

Whatcom County Business and Commerce Meeting

Monday March 15, 2021 11-1230pm via Zoom

Voting members in attendance: Troy Muljat, Casey Diggs, Gail Buce, Ryan Allsop, Clark Campbell, Debbie Ahl, Sarah Rothenbuhler, Pete Dawson, Andrew Gamble, Brad Rader

Non-voting members in attendance: Don Goldberg, Councilmember Rud Browne, CJ Seitz

Public in attendance: Jennifer Noveck, Gina Stark, John Michener, Guy Occhiogrosso, Mauri Ingram, Commissioner Ken Bell, Commissioner Michael Shepard, Jed Holmes, Emily Stone, County Executive Satpal Sidhu, Sandy Ward, Darcy Jones, Cara Buckingham, Rob Fix

Call to order by Clark at 11:02am. Seconded by Ryan.

Asked for public comments.

Motion to approve January 2021 meeting minutes by Clark. Seconded by Debbie Ahl.

Minutes approved.

We did not have a February meeting so there were no minutes.

Clark: We are going to start off with the guest speaker, just a quick overview. This is a working meeting, we probably won't have time for sector updates because of the discussion. There's been some background work in February on what the right reporting structure is for this group. We want to give the group an opportunity to comment, ultimately the decision will sit with County Council. Some background sent out previously, we will start that after the presentation from Darcy Jones. Okay, why don't we turn it over to Jones Engineering. A letter was submitted, which everyone got.

Darcy: Thank you Don and Jennifer. My name is Darcy Jones, President of Darcy Jones Engineering. Attended Western University, received degree from Huxley, AICP Planner, LEED Certified, licensed land surveyor in the state of WA. Jones has been working in the community for many decades, he took it over when his father passed at a very young age. One of the main reasons that I really engaged as a result of working with the company and the property owners at the Kaitech golf course properties. Kaitech is the owner of the subject property today. They have spent a lot of energy and civic responsibility on Whatcom. We've been building homes in Cordata, north end of town, for at least 12-14 years now, and we've been very successful in meeting the expectations for affordable housing, the housing equity assessment found favorably that our homes were meeting affordability measures. Kaitech and their building arm Larabee Springs, we use local contractors, local suppliers. We work with AJW, Stremmer Gravel, RAM construction as well, supplies primarily from Westside up in Lynden. I wanted you to understand a little background and moving forward as I mention, we've been working on building subdivisions, solar power, sustainable neighborhoods, all in the affordability range when measured as 30% of family income. WE are proud of that and want to continue to do so. We reviewed the letter to the County almost two years ago, you did make reference to the South Kaitech property and we appreciated that and we share your frustrations. We have been working to get a portion of the golf course property to be brought into the UGA. In 2016, they were designated a growth area reserve, sort of a purgatory zoning to be in, cannot move forward with capitol facility decisions. We would like to become part of the UGA and proceed into an annexation process with the city., I know Troy has probably kept you up to date on housing, I am sure you are aware of the crisis and pricing, we believe that a portion of Kaitech's golf course should be brought into the city as soon as possible, so if you aren't familiar with the property. I sent out a PDF presentation. The overall property is 600 acres, it extends from the

Northern boundary to Smith Rd. It encompasses the golf course. It falls quarter mile west of the Guide and all the way out to Aldrich. We've made a decision in 2016 or 2015 to bring the south half into the UGA together with some neighbors to the east about 55 acres along the Guide, since the Guide was widened, they've been in no man's land. Those neighbors reaffirmed commitment to come into the city. In 2016, we were designated UGA reserve, which was stated in COB council ordinance and County Council resolutions and comp plans that as part of the reserve, we'd work with the city in the annexation phasing plan update and capitol facilities planning, which I think is a main reason we weren't brought in in 2016 – the capitol facilities plan wasn't in place or achievable by then. We've been trying to work on the issue of capitol facilities via the annexation phasing process. This got derailed. I recognize there are other areas trying to be annexed to the city, we are in a unique position to bring significant buildable land with a variety of housing options, good density, we've been refining our plan, paying attention to the community in terms of amenities, what type of housing, we've been focused on workforce housing at a very affordable level, becoming more aware of housing needs in the city and we want to participate in being part of the solution and we really are trying to reach out and re-engage in the community to get momentum to bring this property into the city and to get us working on homes. We've been building homes on the north end of the city for a long time. We will run out of land in the next few years. We'd like to keep momentum going and keep building houses. As most of you understand the County and city is involved in Buildable Lands report and doing a land capacity analysis, overview of capital facility planning. That is due June 2022, recommendations from that might lead to Comp Plan updates. One of the goals I am trying to do is to bring this forward faster. I know there is state law that limits things. The County probably cannot make a final decision until June 2022, I am trying to get prepared when the need is demonstrated, we will have the capitol facility plan in place, we will have ongoing discussions and pending agreements for master planning, amenities, there is so much work to do. If you went through the presentation, I start the whole thing with a roadmap for how long these things can take. I've looked at what we can do to get started right away – we've brought water and sewer all the way up Cordata and there's still capacity, we could extend water and sewer from where we are now to the north and we'd have enough capacity to continue for at least a few hundred more homes. This is a short term interim solution, in the meantime, the sewer mains along the Guide will get started next summer.

