

FRIENDS OF



CLARK COUNTY

SMART GROWTH

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www.clarkfriends.org

(360) 695-5570

January 2006

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Lora Caine

We are excited about 2006. It is a year of ambitious possibilities. The Board of Friends of Clark County came to that realization at their retreat in January.

After lively discussion, brainstorming and prioritizing we zeroed in on several objectives and goals where we can carry out our mission: to help conserve and protect Southwest Washington's quality of life.

As we have done in the past, we will continue to monitor, research and analyze Clark County's growth issues. Some examples of those issues at hand are the Clark County comprehensive plan update, the City of Vancouver's proposed annexation, the Cowlitz casino proposal, clean water, transportation issues (including the I-5 river crossing) and the property rights initiative.

We, on the Board, plan to do further outreach and education to help the people of Clark County understand what may face them in the coming months. The website will be updated often; there will be more timely information sent in easy bulleted form to members on our email list; and there will also be more outreach to public officials.

We plan to enhance our networking and partnership connections to unite the efforts of the groups who are also concerned with the Clark County community issues. We will continue our quarterly newsletter and involvement in local events like Earth Day.

As usual we always welcome your ideas and involvement with our efforts. FoCC is enthused about how we can work together to help our County be a great place to live.

FRIENDS of CLARK COUNTY

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MISSION STATEMENT

Friends of Clark County is a nonprofit, membership-based organization creating, educating and empowering advocates for Smart Growth.

Our mission is to conserve and protect Southwest Washington's quality of life.

FoCC MEMBERSHIP

Please join/renew your membership using the order form in this newsletter. We need your support to help cover the costs of our meetings, newsletters, public forums, research and to continue our vital work protecting your quality of life in Clark County.

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I-5 TASK FORCE

by Andrew Ness, FoCC board

The Columbia River Crossing Task Force (CRCTF) is a joint venture between Oregon and Washington. Their purpose is to trouble shoot solutions that alleviate traffic congestion on the corridor around the I-5 bridge interchange.

The task force is made up of 39 members chosen from local state agencies, businesses on both sides of the river, and a variety of community interest groups.

The CRCTF is run by staff from WSDOT and ODOT and the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC). Other taxpayer agencies involved include cities (Vancouver and Portland), ports (Vancouver and Portland), counties (Clark and Multnomah) and mass transit (C-Tran and Tri-Met).

These groups are primarily responsible for developing & maintaining the task force's work. Members attend monthly meetings.

FoCC President Lora Caine represents your interests, and the interests of Clark County as a whole, on the task force. To increase effectiveness, FoCC also meets with other local interest groups to coordinate our goals.

The task force has accomplished their first goal, to develop a "Problem Definition". It states why the project is necessary by describing just what *isn't* working in the current I-5 bridge area. (However, the Problem Definition can change if new issues are brought to the attention of the CRCTF.)

The Problem Definition breaks down into seven categories. These transit issues involve everything from commuter, mass transit, freight, and local business impacts to pedestrian traffic. Safety issues like vehicular accidents and bridge stability are also being considered.

(continued on the next page)

I-5 TASK FORCE

(continued)

The next step in the process is to develop evaluation criteria.

The task force will evaluate options that address the Problem Definition. From that viewpoint the task force will then adopt a specific plan or solution that solves the traffic and business issues.

As plans are developed by this task force FoCC will support solutions that include commuter transit for Clark County but also address inadequate mass transit and pedestrian access.

As far as we are concerned, the plan must offer solutions friendly to Clark County neighborhoods and residents. We also want environmentally friendly solutions that take into account both urban and wild life around the I-5 Bridge.

In short, FoCC wants a healthy environment for both sides of the river and a solution that will give everyone the best options for work and local neighborhoods.

For more information, go to the Columbia River Crossing Task Force web site at
www.columbiarivercrossing.org

DEVELOPMENT MORATORIUM

It's back! The Salmon Creek transportation corridor runs along NE 134th Street from the I-5 off-ramp east to NE 50th Avenue. The travel speed standard was lowered from 22 mph to 13 mph to lift the last moratorium. Thousands of new trips were added. (Most of them are not yet on the road.)

Now computer modeling shows that any more traffic on that corridor will cause the lower 13 mph standard to fail. New applications impacting the corridor will not be accepted. FoCC V-P Milada Allen and Advisory Board member George Vartanian will join the task force trying to fix this mess.

FoCC THANKS OUR SUPPORTERS

Annual FoCC membership dues are \$25. We are so grateful to those members who have recently joined / renewed at one of our higher levels:

SUPPORTER

Don & Sue Cannard
Val & Dan Ogden
Judie Stanton

DONOR

Mitch Bower
John Bishop & Elizabeth Cook
Dave McDonald
George Vartanian

Friends of Clark County is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation.

Membership dues and donations are tax deductible.

FoCC WEBSITE

Our new webmaster is doing a fabulous job of keeping our site updated. You'll find:

- the latest updates to our meeting and events calendar;
- background and action items for issues that impact you;
- projects we are working on;
- links to other organizations that share our quality of life goals;
- opportunities to get involved with Friends of Clark County.

