

Julie Thompson

From: Margie Doyle <margaretdoyle7@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 11, 2017 6:02 PM
To: Julie Thompson; Lynda Guernsey; Rick Hughes; Jamie Stephens; Bill Watson; jeffo@rockisland.com; Erika Shook; Russ Harvey
Subject: Further comments on the PCUP for Interisland Propane storage tank and distribution center at 27 Aeroview in Eastsound

Please forward to the Hearing Examiner, Council members, County Planning Staff, Public Works and Planning Commission.

Thank you,

Margie Doyle

Editorial: Safeguard the Seaview Neighborhood

Families, OPAL's first neighborhood put at risk

Posted on [July 11, 2017](#)

— by Margie Doyle —

(Disclosure: I live across the street from 27 Aeroview in a lot also zoned Service/Light Industrial. My husband has lived on the island since 1982 and in this house since 1989).

I've always loved living on Orcas, because for good or ill, you *know* most of the people you deal with on a daily basis. Just yesterday I got a note from my island doctor commenting on the results of a test done last month and making personal recommendations — just one example of the extra (or should I say “normal”?) connections people make and cherish on the island.

As a child, I lived in the same city neighborhood from 3 to 18 years of age — we rode bikes, played street games, delivered papers, put out house fires, partied at weddings and wakes, and welcomed new babies in that city block of 30 homes, 60 kids, retirees, low-income, doctors, lawyers, professors, accountants, teachers, nurses, and insurance agents among us. That was then in the 50s and 60s.

This is now. In Eastsound on Seaview Street, from Mt. Baker Road to Transylvania, bordering the airport, there's a very similar mix of residents and families to the neighborhood I grew up in. We walk, bike, stroll our kids, garden, pay our mortgages or rent, and head out to work in the mornings and come home at night to our homes and families.

One big difference is that this “Seaview” neighborhood has, right in the middle of the residences, a service-light industrial zone. The lot at 27 Aeroview Lane has been vacant for at least the last 17 years; it is directly adjacent to the airport on the east side, to Seaview Street on the west side, to Wildwood and Aviator housing complexes on the north side, and to our home and cabinet shop on the south side.

Within 300 feet of the property line, OPAL's first neighborhood, OPAL Commons, has their community garden. Further north are the 18 homes owned by our local Community Land Trust, our "affordable housing" agency. In the last three years, OPAL arranged for four homes to be barged to Eastsound and placed on lots between Seaview and Mt. View streets, providing more affordable homes for retirees and young families to live.

Recently the County installed a 30,000 gallon fuel tank for emergencies in the county public works lot off Mt. Baker Road, also off Seaview Street to the east. In 2015, there were two fuel leak accidents at the former VanderYacht propane lot at the north end of Seaview Street, and the neighborhood had to be evacuated. It's important to note, that without the county's knowledge or approval, a septic waste disposal tank was also on that location.

That's the background and helps explain why the Seaview neighbors (which include Mt. View and Blanchard streets to the west and the airport hangars to the east) are so alarmed at the prospect of InterIsland Petroleum installing a 30,000 gallon propane tank (which owner Don Galt admits is a flammable and explosive fuel) right in the heart of our neighborhood.

I've just returned from a week-long vacation where, in Halifax, Nova Scotia, I visited the Maritime Museum and learned more details of the sinking of the "unsinkable" *Titanic* in 1912, and the lesser-known explosion of Dec. 6, 1917 when a ship loaded with explosives collided with a ship laden with refugee provisions in Halifax harbor. Within 20 minutes, explosions were set off that leveled an area with a 1.5 mile radius and killed nearly 2,000 and maimed or blinded 9,000 people. I was reminded that with the best of safeguards, accidents happen.

As a Seaview neighbor said to county officials and Don Galt recently, "Many of our neighbors are united over concerns with having your company use the proposed property for a propane fueling operation. I believe we all appreciate and acknowledge your efforts to make this a safe, efficient operation. As we all know, all the safety protocols in the world will not prevent an accident. This is why we call them accidents. Human error, laziness, being in a hurry, deterioration of equipment, forgotten maintenance, or whatever it may be, the chance of a heavy spill or fire is always possible.