I need support and came to this group to ask, whatever your group can bring in terms of public support in your businesses or at the political level, personal contacts, we can bring a tremendous of good housing and fairly quickly and again I've trust you've seen the presentation. It is ongoing, fluid plan. We have another presentation with Cordata Neighborhood Association in a few weeks and I serve on the Business Park Board and work with the neighborhood a lot.

Don: What can we do to help? Questions from the group? First questions I have – if you had the green light, if you were annexed into the UGA, how long would you start building?

Darcy: If we were annexed today, it would depend on the infrastructure development agreement. There's some infrastructure work that would have to be done prior to building houses, but in a perfect world, if we could simply extend water and sewer northerly and continue building houses, that could happen within 2-3 years. If we were actually annexed. We have to get into the UGA. The County Council did vote a few weeks ago to docket us for 2021 to be considered, which I really appreciated. We are on the docket for consideration, it will still take time and I do not think we can get annexed until the end of the 2022, in 2023 most likely.

Don: And of course, we have County Exec Sidhu and Council member Browne on the call as well.

Clark: Sounds like some jurisdiction issues between County and City? Looking at your plan, it looks like this is about 400 units.

Don: Closer to 600 units.

Darcy: Actually closer to 1200-1400 units. With the infill toolkit, we can do better than 900.

Clark: Good background, open it to the committee.

Troy: Thanks for being here, you've definitely provided workforce housing, I see that and get that. One of the big issues you can educate the committee on is the cost of infrastructure, what exactly needs to be done to accommodate growth? What are those costs to the community? Big picture?

Darcy: Related to N. Bellingham is water supply. The city in 2019 adopted the north end water system plan, it is \$14 million water tank and pump systems, 2 tanks, a pump station, a forced main, about \$14-15 million total. The sewer improvement along the Guide is in the \$6-8 million range. Pump station is \$1 million. Then a large issue is the east-west arterial connection issue, which has been boiling for many years. Is Klein or Kelly going to extend easterly from Slater or should it be Smith Rd? We've been having this conversation for decades. It's an existing deficiency when they looked at the Kiatech property in 2016. The city did a financial impact study for us and they assigned \$30 million total for roads, \$14 million water, \$5-6 million sewer. Those are the main. Fire and police services are part of this analysis. But I think the estimate in 2016 is steep. We've studied the east-west connection extensively. We think Smith Rd is the way to go for east west connector. I don't think there needs to be a lot more stay on it. We need to get that wrapped up. The city assigned \$30 million to existing deficiencies at South Kaitech. All of those would need to be built right now – there are all sorts of properties that cannot be developed, including King Mountain, right now.

Troy: Again, we've got water, sewer, fire, emergency services, road, transport, connectivity. Someone has to pay for these.

Darcy: Developers are willing to pay their share and look for other funding opportunities.

Casey: How does a large development like that impact school districts? What districts do those kids go to? Will they be in Bellingham when Meridian is next door? Or?

Darcy: We looked at this with City Planning Director. Meridian school district already extends into the cordata area. There is overlap between the two districts. We've had significant discussions with meridian over the years and recently, we would intend to be within this district. So they'd be within COB districts, but we'd plan for these homes to go to Meridian.

Don Why not accelerate by offering a ULI and create your own infrastructure bill?

