

Cortney Ingle

From: Barbara Schneider <bschn3@msn.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 17, 2019 7:49 AM
To: Cortney Ingle
Cc: Andy Hover

Dear Okanogan Regional Planning Commission,

I have been a landowner in the Methow Valley since 2005 and a full time resident since 2015. During this period of time I have seen the area and personal lives threatened and damaged by wildfires, including tourism, which is one element of the economic viability of the area. Struggles have begun over water resources, which will become more limited as climate change progresses. Growth seems to be rampant and unplanned as evidence by homes being built in isolated areas, difficult to access in times of emergency, but yet visible enough to destroy the natural beauty of this area (i.e. polluting the natural ridge lines and night skies we currently enjoy).

Because of events like these, I believe it is mandatory that the Okanogan County develop and adopt a Land Use Planning Document that is comprehensive with regards to the use and distribution of the areas water resources. The Plan should demonstrate foresight with regards to land use and zoning issues, such that that land and the people can maintain a rural feel but have some degree of protection from natural disasters such as fires and land slides. The document must take into account the economic development of the area, particularly addressing the needs of the local agriculture and tourism/recreation businesses. And public lands and open spaces must be preserved and protected and even expanded.

This is no small task. I would strongly encourage the Planning Commission to hire a professional advisor who can assist in developing a plan that is comprehensive, legal, and defensible going forward. Such an advisor must take into account the feedback of the county residents, past and present, and develop a fair process to incorporate this feedback. The task seems daunting but there are folks who are trained in just such work. Additionally there are other County Land Use Plans in the state of Washington that are comprehensive and forward looking, and such plans could be used as models, realizing that Okanogan County is a diverse landscape with pockets of cultural diversity and resource needs that must be protected and respected.

At the very least Okanogan County deserves a new, fair, forward-looking, Comprehensive Land Use Plan which reflects the goals of its residents. Please make this your priority.

Respectfully,

Barbara Schneider
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