

Adam Zack

From: Steve Bernheim <sabernheim@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 11, 2018 1:57 PM
To: Comp Plan Update
Subject: Comp Plan Comments for Vision Meeting February 16 Planning Commission
Attachments: CLIMATE CHANGE bernheim version.docx; ECONOMY (bernheim proposals).docx; Energy and Resources BERNHEIM PROPOSALS.docx; GOVERNANCE (BERNHEIM VERSION).docx; HOUSING (my version).docx; LAND USE bernheim proposal.docx; NATURAL ENVIRONMENT bernheim proposal.docx; TRANSPORTATION bernheim version.docx

Dear Adam,

Please accept these comments on EIGHT of the vision elements of the comprehensive plan to be discussed at the planning commission public hearing this coming Friday, thank you.

Sb.
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CLIMATE CHANGE (Bernheim version)

Our island community sets an example with its response to climate change. We proactively address the effects of climate change like sea level rise and drought. Our community uses its resources to meet current needs while ensuring that adequate resources are available for future generations and seeks a better quality of life for all its residents while maintaining nature's ability to function over time by minimizing waste, preventing pollution, promoting efficiency and developing local resources to revitalize the local economy. Decision-making in a sustainable community stems from a rich civic life and shared information among community members where human, natural and economic elements are interdependent and promote each other. ~~encourages voluntary efforts to reduce our carbon footprint. Preparations to mitigate these affects are made in advance before they become crises.~~ We adopt greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, track our county's greenhouse gas emissions, and accept climate change as a factor in land use and construction permit decision-making

BERNHEIM PROPOSALS AND EXPLANATION:

1. Add "uses resources to meet current needs while ensuring resources for the future," because it is more specific with regard to what is the impact of Climate Change on our island vision. We must do more than "balance" rights against the environment: we must at least preserve the island resources for future generations. Greater public involvement will be necessary to successfully deal with climate change's impacts or our personal and community economies.
2. Add "GHG emission reduction targets" and policies and actions to achieve those targets by recognizing that individuals and government will play separate roles in achieving substantial greenhouse gas reductions.

ECONOMY (Bernheim proposals)

We support a pattern of economic growth and development which serves the needs and preferences of our community, and which recognizes the rural, residential, quiet, agricultural, marine and isolated nature of the islands. Our economy comprises a wide spectrum of stable, year-round activities and seasonal tourism that provide family wage employment for islanders. The workforce is able to live, work and thrive locally. We support and encourage traditional industries including forestry, farming, aquaculture, construction, fishing and tourism without jeopardizing the natural environment on which they depend. We have home occupations and cottage enterprises that are compatible with surrounding neighborhoods. We encourage new ideas and new technology for improving the quality and profitability of our goods and services. Advanced interactive communication systems support our economy. Value-added activities are encouraged. Environmental conservation ~~and principles limit permitted sustainable development are balanced.~~

BERNHEIM PROPOSALS AND EXPLANATIONS:

1. All economic activities in the San Juan Islands owe their sustainable development potential to well-preserved natural resources, clean sea, beautiful forests and beaches and the coast which has been spared excessive or illegal building. Agro-tourism encourages ecological farm and forest practices. Eco and agro tourism thrive on the protection and preservation of the environment. We need a new tourism slogan: the San Juans as they used to be. That is precisely what tourists want: seven days of peace and quiet, good domestic food, clean sea, a comfortable hotel, local products. No amusement parks and such things. Anybody can have them. But once you pollute your clean sea, there is no going back. The damage is irreparable.
2. Add "preferences" ... The County's vision statement should provide that economic growth and development will be guided by our islands' residents' *preferences*, as well as by their needs. We island residents have the power and authority to make our development preferences into law and we should view economic development as more than accruing incomes, employment numbers, business profits, and construction sites. Our vision of economic development should describe *four* basic elements: not only is there the "growth" factor, but there should also be equitable spread of benefits among residents, improved governance, and increased sustainability. Development so defined is participatory development: the people here decide how it proceeds.
3. Add "seasonal tourism" ... Seasonal tourism should be highlighted as a major prong of our islands' economy. By preserving our natural resources and leveraging them into a successful program of low-impact seasonal tourism, all islanders can share the benefits of the development.
4. Revise the thought that conservation and development are "balanced." Conservation is the priority; development is subject to principles of conservation, not "balanced" against them.