Our URL is www.clarkfriends.org

WAKE UP WAL MART

Shoppers should have low price alternatives. With 3 stores in Clark County, 1 under construction, Salmon Creek in the review process and several more rumored locations Wal Mart continues to dramatically expand their presence here.

A growing coalition of local community and business groups is concerned about Wal Mart's business practices.

For example, two confidential state reports reveal that more than 3100 Wal Mart workers receive state-funded medical assistance. 1800 work full time.

Some state legislators don't think that the country's largest business should shift health care costs for their employees to taxpayers. If passed, SB-2356 and HB-2517 will require companies with more than 5000 employees to pay 9% of their payroll to fund state health care.

BUT every dollar these employers spend on employee health care benefits will be deducted from that amount.

The newly formed local coalition has started a website at:

www.walmartwatchdogs.org

A national grass roots effort is working to make Wal Mart accountable to community standards and values. Their website is at:

www.wakeupwalmart.com

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Here are some events and meetings that we think will be of interest to our members.

Clark County Comprehensive Growth Management Plan Open Houses

5:30—7:30 with brief presentations at 6 and 7 PM
Thursday, February 9 Thursday, February 23
NW Regional Training Center Fire District 11
11606 NE 66th ST #103 21609 NE 72nd Ave

Cowlitz Tribe Casino Concerns

Pose your questions about the application and approval process to representatives from the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and National Indian Gaming Commission

Both public meetings start at 7 PM

Wednesday, February 15 Thursday, February 16
Prairie High School Aud. Fort Vancouver High
11500 NE 117th Avenue 5700 East 18th

Wetlands Ordinance Public Hearing

February 16, 2006; 6:30 PM

Clark County Public Service Center
6th floor hearing room; 1300 Franklin

The Planning Commission will hear testimony on significant changes to the county Wetlands Ordinance (Code 40.450). The proposed ordinance is available at www.clark.wa.gov/longrangeplan/projects/index.html

Click on Critical Areas Ordinance Update and scroll down to Wetlands Ordinance.

2006 Bi-State Metropolitan Forum

March 16, 2006

PSU Smith Memorial Student Union

Featured Guests Governor Christine Gregoire
 Governor Ted Kulongowski

Hosted by PSU Institute of Metropolitan Studies

Register at www.pdx.edu/ims

GUEST OPINION

by Jeanette Steinhauer*

Neighbors near the proposed 5th Plain Creek Master Plan mixed use development are very concerned about this enormous project's impacts and question the process for the necessary rezoning.

First, the developer presented the Fifth Plain Creek Master Plan to the county last June with a listing of the 105 owners of 786 acres their project would involve. An attorney was listed as the representative of all these property owners. But most of us "represented" by this attorney were never contacted by him, never entered into any agreement with the attorney or the developer, and are opposed to the project.

Also, we are troubled that Board of County Commissioners Chairman Marc Boldt denies any conflict of interest in this matter. We do not agree. His relatives own about 77 of the acres included in the proposed development. Since his vote on this matter will certainly prove beneficial to the Boldt family we have asked that he recuse himself from this matter. So far he has not done so.

Next, the neighborhood does not have the infrastructure to support the 2,600 homes being proposed. The developer's plan does not adequately address the increased traffic and burden on our schools that will result from this rapid expansion.

Finally, although the 5th Plain Creek master plan may look attractive on paper, there is no guarantee that it would be built as planned. For example, the proposed public walking path along 5th Plain Creek is not an option because the developer has not secured permission from the property owner to use their land for this purpose.

** Jeanette and Louie Steinhauer are FoCC members who live on 5+ acres in the proposed development.*

A Good Time Was Had!

by Val Alexander, FoCC board

The sirens blew and a gurney was rushed to the stage/Emergency Room where trauma nurse Bridget Schwarz waited to evaluate the victim. The patient was identified as Smart Growth, represented by Commissioner Steve Stuart, who complained of "growing pains".

Specialists were called in to consult. Cardiologist Craig Pridemore observed signs of sprawl that caused the patient's chest pains.

Orthopedic specialist Judie Stanton determined that due to multiple fractures the Smart Growth did not have a leg to stand on.

Neurosurgeon Ron Barca found signs of brain trauma caused by the patient's trying too hard to think outside the box.

Finally internist John Karpinski informed the patient that he suffered from high BP (Building Permits).

This crack team of specialists then offered treatment plans and preventative measures to maintain Smart Growth's quality of life.

The "Fun Raiser" was held on November 20th. It was a great success. A large crowd participated in comments and questions and enjoyed a dinner and libations hosted by supporters of FOCC.

A silent auction raised funds for operating expenses and activities to educate and empower the residents of Clark County. The skit was lighthearted but educational and all attendees showed enthusiasm and enjoyment.

TAKINGS UPDATE

The Washington Farm Bureau just filed a property rights initiative that would require government agencies to consider how regulation will impact property value.

Compensation could take place, for example, after an agency demands buffer requirements, habitat designations, or zoning restrictions.

To get on the November ballot the bureau has until July 7 to gather 235,000 signatures.