Darcy: We are open to those discussions, but we cannot do that unless we are in the UGA. I'd love to be able to explore these options. We would have an annexation agreement and development agreement and we'd like to discuss those things with the city and the county. There's a lot of ways to go – LIDs, might be a way to go on some of the infrastructure. But again, some major projects affect a significant part of the city. The city just decommissioned two huge water tanks, the City has to build new ones and the health department is requiring that. That will be at King Mountain. So they have to have some financing in place. Kaitech can participating and play a role. We paid a lot into the Horton Rd fund, which allowed the city to get additional fundings. Those capitol facilities plans need to be moved forward and put into place. I have an interim plan.

Satpal: Thanks Darcy for bringing this up in this forum. I have a couple suggestions. One is LID or other things. What traditionally was done in the 50-70 years, municipalities put in but this has changed. How does the benefit flow back to the community? We spend \$20 million to put infrastructure in. How do the taxpayers benefit from this investment?

Darcy: Kaitech will work with the community to provide the type of housing the community needs and is in demand. We've been listening and watching carefully to develop housing ideas that will respond to what the city truly needs. Also lots of amenities.

Satpal: If you do 1200 homes and you say every house is \$5k cheaper, the benefit to the community, but that doesn't really do any good. If the house is \$550,000 and now it is \$540,000, that doesn't really help. We really need affordable and workforce housing. There are other streams of money, which should be put into play for affordable housing. I'm talking 1590, Bellingham is doing and County Council is considering. 1406 dollars, I would like to put into this. We should put some EDI money into this mix as well. One of the suggestions given that there should be inclusionary unit zoning, which are affordable forever and go to a land trust model. We need to make them affordable, smaller lots, smaller homes that are under 1200 sqft, then those homes are always \$350,000. Would need a covenant with a local organization such as Kulshan or Mercy, so they'd manage it for the life of the house. The builders don't want this responsibility. That should be some kind of stopping point.

Ken Bell: Darcy, your Dad is dearly missed. The big picture thing for me is we have 5 UGA that have not been annexed into the City. My concern is there is no plan to get the existing areas incorporated. What are we going to do with the existing ones? Don't take this as me not advocating this, I think it is a tough row to hoe if you are going to ask the City to bring this area in when they haven't annexed the ones with infrastructure? How do we expect to get his in?

Darcy: The annexation phasing plan was supposed to address this question. That process has dwindled. The city planner Greg Aucutt a few weeks ago said at Council that there is no housing density left in the UGAs as it stands anyway, they might come in for other reasons but not for housing.

Rud: Quickly, the thing with infrastructure seems to be the biggest thing preventing annexation. They do not want to take on the financial burden or transfer it onto existing residents. In the case of Darcy's project, \$20-30 million divided among the people who are going to get housing, or off developers profits, or you put on the citizens in the community. The city pushed back because they don't want to fund the infrastructure. The best thing that has come forward is the idea of an LID. Reduce the cost of housing by 20k a unit and say that is more affordable when actually the market sets that price, so that isn't guaranteed.

Pete: Thank you and thank you Darcy. We recognize there is a housing crisis, it appears this is the best investment for the community for homes. If there are other options available, let us know. At this point, adding inclusionary zoning is a burden and slows things down. I think we should get this designated as the UGA to get us started. Question for Darcy: are the city and county supportive? Is it a matter of dollars and process or other things holding them back?

Darcy: What's been said during the Comp Plan update process in 2016 and since, the south Kaitech property is the best property for Bellingham, its largest, it can be built out to include services, it is well established, the primary issue is fiscal impact but again would emphasize that those numbers of \$30 million, those facilities that are needed NOW by the existing community. Kaitech can help pay and get that going. There are what they call existing deficiencies. This is not just for Kaitech's project, we are part of it.

Ryan: The longer this goes on, the higher the costs of the housing and infrastructure. There are no costs that will go down. Pete can back that up. Shortsighted to think that the cost today will not be way higher. How many houses could you build in a year if you could start tomorrow? We talked with Janicki and he said it was financing issues. How fast could you crank them out?

Darcy: Good question, working with partners, we've been putting out less homes than we could. 50 homes a year right now. If we got moving, we'd ramp that up significantly and we'd expect to have that conversation. The phasing is really tied to infrastructure.

Ryan: How can we help you?

Don: We can get the actionable items together with Darcy after the meeting.

Debbie: Thank you so much for this presentation Darcy.

Darcy: Thank you.

