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OKANOGAN COUNTY
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

June 19, 2014

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141 Fire Tools Road
PO Box 357
Tonasket, WA 98855-0357

Mr. Perry Huston Suite 130
123 5th Avenue North
Okanogan, WA 98840

Dear Mr. Huston:

Please consider the following comments regarding the County Comprehensive Plan, Interim Zoning, and Determination of Non Significance. It is my hope that you will work toward a Comprehensive Plan that ensures future generations will live with the abundance of resources and quality of life enjoyed by current residents.

PROBLEM: Over-allocation of water in Okanogan County is a pressing issue and is not adequately addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. The Plan fails to meet its state-mandated obligation to protect the quality and quantity of groundwater of public water supplies.

SUGGESTION: The Plan should enumerate specific protections for groundwater resources in all regions of the county, and clearly specify what measures will be taken to ensure adequate water supply for the densities envisioned for every region of the county. Any land use that is incompatible with groundwater protection should be eliminated from the Plan.

PROBLEM: There are ambiguities on maps which could support undesirable changes in the Methow Review District from 20 to 5- acre zoning. These ambiguities need clarification. Densities of Rural designations (1, 5, or 20-acre) are determined by their distances from county "arterials," but the county has no arterials (only major and minor "collectors"), and there are no descriptions of how distances are measured nor any necessary definitions in the Plan. Substantial portions of the 1-acre (R-1) zoning are along dirt or gravel roads, leading to public lands or hayfields, and far from any major paved road or services. In sum, the current Plan and Zoning documents cannot be analyzed nor implemented as written, due to ambiguities, contradictions, and inaccuracies that require clarification.

SUGGESTION: Contradictory elements of the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance and supporting documents need reconciliation and definitions need to be provided, before any aspect of the planning process is carried forward.

PROBLEM: Consideration of Okanogan County residents' input and questions regarding the Plan has thus far been inadequate. The 7-year history of this Comprehensive Plan Update shows increasing limitations on citizen involvement in each successive Draft. Community input in 2008 by eleven different county-facilitated Neighborhood Groups was included in the first draft, but then relegated to the appendix, and then merely mentioned by a list of geographic group names. Finally, the community input was eliminated altogether. To ignore Okanogan County residents' input and questions in this way is entirely unacceptable.

SUGGESTION: The past, present and future role of individual citizens, advisory groups and communities in shaping the Comprehensive Plan should be recognized and respected by County officials. The involvement of citizens in land use decisions is crucial to effective planning, and this input should not be ignored.

Of the problems listed here, this final item is the most disconcerting to any sense of democratic process and civic responsibility. Please let me know what you will do to address and remedy this situation. In particular, I would appreciate your reply to the following questions:

> Why has citizen input been shunted into appendices, given minor mention, and effectively eliminated from the official planning process?
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> How will the important issues and questions that Okanogan County citizens have offered be responded to?
>
> How and when will official responses to citizens' questions and suggestions be made publicly available?

Thank you for your time.

Thom Speidel