



GRASSROOTS

The Newsletter of the
Whatcom County
Democratic
Central Committee

Membership Meeting

SPECIAL DATE

Thursday, September 10

7:00 – 9:00 pm

Norway Hall

1419 N. Forest St, Bellingham

(between Champion & Magnolia)

All Democrats Welcome

PROGRAM: Our endorsed County Candidates will discuss the various land use planning proposals, including Urban Growth Area proposed changes, LAMIRD proposals, Critical Areas Ordinance. Both the LAMIRD and UGA issues involve big money. Given that it is election season, land speculator and developer money should once again be expected to play a role in County politics.

Public Hearing on Urban Growth Areas

Joint County Council &
Planning Commission:

UGA Proposal Public Hearing

Thursday, September 17

County Council Chambers - 6 p.m.

Read the proposal documents at
<http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/>

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Dem County Council Candidates Fight Sprawl, Face Campaign of Misinformation

Democratic-supported candidates have been quite successful in recent years in getting elected, and a majority on our County Council, in particular, have been able to make great progress in protecting farm land and water quality in our county. But this is not the time to be complacent about our local elected representatives.

If you have not traveled around the county in recent months, you may not have seen the huge, bright yellow “Land Grab” signs. Google “land grab whatcom” and you’ll find the Whatcom Republican Party’s press release opposing recent rural zoning proposals that uses the same language. County Council At-Large candidate Bill Knutzen said at a forum in July that these proposed zoning changes were “stealing property rights” and “almost criminal.” The over-the-top rhetoric seems to be taken right from the Glen Beck playbook, which I saw a number of people carrying at the County Council hearing on the Bonner mini-initiative in July.

Protecting Whatcom Farmland Through Carefully Developed Zoning

So what’s the truth? Is this a land grab? Of course not! Unless you do not support the concept of land zoning at all (which would mean you would be OK with your neighbor tearing down his house and putting in a noisy, dusty, smelly industrial shop operated day and night), we must accept that in any zoning decision there are winners and losers. People looking for an up-zone so they can divide their property into many lots and sell them at a considerable profit are hoping zoning will make them winners. No one complains about this windfall.

But sometimes wise public policy calls for down-zoning, in this case to prevent sprawl, and there will be losers. But “loser” is probably too strong a word, because even if property is re-zoned, the current use is grandfathered in and can continue indefinitely. They have lost nothing re-

garding current use. And wise policy makers, like we have now on the County Council, will look for ways to make the changes as painless as possible.

The greatest threat to our agricultural lands is sprawl. The Growth Management Act requires the County to identify and limit the growth of rural areas with high density, places known in the law as Limited Areas of More Intense Rural Development (LAMIRD).

LAMIRD areas were identified in 1997, and now with changes in the law, they must be re-examined, which means down-zoning to prevent new development. For most of Whatcom County, LAMIRD impact will be minimal. Along the Guide Meridian, Interstate 5, the Toad Lake area, changes to zoning from commercial and higher density residential to rural will be required in order to comply with state law.

Working for Practical Solutions

The GMA also requires the protection and management of environmentally sensitive natural resources, known as “Critical Areas.” Our rivers and bay are critical

Continued, page 2

Health Care March

Saturday, September 12

12:00 - 2:00pm

(updated information)

Start and end at

Maritime Heritage Park, Bham

Whether you support single payer, public option or generally sweeping reform of the current health care and insurance mess, show up!

Groups participating: United for National Healthcare, MoveOn, Organizing For America and other local groups

See page 3 for an update on the Health Care issue.

Women's Club to Endorse Candidates

Whatcom County Democratic Women will host their monthly meeting at Anthony's Hearthfire Restaurant on September 14, 2009 from 11:30-2:00 p.m. A special menu is available for under \$10.00.

All are welcome to come hear and speak with candidates for Port, County Council, City Council and School Board Races. The endorsement process will be restricted to Women's Club members only. Space is limited so come early; restaurant opens at 11 a.m. For information please contact Sheila McCandlish at 647-3551 or Maggie Hanson at 733-2539.

Another Successful Fair

Thanks to all the volunteers who staffed the NW WA Fair booth, and most especially to Alyce Werkema who put in countless hours in advance and was there every day of the fair. Alyce is the driving force behind the Lynden Democrats, and continued to involve more Lyndenites in the fair effort. Thanks to:

Bill Jennings, Mary Levek, Bill Newmon, Don and Arlene Carlson, Kathy Hopkins, Sherry Zielstra, Barb Turner, Don Knutzen, Peggy Borgens, Margo Thorpe, Hue Beattie, Ted and Angie Mohr, Kathleen Harrigan, Kelly Kirby, Katie Phillippis, Adam Day, Susan Henderson, Donna Mason, Paul Rossiter, Catherine Chambers, Alex Abundis, Edith Landerman, Andrew MacDonald, John Munson, Alyce Werkema, Steve Schuck, Judy Mullenix, Elisabeth Britt, Sheila Pfeiffer and Steve Lydolph.

