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CITY OF BELLINGHAM

Director, Planning Department
City of Bellingham

Subject: Staff Request paper Historic Preservation Meeting January 24, 2012.

1. We have lived with a view of Bellingham Bay since 1980, first from a house on South Hill and, since late 2005, from unit 306 in Fairhaven Gardens Condo. In both locations view preservation is of vital concern, but we know that much of our water view across 11th St. will vanish when the Ken Imus parking lot is replaced by a building. Pleasing views are a major factor in pricing residential property. However, maintaining a view generates all sorts of adversity. The recent Herald story about a condo resident cutting down a tree in Boulevard Park for a view is an example. It refutes a recent city council member's comment that he did not consider view to be a worthy issue.

2. The Draft Design Standard subject 82 page paper says nothing about the height of the ground upon which proposed buildings of specific heights will stand relative to existing buildings. The plan must be amended to fill this data void. As it exists now, it appears to be written by the Flat Earth Society acting as an agent of some developers.

3. This missing data (derived from elevations on the attached 16 x 10 inch topographic map of Fairhaven) is in city's data base. Our condo's Architect's Building Elevation sheets A-8, A-9, and A9a show both the building heights and the Mean Sea Level (MSL) heights. It is odd that such a fundamental data element as ground height is ignored by city planners. As MSL heights in the aviation world establishes flight levels for safe management for air traffic, so does MSL heights for buildings bring uniformity, rationality, and stability of value to residential property.

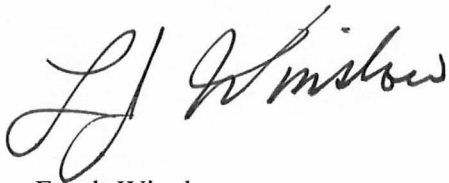
4. Except for a mention of topography in note 7 in table 330-A page (64), the document ignores vertical height of the ground (MSL). As Harris Square was built with no regard for disparity in building height with the old buildings across the north side of Harris Ave, it also sets a height precedence for building height to the west. The objective should be to assure that this height building height not be exceed by Option 2 and 3 on page 65.

5. Specifically, Mean Sea Level data is missing from the city's Draft Design Standards of 12/21/11 on pages (64) and (65) of the packet, also numbered as pages 8 and 9 of the 19 page

Residential Regulatory Development for the Village. This section deals only in building square feet and ceiling heights and maximizes the number of view properties by placating set-backs.

6. My 16 Nov 07 effort to depict vertical heights is attached. It attempts to graphically present the use of MSL in an effort to project two profiles of Fairhaven on one sheet. The top, at sea level, is a slope rising from north to south and the lower, at sea level, is a slope rising from west to the east. As I was an instrument rated aviator, I saw the similarity of design of view corridors to that of designing an instrument approach to an airfield. I use the term, glide path, to show, the impact of the height of buildings.

7. Buildings may have many "heights", depending where the vertical measurement is taken. Making public policy solely in terms of building height while ignoring the height of the land upon which a building stands is simplistic. It disregards the View Factor that helps sets real estate prices. The contour lines of a topographical map is the missing tool to manage the View Factor in Fairhaven. Otherwise, what municipal code was the architect complying with when he entered the MSL measurement as well as the building dimensions on the Building Elevations Sheet???



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Attached graphics:

1. Profile N/S and E/W slopes Nov 2007
2. Five foot contour map of Fairhaven