ORGANIC GARDENING PERMACULTURE LIVING

Sustainability involves both organic gardening and permaculture living concepts. "Bev's Place" is a suburban Vancouver 90' X 100' lot treated like a farm.

Year round, Bev Doty produces fresh vegetables from raised beds, tree fruit, berries, and kiwis. There is a native plant corner and a bamboo grove, habitat for mason bees and other pollinating creatures.

There is a carpet of recycled milk jugs, and tile of recycled auto glass. Real linoleum and solar tubes are used on the property.

We must live interdependently with nature. Seize this opportunity to learn how. Meet Bev and see all the wonderful things she does on her farm.

Saturday, February 25, 2006

1:30 — 3:00

Reservations required 360.574.1343
or bevesalt@pacifier.com

WASHINGTON TAKINGS INITIATIVE

by Linda Wolfe, FoCC board

Good jobs, spectacular scenery, clean air and water, wide open spaces; these are the hallmarks that make Washington State a wonderful place to live, work and raise a family.

Yet an initiative expected on the 2006 state ballot would risk all that by taking aim at our successful system of protections for land, air and water at a time when Washington is growing rapidly.

If approved, this developers' initiative (aka "takings" initiative) would create a loophole for developers and other special interests to get around land use laws that safeguard the health, safety and quality of life of all Washingtonians.

Wisely, Washington voters soundly rejected a similar initiative, Referendum 48, back in 1995. *Oregon wasn't so lucky.* Backed by timber companies and developers, Oregon's Measure 37 was approved in 2004. More than 2,500 claims have been made so far.

Washington must say "No" to a developers' initiative to avoid stories like Allison Hamilton's. The Polk County, Oregon resident recently saw the county's Board of Commissioners approve a Measure 37 claim for one million feet of commercial space (the size of a large shopping center) and for 17 homes on 77 acres of farm and forest land. "The demand approved by the county means clogged roads, destruction of farmland, and reduced property values," Hamilton said. "The water system is already overtaxed."

The initiative planned for Washington will be worded differently than Measure 37, but the intent will be the same - creating a loophole for developers who don't want to be slowed down by neighborhood or community concerns. And the effect will be the same: more irresponsible development, more snarled traffic, more neighbor to neighbor conflict, and erosion of our outstanding quality of life.

Contact Benjamin Lawver with the Community Protection Coalition at ben@protectcommunities.org (206.323.0520) or FoCC board member Linda Wolfe at savewolf@comcast.net (360.546.2015).

ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE ON TAKINGS

by Sydney Reisbick, FoCC board

Both upstream and downstream property owners could face "takings" of land value as a result of development.

It is easy for an *upstream* landowner to declare "taking" of value of his land if he cannot develop it in any way he wishes, regardless of the effects on others. It is much more difficult for a landowner with a house or a farm *downstream* from development to declare a "taking" when his home or fields are flooded after development decreases upstream permeability.

How do you measure the change in the 100-year flood plain created by the upstream developments?

Only governmental entities have the perspective to deal with the combined effects of development over the whole area.

Can the County be sued for increased flooding of downstream properties?

Probably not. They usually claim that it is just an unusual year and it is perfectly OK to have several 100-year floods in 5 or 10 years because of natural variation.

Isn't there some responsibility of the County to consider the downstream properties?

One way is to maintain the upstream wetlands, including seasonal wetlands. These natural low areas are often not needed until a really rainy year. Then they become lakes (e.g. the horse pasture on SR502 to Battle Ground just west of Dollar's Corner.) Without these sinks, we are "taking" value from the downstream properties to preserve maximum value of upstream properties.

No one is dealing with this yet. Downstream houses are caught between rising tides and increasing impermeability upstream. We need more permeability, not less; more wetlands, not less. We need balance between "taking" of land value by floods and "taking" of value by regulations. We need to preserve the wetlands that buffer the rivers.

GLOBAL SCALE TAKINGS

Consider the impact of global warming, whatever causes it, on takings.

The rising ocean is taking land as the first evacuations of low islands in the South Pacific show.

As the ocean rises, it will affect tidal rivers, such as the Columbia. The 1996 flood was a combination of much rain and high tide. A higher ocean means higher tides and higher 100-year flood levels.

KOOB DOOG A *

Are we sleepwalking into the future? To find out, here is recommended reading from 2 FoCC members—John Aschim and George Vartanian:

The Long Emergency (Surviving the Converging Catastrophes of the 21st Century) by James Howard Kunstler

The author focuses on shortsighted suburban planning and the need to drastically change our current course of auto and oil dependency. The book is filled with eye-opening issues that affect us today and will most certainly change the way we live in the future.

* OK, that's "A good book" spelled backwards.

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IN THIS NEWSLETTER

- 2006 objectives and goals;
- Columbia River Crossing Task Force update;
- Takings initiative
- 'Takings' impacts downstream
- Meeting calendar and more!.

Please renew your membership with FRIENDS of CLARK COUNTY using the order form inside this newsletter.

We need your support to help cover expenses as we continue the vital work of protecting our quality of life in Clark County.

If you join at the Donor level (\$100) or above we'll give you a Friends of Clark County baseball cap FREE.

Thank you!