

January 2011 Meeting

## Future of Area Councils

By Peter Rimbos, Corresponding Secretary

A standing-room-only crowd helped the Greater Maple Valley Unincorporated Area Council ring in the new year at its Monday, January 3 regular monthly meeting. Several major topics were on a busy Agenda: Area Council Officer Elections; Unincorporated Area Council Funding; Black Diamond Master Planned Developments; King County Comprehensive Plan Update; and King County Code Recommendations.

Distinguished speakers were District #9 King County Councilman Reagan Dunn, Unincorporated Area Relations Manager Lauren Smith from Executive Constantine's Office, and Paul Reitenbach and Harry Reinert--both from King County's Department of Development and Environmental Services. Members of the Four Creeks Unincorporated Area Council (UAC)--from the May Valley area--also were in attendance.

Your Area Council serves as an all-volunteer, locally elected advisory body to the King County Council representing all rural unincorporated area residents living in the Tahoma School District.

### Public Comments

Rich Ostrowski from the Rural Area east of Black Diamond provided comments on the proposed Black Diamond / Enumclaw School District (ESD) / Yarrow Bay Tri-Party School Agreement recently approved by ESD. Three schools are proposed in the Rural Area outside the Black Diamond urban growth area. Mr. Ostrowski expressed concern that all parties of this agreement tacitly assume King County will permit the three Rural Area schools.

Judy Carrier from the Rural Area south of Black Diamond along Green Valley Road provided comments about formation of a new UAC in her area and the alarm long-time residents have over the proposed Black Diamond Master Planned Developments. Ms. Carrier expressed particular concern with the proposed two Rural Area schools immediately adjacent to Green Valley Road.

### Area Council Officer Elections

At its first monthly meeting of the year the Area Council conducts internal elections for its Officers. For 2011 the Area Council re-elected Steve Hiester as Chair, Dave Fields as Vice-Chair, Les Dawson as Recording Secretary, Peter Rimbos as Corresponding Secretary, and Susan Dawson as Treasurer. All officers immediately assumed their duties for the new year.

### Unincorporated Area Council Funding

As part of its 2011 budget the King County Council proposed eliminating local UACs in favor of one Countywide "Commission." Lauren Smith, Unincorporated Area Relations Manager from Executive Constantine's Office, and District #9 King County Councilman Reagan Dunn both provided perspective on the next steps and alternatives being explored.

Councilman Dunn discussed the impacts of the 2011 King County budget, especially on law enforcement in Unincorporated Areas. He voted against the Budget Proviso which included the proposal to eliminate the six UACs and form one Unincorporated Area Commission. Although all UAC members are citizen volunteers, King County does provide both support to the UACs through Community Services and funds to pay for liability insurance and hold member elections.

Ms. Smith discussed concerns with eliminating the UACs. King County Executive Constantine is looking at options including using available funds through the end of June. The Executive must provide options to the King County Council for consideration by April 15. An All-UAC Meeting will take place on January 13 in Issaquah to discuss potential options.

Area Council members described the benefits UACs provide to King County: representation of unincorporated area citizens; comprehensive reviews of the King County Comprehensive Plan and King County Code; and direct interaction with King County Departments. There were many concerns expressed with a single Commission to cover so many people and their particular issues.

The Area Council strongly supports the ability of local citizens to enumerate local issues of importance to them to those who represent them in King County government. The Area Council will seek a solution that maintains this ability. Both Councilman Dunn and Ms. Smith expressed their support with this goal.

### Black Diamond Master Planned Developments (MPDs)

Yarrow Bay, a well-known major land developer in Western WA, has proposed two major MPDs comprising over 6,000 homes and over 1.1 million sq ft of commercial/business space in the City of Black Diamond. This would quintuple the current population of 4,000 and are the largest MPDs in King County history.

The Area Council has been following these MPDs for over a year and several members have testified in Hearings conducted in 2010. The Area Council's primary concerns remain: (1) the addition of ~10,000 vehicles on two-lane roads throughout southeast King County; (2) major impacts on the Rural Area outside the Urban Growth Boundary such as Schools, Sewer Storage Facilities, and a large Detention Lake; and (3) exploitation of the Rural Area to enable urban development.

Peter Rimbo, Area Council Growth Management Committee Chair, provided an update on the process so far and going forward. Following formal Hearings on September 20, 2010 the Black Diamond City Council approved the MPD Applications with over 150 conditions. On September 21 Yarrow Bay submitted to the City DRAFT Development Agreements that provide the plan over the next 15 - 20 years for MPD design, development, and build-out. Black Diamond City Staff currently is negotiating with Yarrow Bay to finalize these Development Agreements.

Sometime in early February the Development Agreements will be presented at a Public Information Meeting. They also will be submitted to the City's Hearing Examiner to conduct Public Hearings targeted to start in mid-February. Members of the Public can orally testify (or submit written comments) at the upcoming Hearings. Information on the upcoming hearings will be posted later this month on the [City of Black Diamond MPD page](#). The Yarrow Bay DRAFT Development Agreements already are posted there.

### **King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP) Update**

The KCCP is the guiding policy document for all land-use and development in unincorporated King County. It is updated each year and the current plan was last updated on October 27, 2010. Every fourth year major revisions are proposed for adoption. This was last done in 2008. The process for the next major update in 2012 is now underway.

Paul Reitenbach, King County Department of Development & Environmental Services (DDES) Senior Policy Planner, summarized the process for the 2012 update. Mr. Reitenbach provided a list of "Topical Areas" that have been identified to help scope the update and requested comments from the Area Council by February 9. Some of the major categories being addressed are: Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands; Environment; Parks, Open Space, and Cultural Resources; Transportation; Economic Development; and Area Zoning and Land Use. A Public Review Draft will be released by October 1. The Area Council's Growth Management and Transportation Committees will again develop detailed comments and provide them to King County for consideration.

King County Executive Constantine will submit the recommended 2012 KCCP update for review to the King County Council on March 1, 2012. The process, now underway, culminates in final approval by the King County Council late next year. Citizens can review information on the KCCP, the update process at:  
<http://www.kingcounty.gov/property/permits/codes/growth/CompPlan.aspx>

### **King County Code (KCC) Recommendations**

In the Fall of 2010 the Area Council completed a comprehensive review of applicable KCC chapters and provided a set of recommendations to King County for consideration. The following KCC TITLES were addressed: 7--Parks & Recreation; 9--Surface Water Management; 10--Solid Waste; 14--Roads & Bridges; and 26--Agriculture & Open Space Lands. That committee distributed the Area Council recommendations to various King County Departments: DDES, DNRP, and KCDOT. The Area Council already has received a positive response from the King County Department of Transportation.

Harry Reinert of DDES, who chairs its Code Review Committee, provided an update on these recommendations. A long discussion ensued on the suitability of building schools in the Rural Area specifically to serve adjacent urban development, as is being proposed with the Black Diamond MPDs. Mr. Reinert encouraged the Area Council to propose such issues to the County as part of the KCCP Update (see previous section).

Mr. Reinert will follow-up with each of the King County Departments involved to ensure the Area Council receives timely responses to its recommendations. This will aid the Area Council's review of the KCCP.

Next Regular Monthly Meeting:

Date/Time -- February, 7, 2011, at 7:00 - 9:30 PM.

Location -- Sheriff's Precinct #3 Headquarters, 231st St & SR-169 (across from Fire Station).