Clark: Is there a motion for action today with regards to Darcy's presentation? From moving from being considered for inclusion to the UGA? My sense is there is probably more research that needs to be done. My question to Rud and the group: what's the first step? Is this an interlocal agreement? Does County need to agree to release the properties to the city? What thing can we do to help move along the road map?

Rud: The problem is not the county releasing it. They can have it tomorrow. The city won't take it. The city has to be persuaded to take it because they assume financial responsibility.

Don: That comes to the back end of this conversation. Who we report to, what our jurisdiction is as a committee. I agree with Clark, it is a big project with a lot of information to review, but it is up to the committee. What would we be voting on? Getting more information so we can support or not support this?

Casey: It is disappointing to hear City doesn't want it. Every council person says they want more housing. But basically there is a gift to get us more housing. Is it just money? They should be willing to lose political capital and get this thing going. That's just be two sense.

Don: \$30 million is a large number.

Rud: If the city takes it without funding mechanism, they say to the community you subsidize the project. Every single household will have to pay \$1000-\$1500. I don't think that they should take it either without funding.

Don: I think it will take some time to get info.

Michael Jones: Who docketed you?

Darcy: County Council voted to put it on the docket for a comp plan amendment. That transfers the review process to the city, if they do that.

Michael Jones: That would be the first step. Would Bellingham need to docket it as well? You can't really pass one unless you can show the capital funding plan for how to provide the infrastructure. If you don't have the way to pay for it – it'll be rate payer or citizens. Until Bellingham identifies a way to pay for all infrastructure with developers and what they may have to pay without. It comes down to dollars and cents.

Darcy: I sent a letter to COB planning a week and a half ago to address these capitol facilities issues and am waiting for a response.

Pete: One thing I would add is: Kaitech needs predictability to keep investing. The process needs to take a couple steps forward before the negotiations on who pays for what occurs. The group needs to get into the UGA / annexation so they have some predictability to warrant investments and figure out how to pay for all of this. I think we can support the project due to the Housing Crisis, push the City and County to support this and get to a point where they can negotiate who pays for what and go from there.

Don: Do you have something you'd like to vote on today?

Clark: As the advisory group to the county council, within our current set up we can make a recommendation to County Council in support or not of expansion of this to be part of the Bellingham UGA. That recommendation is not binding. Sounds like from Rud's comment, it doesn't seem like they would be able to take action based on this because it'll be directed to the City. Our group does not make formal recommendations of policy to the City Council. So this again is back is next to the agenda point. Is there a

different way that our group can operate and increase effectiveness? By being part of the REP? Or do we limit our scope to County business with County Council? I don't know unless someone has a specific ask, other than to say we support more housing in the County.

Don: Councilmember Browne is trying to speak as well.

Rud: I think we should expand the base of this committee to include the Cities. The GMA requires the density to be inside city limits. The County has limited ability to move the needle on housing. If there was a unified voice to the City to do an LID, that is the way to get it done.

Don: Why don't I go into the next thing first and if we feel?

Clark: Moving on to the next topic. Turning the floor over to Don and Jennifer. There's been some discussion. The reason we did not have a meeting in February – as advisory committee to the Council, we were to get issues from the Council and provide advice. This ends up being a two-way street. In the absence of that, our group comes up with priorities. Housing was the first we came up with, but what came up after that – we bring forth those issues and then they get framed as being an issue for another jurisdiction. When most of us were asked to be on this group, we thought it was broad brush how can we bring economic development to the county? How can we raise the quality of life in Whatcom? How can business leaders be an agent of that? We have a powerful group. As the Chair, I start questioning our effectiveness not our intent and is there a way to be more effective as a group reporting to the ADO via REP, a narrower scope but with a broader audience or do we take a broad scope with a narrow audience, which is County Council. At the end of the day, we can make an advisory recommendation and we are hoping to come out of the meeting with but will have to be weighed in on by Council, as they determined the committee via ordinance.

Don: First, I'd like to note that my reporting will be the same. I will always report to the County Council. When we first started discussing this committee, five of us sat down what sectors, who the powerful players were, I was under the impression it was an ADO committee. Just about to move forward with it and we found out there was an ordinance at the County to make it a County advisory committee. That was when I asked some of you to fill out applications.

