

Letters to the Editor

Growth

OPG's trail plan will benefit North Kitsap

Last Wednesday, Jon Rose of Olympic Property Group hosted a public meeting to raise the issue of inter-connected trails for North Kitsap. Five hundred people attended, everyone behaved! What he presented was the idea of an inter-connected trail system going from Indianola to Hansville and out to Port Gamble.

We, as a community, have an opportunity here to add a significant public asset. A trail system would benefit everyone, families who want to spend time together outdoors, equestrians, bikers, runners, hikers and nature lovers.

To make this happen takes money, cooperation from land owners and some way to maintain it. The money might come from grants, development mitigation and taxes. The big cost would be the development construction and legal costs of securing the trails. Conservation easements could be used to permanently secure public right of way in exchange for property and estate tax benefits. IAC grants are awarded, by the state, for just such a purpose and taxes, well nobody likes taxes but if it had to be, it would be small and the direct benefit would be huge.

Currently the land is owned by "X" number of landowners, primarily a few large owners like Olympic, 10 years from now the same land will be owned by "X2", as Jon said "you do the math." As to who should maintain the system; user groups and county parks

overseen by elected representatives of the community.

A friend overheard a grumbler murmur, "Oh he (Jon Rose) just wants to do another Port Ludlow."

We'll go and look at the plans Olympic has for their Kingston project. A mix of affordable and higher-end homes on a small part of a large piece of land. The cost, to the community, is nothing compared with the county having to build roads connecting 20-acre McMansions, to say nothing of fire protection, school buses, mail delivery and clear cuts. Who do we want as neighbors? I want young families who get great educations at our great schools, then work, play and pay their taxes locally. If you want a community of rich retired folks build golf courses and McMansions. If you want a balanced community you; build ball fields, trails, great schools and encourage small companies to move here to employ us all.

Population growth either happens or not based on regional and global pressures, we are either ready for it or not: The bottom line is, now is the time!

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