

**EASTSOUND SUBAREA PLAN UPDATE – MEETING #3
MEETING NOTES – SEPTEMBER 10, 2007**

Attendees:

Meris Bartlett, Faith Heath, Peter Fisher, Burke Thomas, Pat Pomeroy, Gene Knapp, Mindy Kayl, Lance Evans, Pete Moe, Margie Doyle, Audrey Moreland, John Evans, Bogdan (?) Kulminski, and Rick Hughes.

Staff and Present:

Colin Maycock, Senior Planner, San Juan County Community Development and Planning Dept.
Notes Taker: Lynda Guernsey, San Juan County Community Development and Planning Dept.

Time and Location:

5:08 p.m. – 6:53 p.m.

Next Meeting(s):

September 24 and October 9, 2007, 5 p.m. – 7 p.m., Orcas Island Senior Services Center, Orcas Island.

Meeting:

Colin gave an update of items of interest:

1. Eastsound Long Range Visioning meeting, Saturday, 9/15.07, all day, at the Orcas Center
2. EPRC meetings, on the first Thursday of the month, 3 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
3. Nelson Files
 - a. Background
 - b. Nelson File Breakdown document available at this meeting.
4. Traffic breakdown draft should be available by Friday. Build out will make a difference eventually.

Public Comment:

- a. What about golf cart type cars? How do we regulate them? Safety issue.
- b. County Council looking into the issue of those types of cars. Limited now to roads at 35 mph, legislature may change it to 45 mph. Wouldn't want that to happen.

Colin then referred to the agenda, and that the evening's discussion was going to be about signage. He then went down the list of items, explaining what exists now in both the Eastsound Subarea Plan and in the County, the purpose and components of a sign ordinance, the legal

pitfalls of sign regulations, and then stated that he hoped to come out of this meeting with a better understanding of what the community desired in the way of sign regulations.

Public Comment:

1. Some signs okay. How many do you need?
2. Sandwich signs not changed out in a timely manner.
3. Sandwich signs important for schools, bands, theater, etc. People don't always read the newspapers to see what's happening. Towns with strict no sign regulations are not friendly.

Colin stated that existing signs would be grandfathered. Sandwich signs are illegal now. He explained the code enforcement issues and the need for more equitable and enforceable regulations in the Eastsound Subarea Plan.

Colin listed some of the problems:

1. What is event signage?
2. What is a temporary sign?
3. Few definitions of other types of signs.

Some of the solutions:

1. Eastsound Community supporting off site signs and developing permitting procedures.
2. Permit numbers on signs
3. Permission of property owners to have signs on property.

Issues:

1. How big are signs?
2. The location on the site.

Colin explained that you can have lawn signs on your property. The County can say where, and what they can look like, but they can't say you can't have them.

More public comment regarding signs:

1. Application fee for signage.
2. Punchboard considered signage?
3. If I have a sandwich board for someone else on my property, does that count against me?
4. How do we say no to bands, schools, etc and make them pay?

5. Why are signs being discussed?

Colin – Code enforcement issue and Eastsound Subarea Plan update occurring at same time.

6. Tourists like sandwich boards. Should be temporary, with no restriction to area. Non-profits should be in different category from private companies. Sandwich signs are part of the Orcas Island climate.
7. Would agree to permitting if non-profits given discounted rate. Likes signs.
8. Coalition coming to the County with suggestions on how to make signage work, would that be a good idea?

Colin – Yes. It sounds like off-site signs should be controlled but not banned.

9. Concern about adding more bureaucracy to local government. In favor of signs, but when do they get to be too many? Should check with Prosecuting Attorney early on to find out about legality of ideas. The Prosecuting Attorney may have some good ideas.
10. Instead of permitting, perhaps just regulated by size, color, etc.

Colin – How do you enforce it?

11. Semi-official committee to oversee this?
12. All business does not take place in Eastsound, the sandwich signs are needed to let people know about Olga, etc.
13. On the same token how are signs for churches effected?

Colin – We are working on Eastsound right now, County regulations are the default outside of that area. If you like the regulations now, that's fine. If you don't then let's change them.

14. Can we write a rule that would allow property owners to give permission to have sandwich signs placed where they are now?

Colin – Temporary signs are possible.

15. Sandwich signs can be self-policing, it's kind of what's happening now.
16. Those that are repeat offenders of not removing their signs, should have code enforcement involved.
17. Need legislative process to change regulations.

Colin – We are in that process right now.

18. What about Garage Sale signs?

Colin – You can regulate them but people do what they want anyway. It all comes down to enforcement, the fewer disputable elements, the easier to follow and enforce.

19. A permit process that allows a permit for one year, if no complaints then issued another one year permit.
20. Permit for season.

Colin – Permitting still brings up the issue of increased bureaucracy.

21. Develop a list of exempt signs, perhaps limited to two per year.
22. What about the school year sign painted on the barn? And the signs on the propane tanks?

Colin - There may be an argument for cultural landmarks.

Colin asked that the public get away from sandwich signs and off-site signs for the time being and see if they could come up with some answers to some other questions he was hoping to get answered this evening.

1. Right now the size of a regular sign can't be larger than 32 square feet. What would be an ideal size for regular signs? Discussion.

Consensus to keep it at no larger than 32 square feet.

2. How many signs should people be allowed to have on their property? Discussion.

Consensus is that more signs better than fewer.

Discussion again on sandwich signs. Colin pointed out that the enforcement issue that's arisen is based on the ugliness of the signs.

Public Comment:

1. In regards to the complaints, if the issue is left alone the complaints will eventually go away.
2. Skagit County model has exempt event signs.
3. Puts boards out for kid fundraising events, any cost would be detrimental to the event fundraising.
4. Exempt sandwich boards.

5. Use tax status to figure out if they are exempt or not.

Colin – Explained the hard place he was in with regulating the signs, the number, the monitoring issue, and commercial vs. non-commercial.

6. No permitting. Self-policing using definitions, limiting the criteria, non-profit/cultural events.
7. Perhaps idea of signs allowed up 14 days in advance of event and down 5 days after event, is a good one.
8. For businesses outside Eastsound, perhaps Chamber of Commerce could focus on them.
9. Routing, location signs, almost all done outside of Eastsound.
10. Some do routing by sign posts.
11. Might be a good idea to have routing signs as tourists do skip towns, including Eastsound.

Colin asked the public if the following was a pretty good idea of where they were headed with signage:

1. Existing regulations basically okay.
2. Sandwich boards
 - a. Define Temporary and Special Event.
 - b. Where should they be located?
 - c. For how long?
3. Routing Signs are a County wide problem, not part of the Eastsound Subarea Plan update.
4. Check with the Prosecuting Attorney's office on accident responsibility for people reading signs.
5. No signs blocking sidewalks, driveways, or any public right-of-ways.