The Port is the ADO, we are one of four ports that is the ADO. What makes it powerful is that I report to Rob, Commissioners at the Port, I lead a monthly meeting of the seven Mayors and Exec, and am in constant conversation with these groups and actors. We see our economy regionally and all of you are regional, you are not all from COB or Whatcom unincorporated. Right now we are limited to one person per sector. We recently just found out you have to be a US citizen to be a member of the committee, as a border county, a lot of businesses are coming down from Canada. We have some very knowledgeable Canadian green card holders that live here and have interest in this committee. They would be able to if this committee was an ADO committee but not a County committee.

If we go to the ADO, we can make recs to all the cities, Port, and County, we are much more integrated. I would create bylaws, suggest that new members get voted in by existing members, no Council process. I see it as bringing in opportunity to get things done. Also, the Council is not all business and do not have the knowledge or time to ask us the questions we are looking for. We've talked about this a lot and I am trying to make us useful and effective and your time is valuable. We want to work on solutions, not theory.

Potential negatives: you as members think it is less important, you'd be helping me do my job and the other is if the Council would not like it. I reached out to Rob Fix, Executive Sidhu, and Councilmember Browne on their opinions. That is the quick synopsis. I think we would be more valuable in this suggested format. Spoke to Paul Burrill, he supported moving it to the ADO.

Clark: Ok, open it up for discussion. Regardless of what we want it to be, this body is political. We have political weight and if we came forward with a white paper or formal recommendation and brought that to the appropriate jurisdiction that has the most ability to move the issue forward, whether that's City of Blaine, Lynden, Bellingham, or the County, that gives us a lot more flexibility. My sense is, we have a purpose and a good group, we just haven't had great effectiveness and I think it is because of the structure.

Don: We are not a nonprofit, in other counties REP is called the EDC.

Clark: Open up the discussion. Put forward a motion a vote for an advisory recommendation so that the County Council can vote on it.

Sarah: Do you have some groups like this already reporting to you?

Don: This is the only Business and Commerce committee that I facilitate. We are a member of WBA, the Chambers, facilitate Team Whatcom. Team Whatcom is economic development service providers. A similar group that is not private sector.

Sarah: We have trouble keeping a monthly meeting. I've heard members saying they want a monthly meeting. I'd like to see the port to set an agenda, with open items. To take the workload off you. I'm concerned if we have to flow even more through you. I'd rather work alongside you than have you speak for me.

Don: I'd be the hub to bring these issues to whatever agency. Twice a month I facilitate Mayoral meetings and Small City meetings. I'd need the support and work of the committee to do that. I'd be the hub and reporting mechanism with Jennifer's support. We would

Sarah: It would be incredible to hear more about those meeting times.

Michael: I support this idea of moving primarily because over the past months and as we've looked at the issues, they've been multijurisdictional issues, particularly related to cities and Bellingham. We can send something to Bellingham. It would be a lot like one of your employees freelancing and doing things you do not support, when a County Committee engages with another jurisdiction it really should be the Council or Exec engaging with that jurisdiction, not the Committee. Also Bellingham and Small Cities do not have voting privileges on this committee, but we could make it so now and it will change the dynamic.

Jennifer: Noted the Small Cities meeting times, public meeting, please attend. Discussed a bit about format.

Don: Having specific projects, like housing, is easier than being in nowhere land. We are willing to work hard and there are a lot of things as the ADO that impact all of you that are not County Council issues. That would open up a lot of opportunities for me to reach out to you, industrial properties, utility and infrastructure issues, our three studies that we have not been able to talk a lot about but have put in a lot of work.

Clark: Sarah, Troy, and I have looked at the County budget. And looking at sales tax receipts on the budget, wow gas stations are a bigger contributor to the county budget than Cherry Point. So when we are talking about the economic activity of the county, the county is one of many entities. The county, port, and cities are all major actors. Being able to identify the issue, identify who has the power to address the issue, see what our group has to contribute and how to use our expertise to help. Right now this is a networking group. But that isn't what this is for and this group won't be sustained this way.

Rud: We get a lot of people who come to us and say we want you to do X. We want you to do X and we've seen somewhere else in WA do this and here is the ordinance as an example. The challenge for Council is that we are only part time and have no support staff. We have Council staff, but they run Council mandated functions and meetings. In terms of legislative support, little. Council has no one to delegate to. So if it is

Olympia, County, to the degree that this group wants to come to us – see a model elsewhere in the state. This makes it easier for us to take action.

