



June 2006

The Scrimmage Line

On the Field

Details on the next RGF - CIC meeting will be sent out shortly.

The Scrimmage Line serves as the Current Issues Coalition's "Condensed Minutes."

CIC is a committee of the Responsible Growth Forum and meets monthly to review issues relating to growth in Southwest Washington.

For more information on the CIC, please contact Megan Forell at (360) 695-1385.

Commissioner Betty Sue Morris was the guest speaker at the June 28th RGF - Current Issues Coalition meeting. Below you will find the agenda items she discussed.

Habitat Ordinance

The Board of County Commissioners adopted all changes to the county Habitat Ordinance, excluding any agricultural provisions. A public hearing on July 11 will focus on updates to the agricultural aspects of the county's regulations.

GMA

An Agricultural Viability Committee, (AVC) consisting of 7 people, has been created to set the criteria for agricultural lands in this county. RGF members explained to Commissioner Morris that many court and legal documents currently exist and urged Commissioner Morris to pass this information along to the AVC. If any RGF member would like to share information regarding agricultural land criteria, please direct it to Bob Higbie.

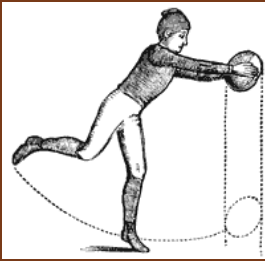
Commissioner Morris reminded meeting attendees that several counties in the area currently have not zoned for agricultural land (Kitsap, for instance).

The draft EIS will be released July 7th, Betty Sue explained the Board of County Commissioners have not had any participation in it's creation. Following the release of the EIS, the Board of County Commissioners will have one month to pick the preferred alternative. RGF members had a long discussion regarding provisions on jobs, and Commissioner Morris encouraged members to submit manual overrides, such as the Leichner Landfill, which Commissioner Morris incorrectly believed to be previously removed. RGF members have asked the city to justify the 15,000 jobs identified in the downtown area, along with any override job generation on vacant buildable lands in the county.

RGF members continued to discuss the importance of "the right land in the right place" and would like to know how and where the new plan would accommodate enough jobs to serve our current goals. Commissioner Morris stated that it is perfectly acceptable for us to comment on map overrides and on the city's overrides.

Mixed Use

The Mixed Use Ordinance is now complete. Betty Sue stressed that business developers had a significant influence on the code.



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School Impact Fees

Schools in the area continue to be in dire need of funding and support, and as Commissioner Morris put it, a “crisis issue for growth.” In order to alleviate the financial problems, Commissioner Morris believes this county needs a long-term solution at the legislative level. She also believes a real estate excise tax (REET) could be one answer to the problem, adding at least 2% to cover school impact fees. She states that the amount to fix the current problem will continue to rise if we don’t take control of the situation.

Critical Lands Report

When asked about the RGF report on building on critical lands, Commissioner Morris responded that it is a very complicated issue.

134th Street Interchange

When asked about the direction and timing of the Salmon Creek Interchange (or 134th street), Betty Sue stated that an additional \$100 million will facilitate a long-term fix and an additional \$35 million would provide a short-term solution. She believes we should look at the short-term solution (6 years), in order to avoid the continual rise of construction and labor costs. Recently, a federally protected sedge was discovered, inhibiting any further development on the land.

RGF members stressed that the county needs to find a solution and if they can’t find a solution they need to add land to other areas of the UGB, to provide for jobs and people.

METRO – Columbia River Crossing

Commissioner Morris believes that we will be able to hold off on the light rail but the new bridge is unavoidable. She also explained that new technology has produced some very impressive Bus Rapid Transit systems and others similar in design, making the light rail old technology. In her opinion, it would be in the best interest of both Portland and Vancouver, to build a new bridge with appropriate provisions for future transit and built to specs that would allow for change in transit method. In addition, this cost effective method could potentially give the Columbia River Crossing project more federal transportation money.

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