

**Summary of Key Items from Shore Woods Maintenance Commission, Inc.
Annual Membership Meeting – March 8, 2008
By: John H. Wiegenstein**

Note: This is a quick summary, not up to usual standards of writing and proofing, but adequate for the intended purpose. ☺ JHW

1. Steve Bauer – General Comments on County Issues

Our unelected County Commissioner, Steve Bauer, led off the meeting and had a few interesting things to say.

Bauer's initial comments focused on problems with the County budget, which he claims are a key reason why he sought the appointment as County Commissioner when Chris Endresen abandoned that post, and why he is going to be running for re-election. Initiative 747 has put a limit on property tax increases, and Bauer pointed out that County expenses are going up much faster than income. The commissioners are going to be putting together a citizen's budget committee throughout the County to give balanced advice to the commissioners as to how to manage the ongoing budget shortfall, which he estimates at \$1.5 to \$2 million per year. (They could have saved ~\$50,000 right off the bat by not putting the speed bumps in, but hey, who's counting?)

Bauer commented that Kitsap County is unusual in that approximately 70 percent of the population is in the unincorporated areas of the County, which is a reverse of the typical Washington County, where only about 30 percent of the population would be in unincorporated areas. Silverdale has had periodic discussions about incorporating, and if that happens the County will lose an enormous chunk of tax revenue, making the job of providing services to the unincorporated areas even tougher.

Bauer also spoke briefly about the Puget Sound Partnership, which is an integrated effort by a number of agencies and interested groups to look after the health of Hood Canal and Puget Sound generally; he represents Kitsap County on that body. He warned that an action plan would be developed by late 2008, under which new regulations and ordinances are likely to be proposed, and those are probably going to affect people in the nature of new regulations for storm water, sewer, wetlands protection, etc.

2. Speed Bumps

Bauer then asked for any questions or comments, and the first one was from a woman who wanted to know more about – you guessed it – SPEED BUMPS! Unfortunately, rather than being a specific question, this was phrased as a general inquiry and allowed Bauer to give a five minute speech on the process that supposedly led to the speed bumps being installed, beginning with the Hansville Futures Group (which he was a key member of) back in 2002, and the 2,600 surveys they sent around the County to solicit feedback on what people wanted for Hansville, and on why Hansville has terrible speeding problems, and why bumps are good, etc.....

Along with offering lots of well-honed pro-bump propaganda on this, Bauer made a few interesting comments which had me scribbling notes furiously. First, he indicated that two dogs had been killed on Twin Spits Road, which is news to me. We have heard for some time of the dog that was killed on Twin Spits Road and which led a family to move out of town because they could not stand the idea that a dog running loose in the road might get hit by a car. I have never heard any factual information from anybody with first hand knowledge of this incident, so at this point the “dog hit by the car” issue seems to have attained rural legend status right up there with the cat in the microwave, and Hitler escaping to Argentina in a U-boat at end the of World War II. Beyond that, I’ve never heard of anything that suggested that *two* dogs were hit, so perhaps the pro-bump contingent has been minting some new “facts” to bolster their arguments. Of course, the idea of County road policy being based – even in part – on a car hitting a dog running loose on a major collector-distributor road is pretty bizarre, but then again, this *is* Kitsap County.....

Bauer also stated that the bumps were “not as much about speeding as about traffic safety,” which left me scratching my head at what the difference was and how he was trying to unlink speeding from the installation of the bumps, when the whole game plan of the Road Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC) and other pro-bump folks (such as they are) from the outset was to frame this as a “speeding problem,” with bumps being the Final Solution.

Bauer also played down his role on the RSAC, stating that he was only involved part time and implying that he was not really a key player, and went on to state that the May 15, 2007 meeting was “well advertised,” [an argument which we know to be at odds with the true facts, based on the RSAC’s own records]. He further admitted that he was the person who proposed the traffic circle at the foot of the hill leading into Hansville, thinking that it would make a “nice entrance” and “welcoming” device for people coming into town. (???)

