

February 2015

Rural Character and Concerns

by Peter Rimbos, Corresponding Secretary

On Monday, February 2, the Area Council held its monthly meeting. Topics discussed included: Proposed Marijuana Operations and Facilities, Cedar River Corridor Planning, and New Area Council Committees to address the environment and economic development.

Public Comments

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Case expressed concerns about proposed Marijuana growing operations and facilities in the area. They used to live in Maple Valley and are concerned that property values could be impacted, as well as adequacy of security.

The Area Council described two such local proposals: (1) A proposed grow operation in a residential neighborhood on SE 186th St and (2) a proposed processing facility also in a residential neighborhood on 200th Ave SE. The former proposal was recently withdrawn voiding the previously approved Conditional-Use Permit. The latter remains very much an issue and several 200th Ave SE residents were in attendance.

The Area Council has thoroughly researched the proposed processing facility's Commercial Site Development Permit, provided detailed comments to King County's Department of Permitting and Environmental Review on its Technical Review (see <http://greatermaplevalleyareacouncil.org>, filed formal complaints with the King County Rural Ombudsman's office, and engaged King County Councilman Reagan Dunn's office on specific issues of vesting conferred upon the permit. Jason Brown of Councilman Dunn's office was in attendance.

While the Area Council could not ensure Mr. and Mrs. Case all issues would be resolved, it did provide the most up-to-date information available and will continue to press King County officials on the needs and concerns of Rural Area residents.

Cedar River Corridor Planning

Chair Steve Hiester will represent the Area Council on the newly formed Cedar River Corridor Plan Advisory Committee. The Plan is funded by the King County Flood Control District to develop a long-range strategy and recommended actions for reducing flood risks and improving salmon habitat. The goal is to have a well-informed, coordinated, and cost-effective approach to designing and building future flood-risk-reduction and habitat-enhancement projects. The Plan will address the lower 22 miles of the Cedar River. Resulting strategy and actions are intended to: (1) Reduce flood vulnerability for residents; (2) Protect infrastructure; (3) Minimize disruption caused by flooding; (4) Protect and restore habitat; and (5) Share information and develop projects that provide multiple benefits.

The Plan will cover the Cedar River valley from Landsburg Road SE (River Mile 22) all the way to Lake Washington including areas of unincorporated King County, the City of Renton, and the City of Maple Valley. See:

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/wlr/sections-programs/river-floodplain-section/planning/cedar-river-corridor.aspx>.

Environment Committee

The Area Council's Natural Resources/Parks Committee and the Flood Control/Surface Water Management Committee were combined into a new Environment Committee to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure focus on critical issues.

The new Environment Committee's mission is to study the often intertwining issues of the environment, parks, landmarks, habitats, water quality, flood control, wastewater, and solid waste. As part of its duties, the committee will send representatives to the Cedar River Council meetings and Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) #8 Steering Committee meetings.

Sue Neuner of the Area Council's River Heights Community Area will serve as committee Chair and Susan Harvey of the Area Council's Ravensdale Community Area will serve as committee Vice-Chair.

Economic Development Committee

The Area Council created an AdHoc Economic Development Committee. The new committee's mission is to consider location, incentives, and legislative concerns guiding or impeding economic growth and prosperity while upholding the area's rural values and maintaining its rural

character.

The new committee will work with King County's Rural Economic Strategies Program which seeks to advance the long term economic viability of the rural area, with an emphasis on farming, forestry, and other rural businesses, consistent with the unique character of rural King County.