

March 2013

Tahoma School District

by Peter Rimbo, Corresponding Secretary

On Monday, March 4, 2013, the Greater Maple Valley Unincorporated Area Council (GMVUAC) held its regular monthly meeting. Major topics discussed were: 1) Tahoma School District; 2) Mapping; and 3) Reserve Silica.

Resignation

Long-time Area Council member, Dave Fields, of Hobart Community Area has decided to resign due to persistent health concerns. Dave has been with the Area Council over 24 years. The Area Council and the community will miss his knowledge and persistence on local issues. Thank you, Dave!

Tahoma School District

Superintendent Mike Maryanski discussed Tahoma School District (TSD) plans for potential school sites to alleviate its ongoing capacity shortage. TSD serves ~7,500 students. Mike specifically mentioned the recently completed unsuccessful negotiations with King County concerning 35 acres within the 156-acre Maple Valley "Donut Hole" (officially called "Summit Place") along the south side of SR-516.

The "Donut Hole" land appraisal being used by TSD vs. that used by King County are far apart. This could be due to differing assumptions on future zoning. King County has assumed urban Master-Planned Development (MPD) zoning (similar to what was envisioned when it was negotiating a sale to YarrowBay in 2007). TSD has assumed a "highest and best use" zoning. Mike indicated TSD's estimates are based on the February 2010 "Interlocal Agreement" between King County and the City of Maple Valley, which adopted a "Joint Plan for Summit Place."

Despite not reaching agreement with King County to purchase a potential school site at Summit Place, TSD is moving ahead with plans to design a Regional Learning Center that would include a new High School. The plan would involve collaboration with Renton Technical College, Green River Community College, and private business and industry to offer students a more abundant choice of learning opportunities. It would serve both High School students and the greater Maple Valley community by offering college learning opportunities locally.

The City of Maple Valley through its Subarea Plan hopes to shed some of its "bedroom community" aspects by envisioning Summit Place as a high-technology sector with light industry to create good-paying jobs for local residents. Mike indicated how the TSD and Maple Valley visions coincide with future Summit Place students having hands-on opportunities with co-located businesses that would benefit both college-bound and vocationally bound students.

TSD owns land adjacent to its Junior High School on Summit-Landsburg Road SE in Ravensdale east of the City in the Rural Area. However, Mike indicated little desire to site a new school there, as it is not centrally located, and does not fit TSD's aspiration to site the school within the City of Maple Valley urban growth area.

Mapping

Tom Carpenter, Four Creeks Unincorporated Area Council (FCUAC) member, discussed a Grant they recently received through the King County CSA program to develop mapping tools to handle various databases to better understand property, environmental, agriculture, and recreational issues. The FCUAC is working with schools, property owners, and local community organizations to develop and use mapping skills.

In 2010, the FCUAC began purchasing Geographical Information Systems (GIS) services from Green River Community College (GRCC). All services funds are used for student scholarships/internships or for equipment purchases that benefit the FCUAC and GRCC GIS students. The FCUAC has since partnered with GRCC on the Atlas mapping program, whose purpose is to provide residents access to King County's geographic and demographic information in an easy, reusable way. For more information see: MySpatialHome.org.

Reserve Silica

During the recently completed 2012 Update to the King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP Update) the Area Council repeatedly voiced opposition to the proposed zoning change of Reserve Silica land in Ravensdale from Mining to Rural Residential (RA-10). We voiced our opposition both orally and in writing to the King County Council, supporting the King County Executive's proposed zoning change to Forestry, compatible with the surrounding Forest Production District lands.

Unfortunately, during final KCCP Update deliberations the King County Council approved an amendment introduced by Reserve Silica (through Councilwoman Hague, District 6--Bellevue, Redmond, Medina, etc.) calling for a "Demonstration Project" to be considered this year. The Area Council opposes this and considers it to be a backdoor way to obtain residential zoning of converted resource land. We also do not approve of such Urban Growth Boundary changes in off-year KCCP Updates (major updates occur every four years) and the precedent that could be set in degrading citizen's property rights.

The Area Council approved a letter to the King County Council specifically calling attention to our concerns with both the so-called "Demonstration Project" for Reserve Silica and the change in policy to allow major updates to the KCCP on an annual basis, thus circumventing the 4-yr process. Because of the scope of such a change to the KCCP update process, that letter is a joint initiative by the Area Council with two other Rural Area UACs--Four Creeks and Upper Bear Creek.

The letter was submitted to the King County Council, as well as the King County Executive and Department Directors on March 5. It can be viewed on the Area Council web site under Correspondence.

Citizens' Survey/Area Council Ballot

The Bi-Annual Area Council Citizens' Survey and Ballot will be mailed to Rural Area residents on or about March 15. This is your opportunity to both provide information to your Area Council on local matters of importance for discussion with our local government, King County, and vote for your Area Council representatives. Please return per instructions. Your Area Council thanks you in advance for participating.

Next Area Council Meeting

Meetings are held the first Monday of each month. A Public Comment period at the beginning of each meeting provides citizens an opportunity to voice issues of concern to Area Council members and government officials in attendance. Next monthly meeting: Monday, April 1, from 7:00 - 9:00 PM at the Fire Station at 231st St & SR-169.

Your Area Council "works to keep the Rural Area rural" by serving as an all-volunteer, locally elected advisory body to King County on behalf of all rural unincorporated area residents living in the Tahoma School District.