

Sophia Cassam

From: Lynda Guernsey
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2021 4:02 PM
To: Sophia Cassam
Subject: FW: Testimony for 16 July 2021 PC hearing on Docket 21-0003

Hi Sophia,

Please see the comment email on Docket 21-0003 below.

Regards,
Lynda

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From: joe symons <joesymons@me.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2021 3:24 PM
To: Lynda Guernsey <LyndaG@sanjuanco.com>; San Juan County Council <councilvm@sanjuanco.com>
Subject: Testimony for 16 July 2021 PC hearing on Docket 21-0003

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I write regarding the PC determination of the status of docket 21-0003

I reference Sophie Cassum's report at

https://www.sanjuanco.com/DocumentCenter/View/23417/2021-07-02_2021-Docket_21-0003_Follow-up-Memo_PC-Public-Hearing?bidId=

IMO, the report basically blows off the fundamentals of the 21-0003 docket request. DCD simply will not acknowledge what the buildout population is. They stick, based on the 20 year GMA update specs, to their work dealing with planning to 2036. This is not what I am asking about. They refer to the CC decision a couple of years ago which "settled" this docket request by refusing to add it to the workload.

We have a new council. We have new understanding. We have new urgency.

Look at this from the perspective of inching the county one 20 year planning horizon at a time, never looking at where the county is going or how any of the Plan would continue to support the goals and intentions of the Vision Statement. With this perspective, the county would slowly and systematically (the process has already started) eviscerate the intent of the plan. Think of this as death by 1000 cuts.

What is the county left with should this docket request be ignored?

My guess is that DCD would say that LOS restrictions in CP will prohibit the issuance of building permits when “things” (water, transportation, utilities, etc.) degrade to the point that LOS factors would kick in. Can you imagine how much degradation would have to occur before LOS kicks in? Of greater concern is the fact that LOS issues only deal with county infrastructure such as roads and county utilities. Most of the county residents (at least geographically) are on wells and except for roads do not use county infrastructure. These are not regulated by LOS. Ferry hassles are not regulated by LOS. Loss of community values are not regulated by LOS. The whole thrust of the LOS sections is designed around urban areas, not rural areas. My point: LOS will not “save” the county from eviscerating the Vision Statement.

Finally, without any teeth or enforcement, the Plan is simply a charade that SJC is going thru to meet GMA requirements and presumably still be on the receiving end of dept of commerce grants and support funding. But consider that DOC/WA does NOT read any of the SJC CP documents. The CP is “presumed valid” even if it violates every one of the 14 principles of GMA. The only way to determine if the CP is indeed “valid” is to sue SJC before the GMHB, thus requiring SJC to “show its work”. Sophie’s summary of what happened 20 years ago just doesn’t jibe with what really happened, what the political sentiments were, and what the outcomes were (she said the issues were resolved and the county is no longer out of compliance). That may be technically true, but it is simply a comment on the fact that all parties agreed to stop litigating. That is not the same as confirming that the county is in compliance.

Worst of all, the CP is irrelevant. What changes things here is the market, not the Plan. With no restrictions on the issuance of building permits (by location, island, land use, availability of resources, whatever), and with a legal buildout capacity far far in excess of anything that could be justified as appropriate, much less meeting the Vision Statement standards, the county is simply completely vulnerable to the tech and international money that wants to turn this place into another Aspen or Nantucket, as has been so clearly demonstrated by previous reports (see <http://doebay.net/bigpicture.pdf>) delivered to and/or paid by SJC.

As you know, the original density map was seriously flawed, and remains seriously flawed. Are we incapable of revisiting this manipulated and unprofessionally crafted density map under the guise of “it’s too hard to deal with” or “it’s too late” or some other absurd fear-based sound-bite leadership-less county decision making? Do you think that had the designers of the 79 density map done even the rudimentary task of running the buildout numbers as part of their process, that they would have been cool with a buildout population > 100,000 when the current county population was maybe 5000? Had they “set a goal”, don’t you imagine that a county population 4x larger than what it was when they started would be considered more than “enough”? We are already about 4 times larger. Has anyone run the COCS numbers, in which it is clear that new residential development pays roughly 75% of the taxes that the new residence requires the county to provide services for, thus offloading the cost of new houses to all the rest of the county property owners, in perpetuity?

The point is: whatever thoughtful or thoughtless decisions are made, it is going to cost us all more. The costs will be in real dollars and in loss: loss of neighborhoods, loss of community cohesion, loss of flexibility (try getting a ferry reservation), loss of water (oops: my well is dry and it is only June!)

Sophie’s report shows a lot of time was spent to bolster the DCD position that the docket request is expensive, irrelevant and if to be done at all, it is to be done AFTER the CP is finished. How does that fly when the whole point is to make the CP actually internally consistent and designed to fulfill the Vision Statement?

Do we ignore hard problems here in educated, wealthy, environmentally sensitive San Juan County like the rest of the world is doing about climate disruption, income inequality, racism, sexism, and any number of other super-critical problems?

I thought (or would like to think) that “we do it different here than on the mainland”. That’s never happened yet (jet ski ban notwithstanding). Is that a reason to not try now?

Please forward docket 21-0003 to CC with a strong recommendation that the docket request be approved and be given significant priority as part of the CP update.

Thank you

Joe Symons
Olga Wa

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