

**Town of Coupeville
Planning Commissions of the Town of Coupeville and Island County
Joint Public Hearing
Tuesday, July 28, 2009**

1:00 p.m.

TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair David Day, Commissioners Chet Baker, Doug McFadyen, Barbara Cope. Absent: Molly McPherson

STAFF PRESENT: Town Planner Larry Kwarsick and Recording Secretary Nanc Garner

OTHERS PRESENT: Mark Preiss, Ebey's Reserve Manager; Jeff Tate, Island County Planning Consultant; Mimi Sheridan, Project Consultant

ISLAND COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioners Ray Gabelein, Terry Reynolds, William Lippens, Val Hillers, Scott Yonkman, Mahmoud Abdel-Monem, Wayne Havens

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair David Day at 1:03 p.m. A motion was made by Commissioner Baker, second by Commissioner Cope requesting Island County Commissioner Ray Gabelein chair the public hearing. Motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING

Ebey's Reserve – Proposed amendments to the standards and procedures that regulate development within Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve

Island County Planning Commissioner Gabelein explained the procedure for the public hearing. He explained the format of the public hearing and noted that there will be a second public hearing on Tuesday, August 25th, in the evening.

Commissioner Gabelein declared the public hearing open at 1:10 p.m.

The staff presentation began with Mark Preiss, Ebey Reserve Manager thanking all those involved for their leadership and thoughtfulness in putting together a draft and moving forward. He provided background information and referenced key issues, noting the partners (Town of Coupeville, Island County and the Trust Board of the Reserve) involved that are committed to protecting the Reserve resources and heritage. The aim is to work with the various partners to develop a process to implement standards and procedures for sustainable development within Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve. What is before the Joint Boards is a working draft

for review and comment that will be fine-tuned over the next couple of months. The outcome will provide a more unified approach at cultural resource protection of the Reserve.

Town Planner Larry Kwarsick explained the proposed unified code for the Town of Coupeville and the County within the Reserve and the set of design guidelines. In addition, the Town of Coupeville has a number of related code issues that will be dealt with on a parallel path. The Unified Code establishes a single process for design review throughout the Reserve and will take the place of the Historic Review Committee and the Design Review Board. A new reserve commission will be appointed as a replacement as laid out in the draft manual. This is a public hearing to hear comments from individuals and/or receive written comments. He has received three written comments to date which are available for review.

Jeff Tate, Island County Planning Consultant discussed issues of property taxes and the public benefit rating system (PBRS) guidelines. Mr. Tate explained that the draft design manual is in three sections: the first is an introduction; the second illustrates the set of guidelines and aspects of development; and, the third section, the appendices, lists properties of historic homes on the register. The draft manual itself will add insight for anyone going through the permit process, constructing a home or general information of community interest. Everyone will be working with one manual to provide a seamless process in a consistent format that will apply to both town and county residents within the Reserve. The goal is to make it easier for construction and home improvements.

Public Input began at 1:35 p.m.

Ted Clifton – 460 Kineth Pt. Place, Coupeville stated he supports the process and the joint efforts of putting together a single set of guidelines and procedures and taking it out of the hands of appointed board members. He wanted to bring attention to page 61 of the draft manual – Energy Conservation and Sustainability . He currently owns an historic building and did not agree that it is more efficient to preserve a historic structure than destroying it. He believes (the upkeep) is a waste of energy for the sake of preserving a historic structure and would like to see this section revised.

Constance Wolfe - 565 Olympic View Drive, Coupeville stated her concern with current design standards and commission appointments as referenced in the draft design manual. She believes that the new proposed commission should be composed of members of (Ebey's) Trust Board and that they should review design applications and not by appointed commissioners.

Frank Scharwat - 13322 State Route 20, Coupeville, stated he received a post card in the mail and that is why he is attending the meeting tonight. He feels the meeting in August may not be as well attend if its not advertised enough. His second comment is about the historical committee and he has gone through the committee throws and his personal feeling is that there is the tale wagging the dog. He believes the county already hires professionals that know what the codes mean, etc., and to have a committee of appointed individuals sit on a board to make

reviews, can lead to making wrong decisions. He thinks it is ok to make recommendations but not to out rule the county professionals. If the Reserve is part of the community, it belongs to the county and to the elected officials and control of the people. If you leave it up to an appointed committee, he has a problem with that. He would rather have the review done by the professionals in the county departments and the review process be put back into the hands of the County

Don Sherman, Sherman Farms – 48 S. Sherman Road, Coupeville stated his background is in agriculture. Regarding the proposed guidelines, he was supportive at first, but now may not be. He read his concerns as follows: 1. An appointed commission has merit and has major decision authority. He needs clarification on the board authority. Do they have advisory capacity as well as decision making authority? 2. Regarding demolition –There are a lot of factors that go into demolishing a structure. For example, liability. Who bears the burden of proof for an unsafe structure? 3. Regarding Energy Conservation – was disappointed in wind energy section. The wind turbine language is scaled back and tax incentives are taken away. He would like to get more of the public involved in review of the proposed manual and at the end of the day, make sure that the public will be able to work within the guidelines proposed.

