



# The Enterprise

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## Residents demand more input, facts on Husum-BZ zoning plan

Story by: Jesse Burkhardt

On the evening of July 25, approximately 100 area residents crowded into the White Salmon Community Library to register concerns and sometimes anger about the proposed rezoning of the Husum and BZ Corner area. Although the event was not a formal hearing on the proposed zoning plan, a large crowd showed up to discuss it.

Pat Arnold, a Trout Lake resident, led the discussion. She said the rezoning documents were unclear. "We are entitled to receive good information," Arnold said. "It's hard to know what is being changed unless the county tells us."

Arnold pointed to sections of the document that she believed were inadequate or missing. "The county is required to provide for protection of the public water supply. What is the effect of this plan on groundwater and water supplies? It's not even in there," Arnold said. "From fish, traffic, to water, you ought to study the effects. But you name it, it's not in there. This is astounding."

Arnold explained that there are currently 705 acres in "rural residential 2" (RR2) zoning in the Husum-BZ area. The amount of RR2 land was to be boosted to 1,746 acres in the proposed rezoning plan. "The Klickitat County Planning Commission approved 1,000 additional acres of RR2," Arnold said. "Why is a major change needed?"

Arnold added that the existing sub-area plan for the Husum-BZ area lists the following goal: "To provide land for present and future commercial farming and forest operations."

Arnold then showed a slide showing the goal as proposed in the new plan: "To provide for residential use within present and future commercial farm and forest operations, not to encourage large, immediate subdivisions, but rather to allow gradual conversion of resource lands to residential use while preserving the rural character of the area as long as possible."

Husum resident Tom Provenzano said he worried about increases in traffic. "There is the prospect of potentially 2,000-3,000 more cars, not including construction vehicles," Provenzano said. "Unrelenting traffic and congestion is imminent and undeniable. It would jam and clog the one main thoroughfare [SR 141] through that valley."

Another leader of the discussion, Mike Kohnle, said more houses would bring more problems. "We face the loss of our rural quality of life, which is the essence of why we live here, and a theft of our privacy," Kohnle said. "And once it's gone, it's gone."

Kohnle charged that the plan was designed to benefit real estate developers. "It's easy to see what you're going to get out of this plan if you're a developer, but what about the rest of us?" Kohnle asked. "Get involved with us and take the county to task and make them come up with a better plan."

Husum resident Beth McCullough said she didn't see any specifics regarding recreation to go along with the many promises. "It says the new zoning plan will

encourage development of historic sites," McCullough said. "Where? It will encourage development of more picnic sites. Who will pay for that? It will develop more fishing sites. Again, where, and who will develop them, and what will the cost be? More launch points. Where will they be? Who will determine that? I'd like to see the planners do their homework and offer specifics."

Jerry Smith, chair of the Husum-BZ Community Council, said the county was not to blame for the failure of other governmental agencies, such as the U.S. Forest Service, to follow through on previous promises. Smith pointed out that the Forest Service had promised new hiking and biking trails in the area, but had not delivered.

"They promised. That's not a county function. We didn't have anything to do with it," Smith commented. "We've tried to get them to get that to go. And we've written letters about SR 141 traffic to the Washington State Patrol, Washington Attorney General's office, and the Klickitat County Commissioners as a public safety issue. We told them that unless that issue is addressed, there will be a loss of life."

Smith added that the council members do not always support development. "There were two large housing developments proposed in the Husum-BZ area, and we're on record opposing them," Smith said.

Steve Stampfli said more homes in the area could have a serious impact on water availability. "We don't envision a lack of water with the Columbia River out our back door," Stampfli said. "But the water in that river is allocated. Wherever more water is extracted, there is the danger of depletion. This is the reason we need to do some good planning and see if more homes can be provided for by the water we have."

Stampfli added that if more roofs, roads, and parking lots are built, water will be routed away from the land faster.

"This results in increased flood frequency and intensity," Stampfli explained. "It also decreases the amount of water that seeps in and feeds aquifers."

In the open question and comment period, several citizens expressed anger over what is being proposed.

"We see this same pattern time after time," said one. "This has been going on for about 50 years here, like Chinese water torture. The powers that be keep dripping away on the rock and gradually wear it down. The problem is, the people who benefit from these changes are not the same people who suffer from them."

Another citizen asked why no representatives from the Klickitat County Commissioners' office or the county's Planning Commission attended the meeting. "We invited them, but they didn't come," Arnold responded. "Earlier, they were presented with a petition asking them to hold meetings in White Salmon. They did not respond."

That angered one resident, who urged everyone at the meeting to travel to Goldendale for the county's scheduled public hearing and possible vote on the Husum-BZ Corner zoning plan. "What you need are several buses to take this crowd to Goldendale," he suggested. "That's the only way they'll listen to you. You need a massive appearance at that meeting."

The hearing is set for Aug. 9 at 1:15 p.m. in the County Courthouse in Goldendale.

Husum resident Mike Dolan said he has been in the military and received no notification about any proposed zoning changes.

"I did not receive any news about this plan, but they find me for my taxes," Dolan said. "Growth is going to happen, but you have to do it in a logical fashion. Why is a huge change in land use needed now?"

"I like the peace and serenity of my hometown," said Kevin Herman of White Salmon. "Are the landowners and developers who serve on the commission going to recuse themselves from voting on this?"

Another citizen offered a deeply cynical view of what was happening. "They will tolerate, in their arrogance, all of our rage," he said. "They will respond only to legal pressure. They have to be aware there are going to be legal ramifications, and it's got to cost them elections, too."

Arnold said legal action was anticipated, and she asked those in attendance to contribute to a legal fund to stop the zoning proposal from going forward.

Bill Anderson, one of the members of the Husum-BZ Community Council, said he wondered why the citizens at the library meeting hadn't been at the Husum-BZ council meetings when rezoning was being discussed. "We have our meetings on the first Tuesday of every month in the back of the Husum Fire Station. Nobody shows up," Anderson said. "Where were you the last six years?"