Democrats Endorse Candidates and Ballot Measures

With about 100 members in attendance Whatcom County Democrats considered further endorsements for this November's election. Whatcom Democrats rules require a 2/3 majority for endorsement.

Endorsements:

Bellingham City Council, Ward 6:

dual-endorsement, Michael Lilliquist and Catherine Chambers (See Page 3)

Bellingham School Board Pos. 5:

Scott Stockburger

Whatcom Library Levy: YES

Ref 7 Domestic Partnership Rights: YES

I-1033: NO

County Zoning, continued from page 1

areas, and dairy waste was a major pollutant that needed to be cleaned up. Whatcom County government has applied a very light hand implementing this law, providing agricultural land owners with an opportunity to participate in the development of their management plans, offering "best practices" and accommodations for the more low impact land user. The regulators avoided the polarization of the issue and gained much better compliance without widespread resentment. There is a direct correlation to farm plans being adopted with water quality improving for our marine waters.

Rural land zoned Agriculture is protected from sprawl because building is limited to one house per 40 acres. But there is a fair portion of high quality soil located outside the Ag zone which is zoned for one house per 5 acres. It is these areas that the County has been targeting for development right purchases, easements on the properties to prevent development. This solution conserves farmland that is zoned for development without hurting the appraised value of individual farms and gives farmers funds they can use now to invest in their farm business. This method has already been used in the Lake Whatcom watershed to remove land from potential development.

Our candidates need your support – dollars, time, shoe leather. Find their websites at whatcomdemocrats.com

Our endorsed County Council candidates – Carl Weimer, Ken Mann, Dan McShane, and Laurie Caskey-Schreiber – will continue to support these common sense approaches to difficult growth issues.

Ensuring a Rigorous Public Process

At the Bill Mize Forum, all four opponents of our endorsed County Council candidates criticized the "process" of the LAMIRD draft proposal, initially presented a few weeks earlier before the County Planning Commission in a public hearing. There seems to be a misconception that this one hearing constituted the entire process, when in fact, it was just the first step in gathering public comment, revising the proposals, and having two advisory bodies review the proposal before it even gets to the full County Council for consideration.

Many comments have been received since the initial hearing and planning staff continue to review these and make amendments to the initial proposal. This is what a "public process" is supposed to be. It is working.

But the "Land Grab" signs indicate that there are people who want to just stop the process altogether. Scare tactics and misinformation work – we are witnessing it now in the healthcare debate. History shows us that killing something politically is always much easier than making something good happen! Carl, Ken, Dan and Laurie will continue to work to make that good happen.

Whatcom Democrats Executive Board

email: add@whatcomdemocrats.com

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Health Care: Action Moves From Town Halls to Halls of Congress

Representative Rick Larsen hosted two town hall meetings on health care reform during the month of August.

The first meeting was held at Skagit PUD on Saturday, Aug. 8, in Mount Vernon. KING 5 TV estimated that up to 1,000 people attended. A PA system was set up outside the building for the overflow crowd, which appeared to be equally divided between pro and con constituents.

Larsen reviewed specific provisions of HR 3200, refuting a number of myths, including that HR 3200 provides health care benefits for illegal aliens. Opponents of the measure asked questions and commented on the federal government's ability to run programs without fraud, waste or bureaucratic red tape.

Whatcom Democrat Abe Jacobson asked, "So we've heard a lot about government waste. My health insurance company paid \$1.1 billion, that's billion with a "b", to its CEO when he resigned. Would you address the issue of waste and fraud in the health insurance industry?" Abe's question stopped the opposition cold.

The second town hall meeting was held at Memorial Stadium on Wednesday, Aug. 12 in Everett. Larson tried to keep it light, but took a pounding from a group of angry opponents who shouted slogans like, "all Obama cares about is funding abortion and funding euthanasia."

Larsen was asked by a constituent, "Why are all Americans being forced into a government run health care and insurance plan when only 46 million out of 312 million are uninsured?" Larsen replied, "this bill does not force anybody to buy health care...this bill does not force people

Dems Meet Lynden Mayor Candidates

The Lynden Democrats will meet at Homestead Farms Golf Resort 115 E. Homestead Blvd. in Lynden, on Saturday, Sept. 19th beginning at 9 am. All Lynden-area Democrats invited to join us.

September Meeting: We have invited the two candidates for Lynden's mayor, Gary Bode and Scott Korthuis, to speak to us of their priorities for Lynden. We also expect some Democratic endorsed candidates for county positions to come by. INFO: Alyce Werkema, 354-4397.

to change their health care plan. If you're in a plan, you will not be forced into the public option. Now folks say that it's not true, but I've got facts on my side, and you've got Glen Beck on your side."

KING 5 TV said, "It wasn't a political love in, but a good old fashioned American debate."

Before beginning the August recess on July 31, members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee marked up their version of the health care reform package. Amendments include financial incentives for states that enact certain medical liability reform measures; another amendment requires the negotiation of payment rates in the public plan to ensure that they are not lower than Medicare or higher than the average rates paid by private plans; and allows for the creation of a consumer operated plan (CO-OP) program where grants and loans will be made for the creation and initial operation of not-for-profit, member run health insurance co-ops.

