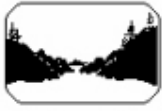


Letter to the Editor, August 2, 2007



# The Enterprise

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## Council plays 'kick the can' with zoning

Kids often play a game called "kick the can," knocking the can as far down the road as possible. The Husum-BZ Community Council is now poised to play a similar game with the proposed rezoning ordinance. Instead of addressing infrastructure and environmental concerns up front, the council prefers to kick the can down the road and address the repercussions at a later date.

As a civil engineer and a Husum property owner of 15 years, I am extremely concerned that the council now seeks to irrevocably change the makeup of the Husum valley to purportedly meet projected population growth over the next 20 years.

If Klickitat County is truly interested in addressing the housing needs of its residents, planners should concentrate on affordable single and multifamily dwelling units within existing urban areas, which are currently sufficiently-sized to handle the projected growth without the need for rezoning. If instead the county is interested in addressing the demands from developers and real estate agents for \$400,000 houses, the Husum proposal should meet their needs.

What is required for Husum is a phased approach to address long-term growth. Resorting to a solution that is reminiscent of an 1800s land rush, the Husum council's plan only encourages unmanaged growth and will ultimately fail to meet the long-term objective. Impacts on water and air quality, traffic, school loading, wildlife and the environment have not received sufficient study. One only has to look at the current shortage of drinkable water in western Klickitat County to understand the importance of addressing infrastructure requirements prior to the onset of growth.

Citizen input is also critical. As a recently retired member of the U.S. Navy, I can guarantee the commissioners that comments from deployed military members who have property in the valley have never been solicited. Supporting your troops is more than a yellow ribbon on your truck. Planners must take pro-active (and yes, painful) steps to ensure they receive a true representative sample of property owners and other interested parties, many of whom are unable to travel to Goldendale.

Klickitat County Commissioners must send this deficient proposal back to Husum for additional analysis and community input. Given that the rezoning proposal is based on 20-year population projections, the commissioners are under no pressure to make a hasty decision. Anything less would be an affront to the citizens of western Klickitat County.

Mike Dolan  
Husum