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To ssundin@cob.org, bsmart@cob.org
cc tstewart@cob.org
bcc
Subject Re: Squalicum Creek Medical Center Proposed
Development

History:  This message has been replied to and forwarded.

Dear Mr. Sundin and Mr. Smart,

I received in the mail July 1st a notice of an agenda for the Bellingham Shoreline Committee Public Meeting to be held Tuesday, July 15. This was sent addressed to my grandparents, Howard and Dorothy Deets, in whose house I live, and who own the property adjacent to the proposed development site. This is the first notification we have received, although the address of record with the City is 2107 Eldridge Avenue.

My family has received NO prior notice of any aspect of this proposed development, although it is required under state and local law. I noted that comments are due on July 7th regarding the shoreline permit, the Monday after a holiday weekend, and that comments on SEPA were due on July 2nd. We received no notice at all regarding SEPA.

I find it absolutely unacceptable that the adjacent landowner, who will be immediately and irreparably impacted by your decisions, has received no notice of any aspect of this proposed development until a notice for a meeting on the shoreline permit issue one week before comments are due. SEPA is an even larger issue and the immediate neighbor should at least have been granted the courtesy of notification.

I am shocked to see the statement in the SEPA checklist that this is not a salmon-bearing stream. Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association has been active on Squalicum Creek for many years and the creek has a long history of being a salmon-bearing water. In fact, the proponent ACKNOWLEDGES that salmon may be found in the creek that passes through the site, but in another part of the checklist does not identify salmon when asked about observed animal activity on or near the site. Additionally, the creek and riparian area from Bug Lake to well past Cornwall Park is home, whether transitory or permanent, to bald eagles (observed for one month earlier this spring), osprey, multiple songbird types, deer, at least two types of owls, and trout.

I was also appalled to see the statement that the site has "not [been used for agriculture] to anyone's knowledge." Agriculture includes livestock, which include horses, and this property was in exclusive agricultural use for decades and only recently became defunct. I would also note that the property owners enjoy the preferential Ag-Open Space Use taxation in spite of their declaration in the SEPA checklist that no agriculture has ever existed on this property.

Additionally, Cornwall Park proper is NOT within 100 feet of the site - the neighboring landowners who have not received any notification of this project are between this site and Cornwall Park, and I find it remarkable that the project commits to trail connectivity with

Cornwall Park with no capacity to fulfill that commitment.

All in all, I'm appalled at the proponents' lack of communication with adjoining landowners regarding their proposal, and the city's lack of communication with effected property owners in the vicinity. The total disregard, not only for the neighbors, but also for the ecological and environmental sensitivity of the proposed development site is incomprehensible. A colleague of mine worked on the City of Bellingham's Critical Areas Ordinance (Bellingham Municipal Code 16.55), and she has informed me that very few wetlands are considered to be isolated in the City, especially if they are in close association with a stream. Permitting the filling of a wetland in such an ecologically sensitive area could be disastrous and would certainly violate your own Critical Areas Ordinance. The City of Bellingham is obligated to protect sensitive natural areas just as we are as property owners, but appears to be willing to ignore all physical evidence to the contrary in order to issue a ruling of MDNS and allow this project to move forward. Proposing floodplain development and wetland destruction should never result in an MDNS, and I am horrified that the city's planning and permitting body has issued such a determination.

Given that my husband formally requested on November 5, 2007, any and all information and proper notice regarding this project, and the City of Bellingham has clearly failed to comply with that request, I would suggest to you that you have some serious problems with your SEPA and every other action you have taken regarding this project since November 5, 2007. The reports and information submitted by the applicant, which have STILL not been made available to us, may answer some of our questions and concerns. However, your lack of notification and communication with a party of record, who made a formal request, and your failure to communicate with the immediately downstream property owner, will call into question every element of the process upon appeal.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

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"Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil, and you're a thousand miles from the corn field."

~ Dwight D. Eisenhower