

August 2011

Black Diamond MPDs

by Peter Rimbos, Corresponding Secretary

On Monday, August 1, the Greater Maple Valley Unincorporated Area Council held its regular monthly meeting. The following topics were discussed: Black Diamond Master Planned Developments and November Area Council Elections and Citizen Survey.

Public Comment

Bev Tonda mentioned the King County Board of Health approved new rules to allow homes with septic systems to rely only on rainwater for all uses, under certain conditions. Specific roof materials and qualifications for designers of rainwater catchment systems will be required, as well as systems to include filtration and disinfection. Cisterns would need to accommodate enough storage volume to last through dry summer months. [For more information, please click here.](#)

The Area Council decided to invite King County Health officials to speak on the new rules at a future meeting.

Black Diamond MPDs

The Oral Testimony portion of the Open-Record Public Hearings for the YarrowBay-proposed Master-Planned Developments (MPDs) — 6,050 homes and 1.15 million sq ft of commercial/business space in the City of Black Diamond — has now been completed. Chair Steve Hiestler provided Oral Testimony to the City of Black Diamond's Hearing Examiner on behalf of the Area Council that addressed concerns about the massive amounts of traffic to be generated throughout the region and four new Schools and major Stormwater Detention Facilities all in the Rural Area. Four other members of the Area Council also provided Oral Testimony as private citizens. In all, over 65 members of the public presented Oral Testimony.

There also were Expert Testimonies presented by Mining and Hydrology experts hired by Save Black Diamond, a local grassroots citizens group. King County experts from DDES and KCDOT also presented Expert Testimonies on land-use permitting issues (siting of Schools and Stormwater Detention Facilities in the Rural Area) and impacts on many County roads throughout the area, respectively.

The Area Council approved Written Testimony by the August 4 due date set by the Hearing Examiner. That Written Statement expands on each of these issues and provides specific recommendations on the Development Agreements--required to provide critical details of all aspects of MPD planning, development, and build-out over a 15- to 20-year timeframe--the primary subject of the Hearings.

Based on all the Public Oral Testimonies and Written Statements, as well as the materials presented by YarrowBay and the City of Black Diamond, the Hearing Examiner will address the adequacy of the Development Agreements in his Recommendations and forward them to the Black Diamond City Council.

A second set of Hearings, Closed-Record Hearings ("closed" because you must have first participated in the Open-Record Hearings to be eligible to address the City Council in the Closed-Record Hearings) in September or October. The Area Council is considering providing both Oral Testimony and Written Statements during this set of Hearings as well. Information on the first set of Public Hearings, including Hearing Rules and Procedures — are posted on the [City of Black Diamond MPD page](#). The Development Agreement documents agreed to by YarrowBay and Black Diamond City Staff also are posted, along with many other MPD documents.

The Area Council also approved a Joint UAC letter to King County Executive Dow Constantine and King County Council members Reagan Dunn and Kathy Lambert. The letter is signed by the Chairs of the three Rural Area UACs--Four Creeks UAC (May Valley area), Upper Bear Creek UAC, and the GMVUAC. That letter also is addressed to the City of Black Diamond Hearing Examiner. It touches upon the higher level issues of impacts on the Rural Area from large developments, such as the MPDs, located on the Rural/Suburban fringe.

November Area Council Elections and Citizen Survey

In odd-numbered years, the Area Council conducts elections for half of its 16 members (members serve staggered 4-yr terms) and an Advisory Issues Survey to gauge area residents on topics of importance to the rural community. These surveys help the Area Council to understand the sentiments of Rural Area residents and to accurately convey them to local and state elected officials. The Area Council discussed its 2011 Election and Advisory Issues Survey plan. The Survey will take into account the new Community Service Area (CSAs) recently established by the King County Council. The CSAs encompass most of unincorporated King County and include community-based organizations such as the current UACs. It was decided to again mail out Election Ballots and Advisory Issues Survey to all Rural Area voters living in the Tahoma School District.

Final preparations for the ballot process and the survey issues/questions will be made at the next Area Council monthly meeting, which will take place on Tuesday, September 6, 2011, due to the Labor Day holiday on Monday, September 5.

Council Business

County-Wide Planning Policies: The Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) is accepting Public Comments on its update of the County-Wide Planning Policies (C-WPPs). The next GMPC meeting is September 28. The Area Council plans to testify on the suitability of placement of schools in the Rural Area that primarily serve adjacent Urban Development and its related impacts on local residents. The Area Council remains concerned that such schools become virtual epicenters of rural community transformation and infrastructural demand, thus creating a “domino effect.” [For more information, click here.](#)