I asked Bauer a couple of specific questions, one being whether it was true that only about 380 responses came in to the ~2,600 petitions sent by the Futures Commission (Bauer admitted that this was correct), and also asking just what the commissioners were doing as far as the 600 plus signatures they had been presented on February 25th demanding removal of the bumps. Bauer’s response was that the commissioners were “looking into it,” though he did not offer any specifics. When I also asked what had happened with the February 28th meeting to look at alternatives, he said that the commissioners were now looking at an unspecified April date for these working groups. The explanation for canceling the 2/28 meeting was that the commissioners wanted to consider the concerns of the petitioners, etc. before moving forward with the meeting. People can judge for themselves whether this makes any sense, bearing in mind that the whole purpose of having the 2/28 meeting (which had been scheduled several weeks in advance) was to address exactly those concerns. Canceling the meeting that is designed to address the concerns would seem to be a strange way of addressing the concerns.

An objective observer might conclude that Commissioner Bauer and the RSAC were worried that the meetings were not going to have the predetermined outcome that they wanted, and canceled them so that they'll have more time to work at stacking the deck before the next meeting. Think of Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe canceling elections until he makes sure the opposition party has been locked up in prison and that the vote can be properly rigged in his favor – an extreme analogy, perhaps, but you get the idea.

Other comments about the speed bumps ensued, with Neal Kellner pointing out that while he had been heavily involved in the RSAC's initial efforts, he resigned towards the end because the process fell apart when the critical requirements of public involvement and broad public support for the bumps were swept under the rug by other RSAC members. As Kellner characterized it, when all was said and done the "solution" turned out to be a problem itself, and has had a very destructive effect on the community.

Other attendees pointed out that Cliffside has no reason to complain or seek speed bumps, because they were given an option to have sidewalks and bike paths put along the roadway at County expense, and they rejected that because they didn't want those items using up existing right-of-way. Now, everyone has to suffer because of Cliffside's short sighted and self-centered decision.

3. Third Access Road

Finally, there was some discussion about a third access road, which Mr. Kellner and another gentleman, as well as Commissioner Bauer, all commented on. Suffice it to say that there are a number of stories as to what proposals have been made in the past and why they have not gone anywhere, and ascertaining which, if any, are accurate is very difficult at this point without access to first-hand evidence and contemporaneous records.

4. Road Improvement Project at Hood Canal Drive

In stark contrast to the speed bump fiasco, which had nothing to do with accepted traffic engineering analysis and practices, Dick Dadisman of the County explained the status of a project to fill and grade a portion of Hood Canal Drive just south of Ponderosa (right next to the pool/tennis courts), where the big "dip" in the road limits sight distance as one approaches Ponderosa northbound. The County will be leveling the rise at Ponderosa and filling the dip so as to create a more level roadway, and will also straighten out the curve and widen the road and shoulder area. Improved stormwater detention and discharge facilities will be installed as well.

This looks like a great plan, and – unlike the speed bumps – it is designed to actually make the roadway more user-friendly and safe for everyone, including motor vehicle operators. What a concept!

As part of the project, the Shore Woods Maintenance Commission had to deed an easement/Right of Way to the County to give it some extra room for the work, and for future maintenance, etc. SWMC President Wayne Stiles executed such a deed in

January, although it appears to convey the full legal ownership of the area in question, rather than a mere easement or ROW, and so far it is unclear whether the SWMC Board ever voted to approve the transaction. There will likely be further discussion on that point, at least by other interested SWMC members.

5. Stop Sign at Ponderosa & Aspen

Doug Leibrant raised the issue of the recently installed four-way stop sign at Ponderosa and Aspen, which might be called Neal Kellner's stop sign since it's right outside his house. Kellner said they went through a big petition process and got a lot of approval from people nearby, but Leibrant stated that he has talked to a number of those people and only one can recall ever seeing a petition. The County apparently has no record of a petition being submitted either. This led to a number of comments from within the attendees, with a few people taking the position that if one is against a particular stop sign or speed device, one must hate traffic safety and want to see people killed.

6. GHAAC Involvement and Representation

One issue that was on the agenda for the meeting towards the end was the extent to which the GHAAC should be recognized by the Shore Woods community, whether Shore Woods should have a representative on the GHAAC, etc. As it turned out, there were not enough meeting attendees to form a quorum, such that no votes on any matters could be taken, and therefore no vote was ultimately had on this or any other issue.

I have no first hand information on what was discussed regarding GHAAC, as I left the meeting before that topic came up. However, it is safe to assume that the issues of GHAAC's structure, membership, operations, relationship to the County, and the manner in which it "represents" people in Hansville - including the significant dilution of voting power of residents of large neighborhoods such as Shore Woods and Driftwood Key - will continue to be hotly debated.