Energy and Resources Vision:

CURRENT STAFF VERSION WITH PROPOSED BERNHEIM REVISIONS

Our community fosters resource and energy conservation. Energy independence is encouraged. Drinking water resources are conserved, protected, monitored and managed to meet the needs of our community, ~~and the natural environment,~~ and future generations. Recycling, solid waste, and sewage treatment are managed both within the confines of each island and Countywide in an environmentally sound manner. Renewable natural resources are used on a sustainable basis. Nonrenewable resources are conserved wherever possible and practical.

BERNHEIM PROPOSALS:

- Add that in addition to being “managed,” water resources are to be “conserved, protected, and monitored.”
- Add that water resources must meet the needs of “future generations.”

Explanation:

The current staff proposal suggests that nonrenewable water resources are conserved wherever possible and practical. Because of the importance of the water resource, the vision statement should specifically state that the County’s water resources will be “conserved, protected, and monitored” as well as “managed,” because the County’s comprehensive plan and implementing laws and regulations should promote water conservation and savings, protect clean water from harmful residential and commercial pollution, and monitor water quality and quantity.

Water is a fragile and finite resource. Today’s responsibilities should be expressed in terms of protecting adequate water resources for “future generations,” and not only for the benefit of the community and the natural environment.

GOVERNANCE (BERNHEIM VERSION)

We are self-governed by informed citizens. We are equally represented by elected officials who conduct the activities of government in an ethical, fair, impartial, responsive and open manner that recognizes the independent, self-reliant nature of its citizens. Our government institutions balance responsibility with resources and costs, consolidate services where practical, manage prudently, provide reliable data, are service-oriented, and perform in a timely manner. Taxes are necessary to raise revenue to pay for every community service and government service and all county residents understand that without tax receipts, government cannot function effectively. County residents exercise their duty to vote when issues of community concerns so that the responsibility for decision-making is shared by all members of the community.

BERNHEIM PROPOSALS AND EXPLANATIONS:

1. Add "taxes are necessary," because many people don't seem to realize it.
2. Add "residents exercise their duty to vote," to encourage voter participation drives and high voter turnout.

HOUSING

PROPOSED

The supply of accessible and affordable housing is adequate to meet the needs of our diverse population. There is housing for people of all incomes. There is sufficient variety in housing types to accommodate diverse households. Raising a family, having a good quality of life, and economic opportunities are not limited by access to housing. Zoning and development regulations allow seasonal communal agricultural housing and rezones of property which results in a range of affordable multi-dwelling special needs and senior housing.

BERNHEIM PROPOSAL AND EXPLANATION:

The new housing Vision statement recommended by the Planning Commission to reflect the increased public concerns over housing, should provide that new regulations will be required to a) provide for communal seasonal agricultural housing for up to 120 days per year and b) allow for the construction of appropriate mutli-family facilities in development areas to provide for elderly and lower income units.

LAND USE (Bernheim proposal)

Neighborhoods, hamlets, villages and towns are clearly defined to conserve agricultural, forest, mineral resource and critical areas. These areas define our heritage and sense of place, providing for commerce and community activities without losing their small scale and attractive island ambiance. The unique character of our shorelines is protected by encouraging uses that maintain or enhance the quality of the shoreline environment. Through innovative land use strategies, including limits on the issuance of resident, non-resident, and tourist construction permits consistent with growth projections and carrying capacity analysis, our citizens and institutions balance and protect private property rights, public rights and our natural environment and help assure that options for future generations to make land use decisions will not be jeopardized.