"It is apparent that the Seaview/Aeroview and adjacent neighbors are strongly against this project. We have developed a quiet, safe, friendly neighborhood that we plan to spend the rest of our lives enjoying. This project not only jeopardizes the safety and tranquility of the neighborhood, but we fear a decrease in property values and increased expenses that we may incur from maintenance and upgrades to the existing infrastructure.... It does not matter that you comply with national, state and county regulations, none of these stipulations will prevent an incident or loss of life."

For over 10 years I've attended the monthly Eastsound Planning Review Committee meetings almost every month. Many times, I've been the only one there as this county advisory all-volunteer group meets to safeguard the character and safety of our Urban Growth Area (UGA) and beyond. Through the years and various committee members, there has been a focused effort to guide growth and development through the lenses of our safety and our modern rural character. They have studied the installation of a propane tank and distribution center (trucks driving through the neighborhood and filling with propane) and issued the following statement to county officials:

"While bulk fuel storage facilities are allowed upon approval of a conditional use permit in the service and light industrial designation, the EPRC is concerned about locating a large fuel tank in close proximity to relatively high density residential neighborhoods and to airport facilities. Residential uses are located on all sides of the proposed use. Airport facilities with fuel storage are also located adjacent to the site to the east. Ingress and egress is limited to a single road. Should there be an explosion, fire, or other safety-related mishap, the ability to

evacuate residents and bring in emergency personnel could be severely restricted due to the single point of ingress and egress....

“Due to the proximity to residential uses and a single point of ingress and egress, the EPRC found that the project would be more appropriately located away from higher density residential uses. The EPRC recommends that the applicant demonstrate provisions for safety measures to ensure protection of people living in the nearby neighborhoods, including emergency provisions for evacuation and access by emergency personnel. If such provisions can not be adequately demonstrated, the application should be denied.”

Comments from the Fire Marshal

In a memo dated June 27, 2017, the Fire Marshal stated that the proposal is subject to the requirements of Chapters 50, 57, and 61 of the IFC, and NFPA 58 as a “bulk plant”. He recommended seven conditions of approval that would ensure compliance with the specific codes. These include:

1) Prior to any construction activities on the site, the following is required:

a) A building permit that includes construction plans for the foundation and the container shall be submitted and approved by the Department of Community Development.

b) An operational fire permit is required to be submitted to and approved by the Fire Marshal for the Bulk Plant. A written operations and maintenance manual (O&M) meeting the requirements of NFPA 58 Chapter 14 shall be submitted to the Fire Marshal’s Office prior to an operational permit being issued. The O&M requirements include Fire Response.

c) Installation of the container, the container specifications and valves, filling station, and equipment on trucks utilizing the site shall meet the requirements of National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 58 and the IFC.

2) The container shall meet the setbacks from property lines and public ways per IFC Table 6104.3. A 30,000 gallon container is required to be setback at least 50 feet from property lines and public ways per IFC Table 6104.3.

3) A designated fire truck turn-around/fire land must be provided on site.

4) Bollards or other approved collision prevention devices must be installed in compliance with NFPA 58 and the IFC.

5) Prior to Occupancy, a Fire and Life Safety Inspection is required. This will be conducted after or concurrently with acceptance testing of the site in the presence of the Fire Marshal and a designee of the Orcas Island Fire and Rescue Fire Chief.

6) Prior to occupancy, hydrants shall be installed meeting the requirements of SJCC 13.08 including:

a) A hydrant installed on the corner of Seaview and Aeroview to fulfill the hydrant distance minimums outlined in SJCC 13.08.080.

b) The hydrant must be tested and demonstrate that it can meet the commercial hydrant flow for this site per SJCC 13.08.010 which is 500 gallons per minute for 60 minutes.

7) If the property is to be gated or fenced, a Knox key box system shall be installed allowing firefighters access to the site.

“He also made an additional recommendation:

“A fire suppression system to apply water to cool the container in the event of fire is recommended. This would supplement the efforts of firefighters and would likely reduce the magnitude of an emergency, should one arise. **This recommendation is due to Orcas Island Fire District’s dependence on volunteer firefighters, in conjunction with the consideration that mutual aid is not readily available due to our island location.** (*Bold characters added*). This system should be designed in such a manner as to allow firefighters to unlock a valve to a suppression system and activate the water cooling system.”

