

K. Anne M. Holby

Public Hearing Outline

Subdivision

Introduction:

- Our goal is quite simple. The county adopted The Skagit County Comprehensive^{VE} Plan (SCCP) in 1997. We are in agreement with the designations in that plan. Our goal is to change...nothing. Mr. Jensen's goal is to request a change to that plan which would increase the density in a rural reserve designated area, thereby changing the rural characteristics of that particular area. We hope that you will consider our points as carefully as you did Mr. Jensen's before you make your final recommendations. Our arguments will validate and reinforce the SCCP while Mr. Jensen's arguments seek to alter something that has already been established and in place since 1997.

Historical Background:

- One of the goals of the SCCP is to preserve historical and cultural structures and landscapes and to retain open spaces. The parcel under consideration consisted of 10.89 acres from as far back as 1925 and likely larger prior to that year.
- Under the policies section of the SCCP it states "areas may be considered for designation as Rural Intermediate (RI) (2.5 acres) by identifying clearly contained logical boundaries that are delineated predominantly by the built environment existing on July 1, 1990. Clearly this piece of property did not fall into the RI designation at that time, nor, does it fall into that designation now.
- Surrounding properties or the predominantly built environment that exists even today is of properties over 2.5 acres.
- This property is surrounded by farms, most of which are historical that date back to the late 1800's. Our farm was built in 1892 and many of the other properties soon followed/or already existed. Many of the farms in the area are still inhabited by family members of the original homesteaders. The farms to the immediate south and north of the Jensen property fall into that unique category.
- Clearly, the SCCP goal to preserve historical and cultural structures and landscapes was fully achieved by the original designation created for this unique area.

Rural Character and boundaries:

- Despite the historical background and the predominantly built environment of the property in dispute, other variables must also be considered in this decision-making process including the rural character – how can we define that? It seems to have some gray areas. To find the answer, one just has to refer to the SCCP. Rural Character is defined under the GMA mandate of the SCCP as "Areas that have open-space, natural landscapes in which vegetation is predominate and it provides visual landscapes that are traditionally found in rural areas and communities.

- Show pictures of the surrounding area – what do we see here? Farms, farm animals, open-space...essentially visual landscapes that are traditionally found in rural areas and communities.
- Compare/Contrast the 2.5 acre homes to the surrounding properties that are greater than 2.5. Let's take this point by point. The SCCP states the following:
 - "Development shall be of a scale and nature **consistent and compatible with the rural character**. Clearly the pictures demonstrate a rural character, however, homes built on 2.5 acres do not – not one of them...let me repeat...not one has a barn, farm animals or a "visual landscape that is traditionally found in rural areas and communities." Can you really say that these homes look similar to the surrounding farms? They clearly significantly change the neighborhood character.
 - Residential acreage shall be designated to meet future need **without adversely affecting the rural character and lifestyle**.
 - **Rural character shall be preserved** by regulatory mechanisms (GMA and SCCP) through which development can occur with minimal environmental impact. Your gradual designations achieve that – while we wish the entire hill would have remained Rural Reserve, we understand the need to plan for growth and your gradual transition made from 1 acre (Bridgewater) to 2.5 to 5 to 10 was a compromise all of us understand.
 - As you can see 5,000-6,000 square foot homes/garages have a negative impact on the rural character of this farming community. This goes against each of the afore mentioned provisions.
- How boundaries are established according to the SCCP:
 - SCCP Goal B Policies are as follows:
 - 3B-1.4 a. Lands shall not extend beyond the logical outer boundary of the **existing area, thereby allowing a new pattern of sprawl**. As each property owner learns that one neighbor was able to change the SCCP, they too will follow suit and apply for the same exception – especially since allowing the change will negatively impact the character and landscape of the current area. The ripple effect is tremendous – reiterating the importance of the logical boundary being Starvation Ridge Lane since Starvation Ridge is a dead-end road, therefore, the development could not continue to sprawl. If however, Bay View Road is considered the boundary – sprawl can and will continue up to Farm-to-Market. One of the goals of the SCCP is to avoid sprawl – allowing the Jensen/Peck properties to be designated RI will increase sprawl – the Planning & Development Services staff recommendation to approve the RI designation is in total opposition to your goal to contain sprawl.
 - b. Preserve the character of existing natural neighborhoods and communities. – Allowing RI designation will not accomplish this.
 - c. The prevention of abnormal irregular boundaries. Allowing the RI designation to jump Starvation Ridge will obliterate the transition or

“buffer” moving from 1 to 2.5 to 5 to 10 acres transition to an abrupt 1 acre to 2.5 acres to 10.

Accomplished Goals of the SCCP:

- After years of debate and consideration the SCCP established the rules of development – you cannot please everyone but let’s look at how the SCCP has been successful in our neighborhood.
 - 3A-2.1 Manage development in rural areas through density requirements that protect and maintain existing rural character, open-space, cultural resources.
 - 3A-2.3 Development shall minimize potential conflicts and not contribute to the conversion of farm to non-resource uses. Encourage techniques such as land conservation, clustering and buffering.
 - Your policy of allowing a gradual transition from high density to low density is a compromise that reduces conflicts and allows the rural character of small farms to flourish.