BERNHEIM PROPOSALS AND EXPLANATIONS:

1. Add "limits on the issuance of ... construction permits," because the San Juan Islands' resources are finite and cannot accommodate a full build out permitted under current code and zoning laws.
2. Delete "balance" of private and public rights and the environment: it is sufficient to "protect" all rights without balancing and thereby sacrificing one set of rights against another.
3. Add that "options for future generations" should be preserved by limiting development decisions that cause irreversible environmental damage or loss.
4. Non-renewable resources are finite and ecosystems have limits in their capacity to absorb pollutants and humanity. Environmental assets, such as areas of outstanding natural beauty, are irreplaceable. Our vision statement should recognize that environmental assets are irreplaceable and the extent to which current future levels of resource use degrade the capital stock of environmental assets for future generations.
5. The San Juan Islands environment is vulnerable because of the islands' relative isolation, a sensitive environment, a high dependency on seasonal activities and external economic activity, demographic imbalance and insufficient public infrastructure. Biodiversity, clean sea and recreation opportunities are the main advantage of the islands, whereas problems include the lack of urban and/or industrial waste treatment, declining marine environment, uncontrolled tourism development and increasing numbers of expensive, overbuilt second homes.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT (Bernheim proposal)

Our islands have exceptional natural beauty and healthy diverse ecosystems surrounded by pollution-free marine waters. The air is fresh and clean, the water quality is excellent, and the soil is uncontaminated. As careful stewards of these islands, we create voluntary associations, pay taxes and fees, and adopt laws and regulations to conserve resources, protect our shorelines, preserve and expand open space, and take appropriate action to assure healthy land and marine environments. Roadways are discouraged along shorelines. Preserving the natural environment from damaging development activities is central to the ecological health, quality of life, and the economy in the islands. Native plants and animals of the islands thrive, and are identified, appreciated and conserved.

BERNHEIM PROPOSALS AND EXPLANATIONS:

1. Add “create voluntary associations, pay taxes and fees, and adopt laws and regulations” ... Preservation of the natural environment and its protection against undue development occurs in the San Juan Islands not by voluntary, unregulated acts of selfless individuals, but intentionally through a) voluntary associations, b) funds created by taxpayers and permit seekers, and c) government regulation. Our vision includes more voluntary associations, more taxes and fees and more voter-supported regulation in order to protect the natural environment.
2. Add “expand” open space and “Roadways are discouraged along shorelines,” in order to facilitate the de-commissioning of Crescent Beach Road and returning that roadway to a beach area.
3. Add that threats to the environment derive from “damaging development activities,” and that the community supports development that does not threaten or damage the natural environment.
4. The natural environment of the San Juan Islands is a major contributing factor to the quality of life and visual attractiveness to residents and visitors alike. The islands’ land and marine environment represents an important economic resource; provides habitat for plants, animals and marine life; and is the basis for the island’s recreational activities. As the degree of human activity intensifies so does the threat to permanently alter or destroy valuable environmental features and resource areas. In accommodating future development on the San Juan Islands, care must be taken so as not to irreversibly alter the island’s healthy, liveable and aesthetically pleasing upland and marine-based natural landscape.

TRANSPORTATION (BERNHEIM VERSION)

We have water, land, and air transportation systems commensurate with our island culture. On-island circulation is by means of a system of scenic rural roads with automobile, bicycle and pedestrian ways functioning without conflict. In some places, the roads are unpaved, narrow, and winding, and care is taken to maintain a rustic quality in public signs. Transportation plans equally consider cyclists, pedestrians, automobiles, public transportation, and rural character. Expansion of new construction of basic public transportation facilities occurs only based on demonstrated local public need. Roadways constructed long ago along sensitive shorelines are decommissioned where alternative connectors are available. The physical capacities of existing transportation systems are a factor in limiting unlimited vehicular and tourist access to the San Juan Islands

BERNHEIM PROPOSALS AND EXPLANATIONS:

1. Add "roadways ... are decommissioned," to allow for sensible abandonment of motorways in sensitive shoreline areas where high costs of maintenance and repair suggest returning the roadway to nature.
2. Add "physical capacities ... are a factor," to permit future limits on cars and tourists visiting the island in case of overcrowding of available facilities. A small island such as Orcas can discourage motor vehicular use thus preserving its peaceful and non-polluted character. The easier the access the greater the pressure for development. It is therefore desirable to limit vehicular ferries so that development pressures on the social and natural environment can be reduced.