

## The Deer Harbor Plan Review Committee Observations from the Chair September 9, 2009

If The Deer Harbor Plan Review Committee is to be an effective resource to The County Council, we need to establish our goals, both for the short and long term. Our goals need to be realistic and drawn from both the experience of other review committees and current economic conditions. To that end, I have set out some ideas for your reading and consideration, additions, deletions and editing.

In looking at the minutes of The Eastsound Planning and Review Committee, it would appear that one of the most oft discussed and prevalent subjects is how to get recommendations acted on by The Commission and now The Council. That frustration is even more a reality in the present economic climate where the budget is closed to new expenditures. That condition will exist for the near future, and will probably continue for some time.

We can work around these conditions by focusing on three major areas.

1. Do the review work that is submitted to us by the two senior planners, Julie Thompson and Lee McHenry.
2. To carefully identify projects that are already budgeted.
3. To find projects that do not have costs to the County; i.e., either have no costs attached or are funded by sources other than The County.

The first area above (1):

We do the reviews and make recommendations as required by our charge when the request is made by the planners. In addition we may request copies of applications for permits involving buildings, short and long plats and conditional use and make recommendations.

The second and third areas above (2 & 3) Projects that are cost free or are already funded or budgeted:

The first and most important task we need to do something about is the condition of *The Deer Harbor Plan* itself. It needs editing and organizing and items identified for possible revision, change or deletion. This is a “no cost attached” item.

Next is *The Bridge*. The noise and safety, caused by deterioration and material used, are of great concern to those who live nearby or who use it daily. The need for repairs is obvious and I understand The County has the money to do so in the

budget. It is a matter of when the work can be done. We need to submit a clear and carefully researched recommendation to The Council in this regard.

Next is the condition and availability of *Potable Water* in the area defined in The Deer Harbor Plan. The County Health Department is anxious to get this project under way. It involves identification of present and future water sources and an estimate of the capacity of same. Vicky Heater from The County Health Department can be available for our October meeting to elaborate and work with us on this area if The Committee agrees. There are apparently funds already budgeted for this project along with some donated help from water contractors. Getting a reasonable reading on available water is critical to the future development of Deer Harbor Hamlet and Environs.

Next is *Cell Phone Use* capability for Deer Harbor. We need to determine whether the citizens of Deer Harbor really want cell phone capability or whether they just want to be “shut off.” The County has a long-term objective to deal with this problem and, if The Committee agrees, we can help them along with a solid recommendation. It is a major problem to those who use cell phones in their business or those who visit and find their relatives at home in Florida have no way to stay in touch. I suspect the need to get cell phone capability for The Hamlet has widespread concern but little desire to litter the landscape with transmission equipment.

We have already started projects for identification and development of *Path and Walkways*. Also underway is the project to look into available *Parking* in The Hamlet for residents, tourists and Waldron residents. These are both viable projects for urgent need and both have wide community support.

The Committee needs to examine just what its responsibility is regarding *The Community Center*. The Deer Harbor Plan as approved calls for a “floating center” involving land that borders Deer Harbor Road and located somewhere between Deer Harbor Inn and The Park just north of Deer Harbor Marina property. If The Committee desires to recommend change in the location of the Community Center and add the architectural and design guidelines to The Plan, it apparently may do so. More clarity in this regard will surely occur as we examine The Plan to see what needs edit, reorganization and change.

Lastly, we will need a committee to look into what recommendations we want or need to make regarding The Council’s preparation to update The Shoreline Management Master Program. This committee may find it useful to involve members of the public for support.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Charlie Binford