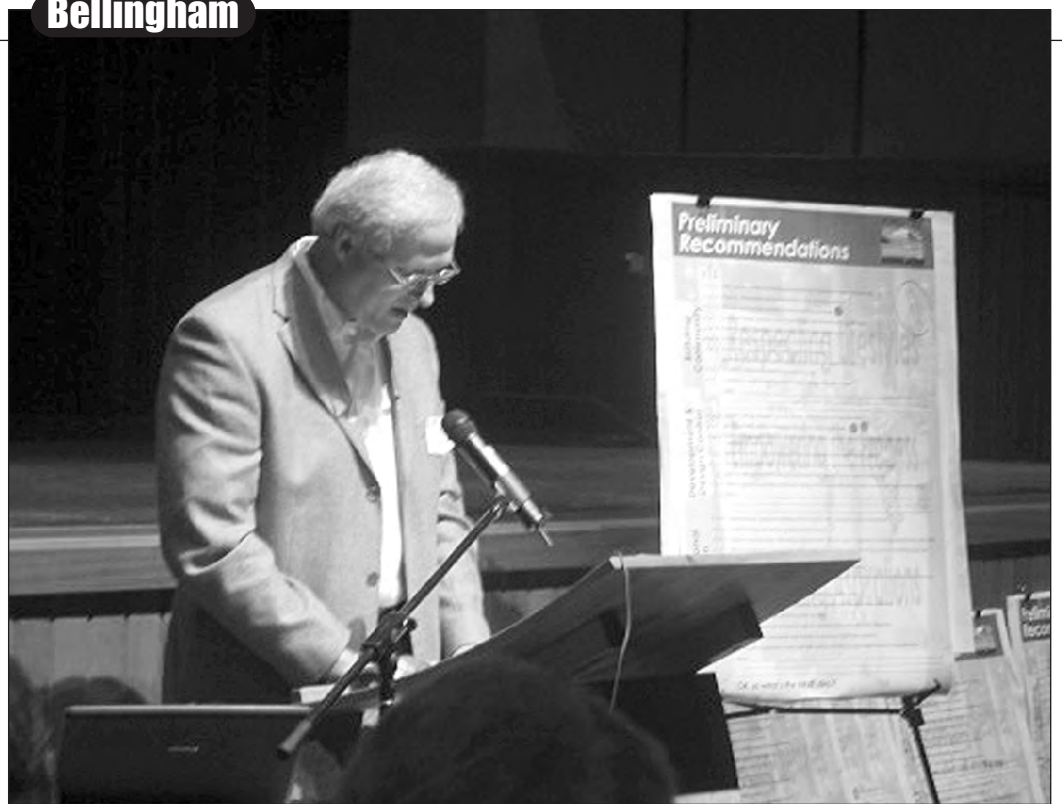
— *Whatcom Independent*

Planning underway for Ferndale graduation

FERNDALE – Co-chair Mariana Smith spoke to the Ferndale City Council this week to ask for its support in fundraising efforts for a "safe and sober" graduation celebration for the class of 2005. In past years, students who could not afford the \$150 ticket to attend the party were excluded. This year, however, a committee has been formed to help raise \$52,500 to throw a graduation party for all 350 graduating seniors. The council agreed to introduce a resolution at its next meeting in support of the proposal.

— Dana Blozis

Bellingham



"The City and the UGA have to be easier to develop than the County," said Peter Roberts of the Columbia neighborhood. Roberts was nominated by his group to explain their findings to the larger assembly. His group desired clear communication of regulations to the general public. "We need to know that the rules are in order to play appropriately," he said.

Photo by John Kinmonth

Forum: Residents put their two cents in

by JOHN KINMONTH
johnk@whatcomindy.com

"How many of us are looking forward to 30,000 new neighbors in the City of Bellingham?" City Council member Barbara Ryan asked the 100 or so people in attendance at the Bellingham Community Forum for Growth Management on Tuesday night. Only a few brave souls in Bellingham High School's auditorium raised their hands in affirmative reply to Ryan's question.

Despite a reluctance to see the large population growth projected for Bellingham, neighborhood representatives and other concerned citizens showed up to the City's final growth forum in order to hear the specific growth strategies outlined and to give their input.

Bellingham Planning and Community Development Director Jorge Vega said in his introduction that they have projected 31,600 new residents in Bellingham and its growth area within the next 20 years. They have estimated that Bellingham will need an additional 14,100 housing units to accommodate the influx.

"Given our current zoning, and given our current urban growth areas, we would be

3,615 housing units short," Vega said. Rather than simply expanding Bellingham's designated urban growth area, Vega said they want to focus on "infill" within existing neighborhoods.

"We're not looking to expand we're looking to adjust," he said. After sufficient plans are made for infill, they will then approach Whatcom County officials about adjusting Bellingham's urban growth area. According to Vega, Bellingham is limited in its growth area expansion due to the Lake Whatcom, as well as other fragile wetlands areas.

"We as a policy, the County and the City, have determined that we're not going to intensify or increase density in the Lake Whatcom watershed," he said. "When we're looking at how to decide as a community where do we grow and how do we accommodate that growth, we have to keep in mind that we have some constraints that limit us in our ability to grow."

Bill Grimes representing Studio Cascade, Inc., a Spokane consulting firm, outlined the preliminary strategies to accommodate the large-scale growth. After this meeting, Grimes said he would be presenting a report to the City, the County, and Whatcom Transit Authority, which they


will use to determine adjustments to their comprehensive plans.