Don: Councilmember Browne, do you see anything that would be negative to move reporting to ADO instead of Council?

Rud: I see it as a positive if you can get engagement from the cities. 60% of the population and 90% of housing is in the cities. If you want to move the needle, it's also probably more neutral. If you want something to fail in Bellingham have County Council tell them do it. Blaine or Lynden too! The point is, the Port is politically more neutral in terms of moving stuff forward.

Don: Michael and Satpal and others can tell you, but partially because of the pandemic, we have really focused on regional conversations between leadership, CARES Act we worked together, shared expertise, money, and I get the feeling in our Mayor meetings, that is what the Mayors want to continue and I think we would be able to do that in this case. I appreciate, Sarah, we are a small team with a lot coming at us. It is getting things done rather than talking about them. We want to be solution driven, rather than trying to find someone to listen?

Sarah: Would it be a monthly meeting?

Don: Yes, I would suggest monthly meeting, when appropriate get together in person and really have a true strategy on what we want to accomplish.

Sarah: I had one more thing. It is interesting because I like the idea of working with sectors but, we already have the group together. Why can't we just get the agenda together?

Clark: It is not the person of who it reports to. If we are seen as a body that has authority within the county to move about the cabin so we can go to the Small Cities or COB, the first question on any issue is what is the jurisdiction who has power, who needs to be in the room? Or is it truly only COB? Then all cities or one city. We can be more flexible. More quick. At some level, Don facilitates and supports. First question every time is who do we take the issue to? Then we can get the right experts to bring it forward. I think that the unique proposition that Whatcom has – many of the groups are member driven business orgs that pay dues. That has its own model. We are a volunteer organization, committee of County Council, no dues. So are not a business advocacy nonprofit, as a volunteer organization if we can take our recs to different groups, we will have more impact.

Don: Is everyone good staying another 10 mins?

Sarah: Could we just keep it on the table as an ongoing discussion? This is strange to bring up in the same day and then vote.

Don: The role is funded by city, Port, county, and state. This department was set up to be a regional economic advisory group.

Sarah: Can we just move it to the next meeting agenda?

Don: We are not saying we are not a Council committee. We would be expanding who we report to to include the cities. Why don't we punt this until the next meeting? We can include some of your recommendations Sarah, setting up timing better, back prior to COVID-19 and everything getting crazy.

Clark This is a matter of some levity. I tend to look at meetings within our business and if they aren't working, I break them intentionally. I feel like we are at that point. There is a ton of value here, but our effectiveness has not been matched by the value of the contribution. If there is a way to be more effective

and we have the support of Satpal, Councilmember Browne, Rob Fix, and there are others who support this movement. We wanted to get this out to the group. For the next meeting, we really wrestle this topic and it becomes the primary topic and I'd like to move it to a motion and vote.

Don: Also, I'd like to make you all the decision makers. What members are in this group, how we work, Council makes arbitrary decisions based on who applies. Gail came in under manufacturing, but we'd like to bring in more small businesses. We'd have a lot more control over our destiny.

Clark: Given that we are to time, I do not see other hands raised. Propose a motion to bring meeting to a close at 12:37pm. Seconded by Troy.

Don: I want to emphasize that we are trying to make this more valuable for all of you and the regional. I appreciate all the work over the past few years. Don't give up on us, we are talking about this to make the committee better and more effective.

ZOOM CHAT COMMENTS

From Me to Everyone: 11:04 AM

Public in attendance: Jennifer Noveck, Gina Stark, John Michener, Guy Occhiogrosso, Mauri Ingram, Commissioner Ken Bell, Commissioner Michael Shepard, Jed Holmes, Emily Stone, County Executive Satpal Sidhu, Sandy Ward, Darcy Jones, Cara Buckingham

From Bob Pritchett to Everyone: 11:39 AM

Most people only 'consume/occupy' one house at a time. Houses truly are a 'trickle-down' commodity. The political focus on 'affordable' housing is well-intentioned, but gets in the way of the basic needs, which is MORE houses, at any price point. If you build million dollar mansions, some people move out of the older \$800k houses into them, freeing them up for the people in \$600k houses, and on down the line.

(And since every years brings more regulatory and building-code obligations, impact fees, etc., building higher-priced houses makes more sense than building lower cost ones. But these higher cost houses open up lower cost houses.)