Senate negotiators announced that they will not put forward an option for a government run health insurance plan, but will propose a network of member owned cooperatives. The Whatcom Democrats platform endorses the adoption of a national single payer health care plan, but single payer health insurance is not currently being considered by Congress. The Whatcom Democrats consider the inclusion of a public option an essential part of health care reform.

In his weekly statement on Aug. 22, President Obama told listeners "I cannot promise you that the reforms will be perfect or make a difference overnight. But I can promise you this: if we pass health insurance reform, we will look back many years from now and say, this was the moment we summoned what's best in each of us to make life better for all of us..."

President Obama will deliver a prime time health care address to Congress on September 9 detailing his plans to overhaul the nation's health care system.

Do you have suggestions for health care reform? If so, Rep. Larsen and Senators Murray and Cantwell need to hear from you. Contact information is located on the Whatcom Democrats website at www.whatcomdemocrats.com under the tab on the left.

Dems Endorse Both Ward 6 Candidates

At our August meeting, the membership tried again to endorse in the Ward 6 race. On a secret ballot, the votes for Catherine Chambers and Michael Lilliquist were a tie, each with 59%. A two-thirds majority is required to endorse. Voters were allowed to vote for more than one candidate if they wished.

After getting through the rest of the endorsement agenda, a motion was made from the floor for a dual endorsement of Catherine and Michael. This passed on a hand vote with 73% in favor.

So how does a dual endorsement work? Both candidates will have equal access to the Party's campaign resources. If a resource is consumable, that is, only one campaign can use it at a time, such as our phone-banking facilities, then each campaign will be given equal opportunity to use the facilities.

The party can provide equal opportunity, but cannot guarantee, and should not be held accountable for, equal outcomes. Anyone who feels that their favorite candidate is not taking full advantage of the Party's resources should contact the candidate and offer help to the campaign.

Thank You From Catherine Chambers

Thank you Whatcom County Democrats for your endorsement in my race for Bellingham City Council, 6th Ward. It warms my heart to have earned your endorsement. My twenty years of involvement with our local party gives me the unique opportunity to understand and represent our values which makes our city so great. I share this endorsement with Michael Lilliquist, but hope for your support and vote in November. Thank you again, for the opportunity to be your voice, as a proud democrat, on the City Council.

Thank You From Michael Lilliquist

My thanks to the Whatcom Democrats for your endorsement, and my congratulations to Catherine on her well-earned endorsement as well. It's a great milestone for our campaign, and I truly appreciate the significance of the honor. I believe the voters will have a good picture of both candidates as we proceed towards the November general election.



In remembrance of those who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, and the wars that followed and continue today, please place this poster in a visible place in your home, car, or other location.

Yard Sale

Support the Dems
with your donations
and purchases

**Saturday,
September 19
9 am - 2 pm**

**1621 Eldridge Ave,
Bellingham**

Call 647-7661 for info



Whatcom County Democrats

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SEPTEMBER 2009 Check whatcomdemocrats.com for details

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
6 6 pm – MoveOn meeting, 100 E. Maple, Bham	7 Labor Day 12 n – Eat-in for Child Nutrition, Birchwood School	8 7 pm – Drinking Liberally, Horseshoe Cafe	9 Obama prime-time healthcare address	10 7 pm – Whatcom Dems Mtg, see page 1	11	12 10 am – 42 nd LD Dems, Machinists Hall, 2064 Vista Dr. Ferndale 12n – Health Care March, see page 1
13 4 pm – Chambers Birthday Bash, 2614 Donovan Ave, Bham	14 11:30 – Women's Club, See Page 2 6:30 pm – Progressive Network, 13 Prospect St, Bham 7-9 pm – Finance Cmte mtg, office	15 1 pm – Great Decisions, 2401 Cornwall 8 pm – Young Dems, Rudy's Pizza, 1232 N. State, Bham	16	17 6 pm – Urban Growth Area Hearing, see p. 1	18	19 9 am – Lynden Democrats, Homestead Farms restaurant, see page 3 9 am – YARD SALE, see above
20	21 6:15 pm – International Day of Peace, march and program	22 7 pm – Drinking Liberally, Horseshoe Cafe	23 12n – City Club, Northwood Hall, Bham	24 7pm – United for National Health-care, 1700 N. State St, Bham	25	26 WA Dems State Meeting
27 Yom Kipper begins sundown	28	29	30 7 pm – Whatcom Dems E-Board Mtg, Office.	Oct 1	2	3 Voter Registration Deadline Blue Festival, Seattle
4 6 pm – MoveOn meeting, 100 E. Maple, Bham	5 6:30 pm – Progressive Network, 13 Prospect St, Bham	6 6 pm – Jobs with Justice mtg, 1700 N. State St, Bham 7 pm – Drinking Liberally, Horseshoe Cafe	7 5 pm – Green Drinks	8	9	10 10 am – 42 nd LD Dems, Machinists Hall, 2064 Vista Dr. Ferndale 2 pm – 40 th LD Dems, Friday Harbor