"Our product...is to provide to these agencies a report detailing how and where Bellingham and the urban growth area can accommodate 31,600 new residents by the year 2024," said Grimes.

Breaking Bellingham up into 24 "urban villages," Grimes said they looked to see which areas could handle increasing urban growth. Although most areas of Bellingham will need to accommodate population growth, some of the urban villages targeted for larger growth include Barkley Village, the Downtown core, Fairhaven, Cordata, and the Georgia Pacific property. These villages are predicted to be able to accommodate 7,300 to 9,525 new homes, which leaves 5,200 to 7,174 housing units to fit into established neighborhoods. Grimes also said they want to move to a less auto-dependent population, meaning that residents must have access to some businesses within walking distance. This leads to apartments mixed with small businesses and other services in a single urban village.

After Grimes' presentation, those in attendance broke up

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FORUM

(from page 6)

into small groups and were able to rate the preliminary recommendations. As they munched on the candy provided at their tables, they used green, yellow, and red dots on a poster to express support or opposition to specific recommendations. They also passed a stick around, and whoever was holding the stick was allowed time to speak.


At one of the twelve tables, Michelle Smith from the Columbia Neighborhood Association board told her group that she wanted "to ensure that we protect the things that make Bellingham unique." She was especially worried about the waterfront and the outlying agricultural land. Another member of her group, Birchwood resident James Bee said he's mostly concerned about building a solid mass transit system. He thinks the City should consider "biting the bullet now" in order to ensure that it's there in the years to come. Smith later said that she thinks these forums are important for Bellingham residents.


"I think growth is going to occur, and I think having an opportunity to be able to direct it is something unique to Bellingham," she said.

The entire forum reconvened after 45 minutes, and each group was allowed one representative to sum up their findings. Each representative had three minutes to explain their likes and dislikes of the preliminary recommendations that are most likely going to be made the City, the County, and WTA. While the speakers ranged from president of a neighborhood association to a WWU environmental planning major, there were some themes that seemed to be reiterated. One idea that continued to come up in presentations was that preserving the quality of life or "character" of a neighborhood was extremely important.

Another theme that continued to come up was to "define and invest in high-intensity transit corridors." Furthermore, the representatives wanted continued citizen participation and neighborhood consent with future planning, as well as clearly laid-out zoning and development reg-

ulations that are easy to understand by the public. Another point that some of the groups thought important was the establishment of interlocal agreements between the City and County managing rural development. Some of the more lively moments were when one Bellingham resident mentioned wanting to bring back corner grocery stores and "maybe a local pub on the corner even," which eliciting loud applause throughout the auditorium. Another was when one presenter begged City officials regarding future transit systems: "Please! Do not be Seattle!"

Grimes said he was going to make a presentation to WTA on Oct. 20. While he said the preliminary recommendations are "pretty much thought through," he said this meeting would help him to prioritize the recommendations. The results of this forum can be viewed at Studio Cascade's 120 E. Holly drop-in center on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from noon to 6 p.m. Other documents including growth forecasts can be viewed at www.cob.org under the "What's New" section. 



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SE2

(from page 7)

"We really stretched the envelope as far as the technology would go," he said. "There would only be a one percent increase of pollutant in the Frasier Valley. That's negligible. (NEB) made a decision based on the opinion of the public." Federal Court of Canada looked at SE2's appeal documents in September and found they had adequate evidence to warrant an appeal.

"If they felt there was not a case the Canadian government would not allow an appeal," Thompson said.

If the Federal Court finds NEB's decision to be erroneous they will remit the case back to them. The NEB will then have to address the issues brought up by SE2 and reevaluate if the decision-making process was valid. At that point the NEB could still deny the application. If this is the case the Federal court said they would allow yet another appeal request by SE2.

If NEB allows for the pipeline, SE2 would virtually have to start over on the project.

"We will have to reevaluate the project completely," Thompson said. "We have to renegotiate with the planners and adjust the pricing for production. We have been delayed several years and a sub-

stantial amount of planning. We just want to be treated fairly and have our day in court."

Despite SE2's claims of environmental feasibility SPEC is still concerned about the impact the \$400 million project would have on the lower Frasier Valley area.

"We're concerned about the immediate impact the plant would have on Abbotsford's air shed," Ivan Bulic said. "We contend it's the wrong plant in the


"If they felt there was not a case, the Canadian government would not allow an appeal."

— Bruce Thompson

wrong location."

Bulic said SE2 should not dispute the public influence over the NEB's decision because the public's input was part of the process.

"(NEB) asked for the public's opinion, the public said no and SE2 says the NEB should not have done that, that it was politics," he said.

SE2 will not know the outcome of the case until late spring of 2005. If all goes in their favor it would most likely be another couple years before the plant is in full production, they said. 

ABOUT THE PLANT

Sumas Energy 2 first submitted an application to the state's Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) on January 11, 1999 to build the project under expedited review. That application was withdrawn for expedited review on June 30, 1999. SE2 submitted a revised application on January 10, 2000.

- Could generate 660 megawatts of electricity from natural gas-fired combined-cycle combustion turbines.

- Fueled by natural gas supplies in Canada

- Located within the City of Sumas in an area already zoned for industrial development.

- Next to existing Sumas Energy 1 plant, which has been operating since 1993.

- Natural gas transmission via 4.5-mile private pipeline segment to be owned by SE2.

- Electric transmission by 230 kV line from the plant to Clayburn substation six miles away.

- Combined water and air cooling to dissipate heat

Source: Sumas Energy 2

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