

May 29, 2008

Dear Council,

Re: Proposal regarding exemptions to the moratorium on subdivisions

The purpose of the moratorium was to allow time for the Comp Plan to be finished, planning tools to be put in place, and the thoughtful rezoning of each sub area (consistent with the new goals, values and tools) to be completed. Out of respect for the process we have been through and in the interest of coherent planning congruent with our new Comp Plan, I respectfully request that you extend the moratorium until the city wide planning is complete.

I understand that as the sub area planning proceeds, the moratorium may be lifted in the sub areas that have determined (with input from the planning department) what zoning would be best for their neighborhood as a whole within the context of the needs of the city as a whole. That seems well and good.

My concern lies with the possibility of exemptions. It seems obvious and important that requests from individuals at this point must be taken within the context of the whole. Yes, people should be able to do what they want with their land within the bounds of the law, and yes property owners can build a house for themselves under the current moratorium. The only thing that is not allowed until the planning is complete is the subdivision of land for economic gain. With the housing market and the economy in their current state, it does not seem like an onerous hardship to wait 6 months or even a year to subdivide in order to sell.

The piecemeal effect of granting scattered exemptions seems to me to be particularly dangerous when critical areas are involved. Aside from the desirability of individual planning within the bigger planning picture, any exemption should be very carefully considered when the land contains a wetland, creek or steep slope.

The reason this has come to my attention is because just such an exemption was granted in my neighborhood – permission to subdivide a two acre property, most of which is wetland and buffer. The property is adjacent to

the 8 acre piece which contains the wetland our neighborhood is deeply concerned about, especially now that a 20 unit subdivision has been proposed directly above said wetland. The exemption granted for the adjacent property would allow a rebuild of both the main house which lies in the wetland buffer and a smaller structure that is actually built on another wetland. What effect would this have on the already stressed wetland and drainage situation along Edgecliff?

I'm sure this was an oversight and I bring it to your attention for that very reason. If you are going to consider exemptions to an extended moratorium, please take the time to consider each one carefully within its immediate and larger context, taking into account all of its potential consequences.

In order to protect our environment and to ensure that such oversights do not happen again, I propose that the following stipulations be included in any extension of the moratorium:

No exemptions shall be given for sensitive areas, critical areas and their buffers, or lands that affect such areas.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gail Fleming".

Gail Fleming
For the Langley Critical Area Alliance