Mary Engle – P.O. Box 5000, Coupeville, stated she lives in Coupeville and works in the Assessor Office for the County and handles current use program and historical exemptions. Her concern is the PBRs and before the amendment is brought forward wants to make sure there is review of the state law that give benefits for property taxes. She said there is an historic exemption already in place and is administered by county tax officials.

Jan Pickard – 1045 Burchel Road, Coupeville, stated she is Chair of the Reserve Trust Board. She has read the draft documents and is in support of the proposed design standards and guidelines. She thanked the Town and county in developing a proposal that will result in a unified design process. She is looking forward to its implementation but feels the document in it's current draft form need more public input.

Paula Spina – 1025 and 1056 Crocket Farm, Coupeville, stated that her understanding was to have neighbor volunteers be on the board and not professionals make reviews. She thinks that property neighbors and volunteers who work with staff on items of the reserve make decisions and not professionals appointed to a board. She stated that it is a good start and essential getting the Town and county to merge together to make decisions but that there should only be two levels of review. Her major concern from day one is the way in which members of the committee are appointed and that the process may be illegal. She thinks it forms two classes of citizens. She hopes the community will get behind the process.

Steve Foster - 547 Scenic Heights Road, Oak Harbor, stated that there is too much information for the public to review at this time. He thinks there is a need for more meetings to go over the items and more maps to better understand the zoning areas be available, for example. He stated there needs to be more public input than just one more meeting.

Larry Ford - 1054 NE Summit Loop, Coupeville, stated he understood how the board, town and county protects the Reserve from the home owners and outside influences and questioned how it will continue to be protected in the future. He felt the draft manual is confusing.

Tom Tack - 710 North Main, Coupeville stated he has been able to add his input as a member of the Planning Commission. He said disclosure is the key to getting this approved without creating an outrage. There needs to be more public meetings so that everyone in the Reserve footprint knows what the process will be. The process will affect not only those owning historic homes, but everyone living within the Reserve.

Commissioner Hillers asked staff if the manual applied to every home in the Reserve or only historic homes. Mr. Tate responded that the standards and permit process would apply to every property owner in the reserve. Based on the procedures in the manual the county would have increased responsibilities, and Commissioner Hillers asked if the County has sufficient staff to review all permits being submitted and, Mr. Tate responded yes.

Planner Kwarsick stated that the town already has a Design Review Board that is a decision making body with community design standards in place. A couple of changes deal with creating some administrative opportunities that do not currently exist; which would allow staff (county or reserve), to make decisions that would speed up the process.

Commission Gabelein asked about the process of a property owner wanting to paint a house. Mr. Tate responded that the property owner would be required to look at a color palette to determine a color and based upon whether or not the house is designated historic or not and its location within the Reserve.

Planner Kwarsick stated that there will be two upcoming Town open house meetings scheduled for Tuesday, Aug 11th at 6:30 p.m. to discuss proposed changes to signage and parking and a second Town open house on Tuesday August 18th at 6 pm to discuss proposed changes to Design Guidelines and Process. Both open houses will be held at the Rec Hall. The next Joint Island County/Town of Coupeville Planning Commission public hearing will be on the evening of Tuesday, August 25th at the Rec Hall.

Commissioner Gabelein asked if there were any more comments. Mary Engle responded that she was concerned that the amount of responsibilities given to the County Planning Department could reduce staff as part of budget cuts.

Commissioner Hillers commented the draft should be reviewed for typos. Commissioner Day encouraged everyone to let their neighbors know about the process currently underway and to submit any questions or comments in writing. Planner Kwarsick added he is more than willing to talk to anyone who has questions about what is being proposed and all project staff members are available to provide assistance as well.

There were no more public comments. Commissioner Gabelein declared the public hearing closed and asked for a joint motion to continue a public hearing on August 25th. A motion was made by County Planning Commission Scott and second by Town Planning Commissioner Day to continue the public hearing to August 25, 2009. Motion passed unanimously.

The public hearing was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.