Closing:

- The GMA and SCCP were charged with creating and implementing a viable growth development plan. An extremely difficult task to accomplish especially since it is not possible for everyone to be happy. Through much debate, consideration and compromise the plan was created and implemented. The Peck’s stated that having their acreage sub-divided from 10 acres to five would allow them to build their planned home. Mr. Jensen purchased the property knowing full well that he purchased five acres and that he could not sub-divide it. Now, both owners want to change the rules...for a second time! That leaves the rest of us wondering why their needs are more important than the entire community that has lived, loved, and raised children here. We are passionate about our rural community and the peace and beauty that exist here. We are before you tonight because of our deep and abiding love of this area and its history. We implore you to consider the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan policies and our needs, which are not motivated by financial gain, but by our passion to preserve such a historic treasure.

Parcel: P35204

Art Jensen 13339 Bay View Road

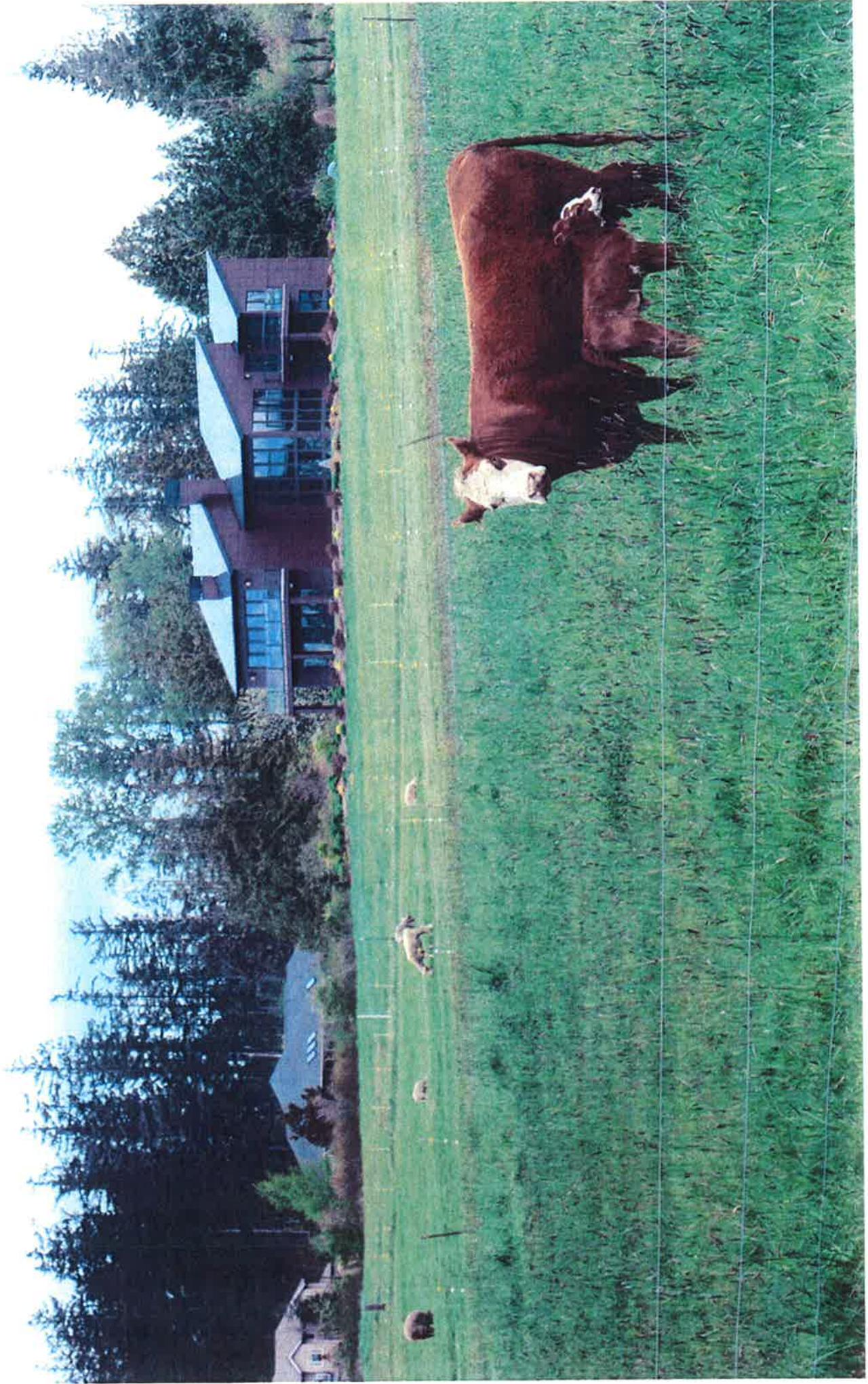
Looking N from Bay View Road



Parcel: P35204

Art Jensen 13339 Bay View Road

Looking NE to Hill res, Bridgeview and cows



Parcel: P35204
Art Jensen 13339 Bay View Road
Looking NE to Hill res. and Bridgeview



Parcel: P112774

Peck parcel (no address)

Looking N to Overway & Hill (RI parcels)



*Mowat Kea Barn
A 5 acre parcel directly east of Peck-Jensen
parcels*



Parcel: P21115
Holboy 13464 Bay View Road (east end of parcel)
Looking SW from Bay View Road



Parcel: P211119
Michael & Cathy Jensen 13374 Bay View Road
Looking SW toward Betz residence



Parcel: P124530
Annabell Jensen 13290 Bay View Road
Looking E to Michael & Cathy Jensen farm



*Winter scene from Holboy farm looking across
Peck-Jensen parcels to Angela Meyer farm*



Parcel: P35204
Art Jensen 13339 Bay View Road
Looking NE from BV-Edison to Meyer farm