From Debbie Ahl (she/her/hers) to Everyone: 11:46 AM

I don't understand zoning nor annexation guidelines - assuming this can only be built in an "urban growth area" and not where it currently resides as, I assume, unincorporated county land? I agree with Bob that we need more housing of all kinds and that there is a domino effect. We clearly need more affordable housing and some way for families to achieve home ownership and begin to build equity. Assuming wetlands and other environmental issues are addressed, the plans look family-friendly with good green space and potentially mixed income families. I support this - housing is critical for our community.

Thank you Darcy.

From Satpal Sidhu Executive to Everyone: 11:54 AM

The trickle down effect on housing can go down on so far. When you look for a different perspective: There may be 10% of the people who can afford million or 800K home, when they move up there are twice as many number of people in next income bracket, and go one more step down of 350 -450K home prices, there may be 3 to 5 times number of Home buyers in that market. We do need homes in every bracket, but

more in the lower price brackets to support the workforce people making under 75 K The LOW income housing is totally another segment

From Debbie Ahl (she/her/hers) to Everyone: 11:58 AM

Rud, can you share with us via email an explanation for your cost of \$1k to \$1500 per Bellingham houseowner?

From Pete Dawson to Everyone: 12:00 PM

understand we're a county committee, assume though as a group we can make recommendations to any agency

From Ken Bell to Everyone: 12:02 PM

Would you add to the mix, exactly how many homes are possible in the existing urban growth areas? What are the barriers to those not becoming incorporated? How much public \$ would be required to get them annexed? If they need to be removed, then take them off and let's move on to better areas. My understanding is that there are two with relatively little capital, by comparison, required to become annexed. What is the real path to annexation?

From Debbie Ahl (she/her/hers) to Everyone: 12:05 PM

Ken, don't we need all of these homes?

From Ken Bell to Everyone: 12:07 PM

Yes we do.

From Michael Jones (City of Blaine) to Everyone: 12:09 PM

The land use planning side of the conversation starts from a population projection adopted by the County Council and cities. It then drives the needs for homes and the land to support the homes (and jobs). The County is obligated by law to provide enough UGA area to accommodate the projected population growth. Thus, by definition, the existing UGA's have enough land to accommodate the County population growth. The real challenge comes in when you consider willingness to sell./develop and the difficulty of developing specific areas.

From CJ Seitz to Everyone: 12:09 PM

Would the work of this group inform the CEDS (essentially the economic development work plan)?

From Bob Pritchett to Everyone: 12:09 PM

I want both new/expansion as well as increased density... it's on the City that they keep agreeing with neighborhood associations to reduce density in new developments inside city limits, where we already have infrastructure in place. (Sunnyland DOT property, for example, among others.)

From Derek Long to Everyone: 12:15 PM

City of Bellingham annexation plan here: <https://cob.org/services/planning/annexations/bellingham-annexations>

CoB strategy: <https://cob.org/wp-content/uploads/annexation-strategy.pdf>

From Debbie Ahl (she/her/hers) to Everyone: 12:25 PM

Thanks, Derek!

I'm sorry I have to step off to do Rotary invocation - one of our members passed this past week.

From Pete Dawson to Everyone: 12:26 PM

concur w Mr Pritchett. Michael or Rudd what is the downside of adding additional UGA area(s)? is UGA limited by the state? Seems if more UGA, more chances of one of the UGA's becoming a good community investment and eventually annexed.

From Andrew Gamble to Everyone: 12:30 PM

we already report to Council, clearly laid out in the ordinance that created this committee

I support remaining thus

From Michael Jones (City of Blaine) to Everyone: 12:31 PM

Pete - There are no absolutes, but given that disclaimer, you are not allowed by GMA/state law to have excess (i.e. too much) UGA. You are only allowed to have "just enough." That is why the population projection and the land capacity analysis is so important. If you set the target too low or too high and then hit it, you've made a mistake. I'd argue that in Whatcom County we may have set the target too low and done a pretty good job of hitting it. That has caused a shortage of housing based on what we are seeing as the desire to live here.

From Andrew Gamble to Everyone: 12:33 PM

Agree w/ Sarah

Gotta go...please forward this to next meeting.

Thanks Don for all your work!

From Pete Dawson to Everyone: 12:33 PM

Michael, thanks for the explanation, makes sense!

I have to jump off for a 1230, thanks all