While these considerations would go a long way to safeguard the neighborhood in the event of a spill, fire, or God forbid, explosion of this 30,000 gallon tank, my 17 years on the island have shown me that enforcement and inspection of conditions is far from perfect. Enforcement is “complaint-driven” county officials have said time and again, while despairing of the lack of personnel to inspect and enforce compliance.

Is it fair for the Seaview neighbors to live under the threat of such an accident? Is it fair for the Seaview neighbors to have the onerous task of monitoring safety requirements issued by county authorities as residents raise their families and hold down their jobs? Is it fair to ask our neighbors in their homes, their “castles,” to sacrifice their sense of security so that an island business, dangerous by its very nature, can operate in the midst of us? Is that what “rural island character” means to county officials?

Margaret Doyle, Publisher

www.orcasissues.com

Orcas Issues: News and Views

Julie Thompson

From: Donny Galt <donny@interislandpropane.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 12, 2017 9:14 AM
To: Julie Thompson
Subject: Re: Inter Island Propane storage

Morning Julie,

Here Matt Willis report of the meeting last week. Wow it was a tough one for me. But I did it and I let folks vent. Anyways, if you have not read this, this is Matts take on the meeting.

Donny

Seaview Residents Share Concerns About Propane Storage Deadline for county decision is Thursday, July 13

Posted on [July 10, 2017](#) [orcasisues.com](#)

— by *Matt Willis* —

On Thursday, July 13 a San Juan Hearing Examiner is set to make a decision that local residents feel could put their safety at risk. Community members facing that possibility met at the Eastsound Fire Station to publicly express their concerns last Wednesday, July 5.

Orcas Issues has [previously reported](#) that Inter-Island Propane intends to place a 30,000 gallon propane storage tank (with a capacity of over 100,000 pounds of fuel) at 27 Aeroview Lane in Eastsound. Donny Galt, co-owner of the company, led Wednesday's meeting and attempted to address everyone's concerns. Also in attendance were Councilman Rick Hughes, Fire Chief Scott Williams, and Eastsound Water Users Association General Manager/EPRC Member Paul Kamin.

Galt welcomed the crowded meeting hall with a warm smile and explained to attendees that he wants to bring his business to Orcas Island for the benefit of its residents. A competing propane business on Orcas should drive down the cost of this fuel on which most of us depend heavily here on the island, he noted.

However, many attendees seemed leery of Galt's explanation, noting that it's their lives and property values that will be negatively impacted by the facility, while Galt profits.

The devastation due to a worst case scenario, a Boiling Liquid Expanding Vapor Explosion (BLEVE), was a concern that everyone shared, especially given the lack of egress for some residents living on Seaview Street. The EPA's *Risk Management Program Guidance for Propane Storage Facilities* states that for a 30,000 Gallon tank, the worst case scenario would cause broken glass in buildings up to 0.4 miles away.

The feeling of helplessness expressed by some attendees was palpable as they pointed out that their retirement depended completely on the value of their property. However, one person noted that property values were already deflated since they were adjacent to an area zoned for service and light industrial use in the first place.

To extinguish concerns of a BLEVE or gas leak, Galt carefully walked the group through a slide presentation covering all of the safety precautions and fail-safes to be in place as part of this system. No less than ten physical mechanisms provide redundancy in preventing leaks, including those caused by a pull-away (which was the case for the leak that occurred on the island [during the winter of 2015](#)). On top of that, all individuals

involved in the propane storage process will have adequate training in proper procedures, risk mitigation, and issue response.

Fire Chief Scott Williams gave his vote of approval for the system by pointing out that the safety systems that Galt presented are what he'd like to see for other installations on the island. Galt followed up, clarifying that the Fire Department has determined there is more than enough water available in the event of fire caused by a leak.

On the other hand, the Fire Chief, with some resignation, admitted that the Fire Department would be hard pressed if the worst case scenario (a BLEVE) were to occur. BLEVEs are rare. A tank must first be exposed to high heat long enough for the container's structural integrity to be compromised. Pressure release valves, in most cases, can ensure that this condition is never met. In addition, mechanisms can be installed to keep the container cool and extinguish any flame within the area of the container. Such conditions attached to the permit would be one way for the community to essentially eliminate the risk of a BLEVE.

Rick Hughes stated that the county's recommendation is to approve the permit with conditions. Though the Hearing Examiner will take input from the public, it's likely that the permit will be approved, he added. It was noted, however, that decisions from the Hearing Examiner can be appealed by "Any person who submitted written comments to the director concerning the [permit] application, and any *aggrieved* person." For details on how to submit an appeal see the [county's website](#).

Paul Kamin took the initiative to copy public comments from previous *Orcas Issues* articles on the topic and submit them into public record. This should allow any of those individuals to appeal a decision to approve from the Hearing Examiner.

The community leaders in attendance, Rick Hughes, Scott Williams, and Paul Kamin, appeared to be satisfied with Galt's factual address to each of the concerns expressed by the public. They also expressed confidence that the conditional use permitting process would ultimately ensure the safety of the community. However, the meeting adjourned with many attendees remaining wary of the risks to their safety.

Donny Galt
Co-Owner, Inter Island Propane LLC

" Your LOCAL source for Propane and HVAC Sales & Service!"

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On Wed, Jul 12, 2017 at 8:12 AM, Julie Thompson <JulieT@sanjuanco.com> wrote:

July 12, 2017

San Juan County
Community Development
PO Box 947
Friday Harbor, WA 98250

The notice of proposed development (permit number PCUP00-17-0018) to install a large propane storage tank at 27 Aeroview Lane adjacent to the Buena Vista Heights subdivision in Eastsound (tax parcel 2711580117) prompted me to write this letter in opposition. I own property in the area and have serious safety concerns.

Installation of such a propane storage tank may meet zoning and land use requirements, however it clearly is not reasonable to place a large fuel storage tank in this densely populated area. Many families and children live here. The potential for ignition and explosion create risks that clearly outweigh any benefits. No one can say with certainty whether there will be significant problems, but accidents do happen. I strongly urge the county to reject this proposal.

Sincerely,

Nancy McCullum, Ph.D.

Julie Thompson

From: Amanda Sparks <ilandgirl77@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 13, 2017 12:13 AM
To: Julie Thompson; Eric Gourley; Rick Hughes
Subject: Propane tank on Sea View Orcas

I live at 81 Sea View Street directly across from the proposed propane building site. I bought my house with the intention of raising my 8 year old daughter in a quiet neighborhood close to school and after school activities. I never would have considered buying at this location if there was a huge propane facility across the street. Mostly because My daughter, as well as all the Sea View neighborhood kids, love riding bikes. After attending the meeting at the firehall and listening to the details of this proposed plan, I am perplexed. My understanding of the light industrial zoning guidelines does not permit this type of use.

Again, had I thought otherwise I would not have bought my house, as the risk would have been to high for me in both danger, and property value loss.

The idea that so many families will be subject to the type of danger from industrial traffic to potential explosions is unacceptable.

Pedestrians young and old walk and bike this street back and forth everyday. This is, in no means, an industrial roadway. The light industrial businesses that currently exists are in peoples homes and create no extra traffic and have no visual indications of such. They also and most importantly pose no danger to the surrounding homes. Something like this will completely change the safety and the vibe of the entire neighborhood forever.

Julie, you were incorrect when giving me written permission to start a drive thru coffee business on Orcas, even after I had you look up the exact location of where I would be operating it. That mistake cost me several thousands of dollars and countless labor hours. I urge you to dig a little deeper on this particular land use proposal and make sure you are understanding the light industrial use (on Orcas) properly. Many folks seem to think this type of use is not permitted for this locations current infrastructure. Only, this time, if something goes wrong and you were incorrect, it's not just a large financial loss for a single mother, it's also my life, my daughters life and the lives of many others.

I urge you to take a look at the zoning for industrial use on Orcas and choose somewhere more appropriate for this type of dangerous industry. Filling densely populated neighborhoods with inappropriate industry is not an answer, it's a travesty.

Best,

Amanda Sparks

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Orcas Island Film Fest 2015: <http://youtu.be/u45ci72zhsM>

This is where I give: <http://funhousecommons.org/>