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Kari Albrecht <knkalbrecht@me.com>

To the planning commission,

i have previously voiced concerns about the number of clear cuts happening in town and have sent Mr Fortner a note and a link to an article regarding green space. This is in regards to development of the old mill site on Chambers Bay.

Steilacoom, in some ways, can be lumped into the cities where there is “no ‘THERE” there.” Our downtown has very limited parking which discourages people from stopping to use any of the businesses on their way to or from work. (I suspect this “drive through” constitutes a majority of traffic in town.) With the old mill site, there is an opportunity to build an area that will benefit the town far into the future.

This is “the town on the Sound,” but we don’t have a waterfront. My idea won’t completely fix that, but it will certainly make the area around the bay much more inviting and accessible. It will also help alleviate some of the traffic issues that will certainly ensue with any kind of build on the property.

First, reroute Chambers Creek road from where it abuts the bay to back against the hillside. Put a traffic circle at the north end for thru traffic and those using the site. This leaves the entire area from the new road to the waterfront free to build multi-story buildings with basement parking, ground floor business and two or even three stories of condominiums and apartments. The top floors on each building (which will be situated to take in the views) can be split into two or three “penthouses.’ This will allow for multiple levels of affordability in each building and not just separate those that have money from those who don’t. Additional building of paired homes and townhouses could be built at the top of the hill with access to Steilacoom Boulevard by the high school. You will NOT get 350 units this way, but what will happen is that there can be places with open air dining, maybe a small post office, a grocery store where residents and passers-by can pick up essentials for dinner, etc. Having the 512 bus add a stop here to the route will increase the ability to move around the area without a car. Not just residents will shop and eat and bank there. Steilacoom lost a lot when we lost the small banks in town. This is a drive through town and we derive very little benefit from the commuters. Having a park area adjacent to the bay, even at low tide would be wonderful. Also, I am aware that funding was approved (not by Steilacoom) in 2015 for the removal of the dam and adjacent buildings. If this could be accomplished and the bridge upgraded, the area would increase property values and property tax revenue, add business revenue, and make a permanent spot for all Steilacoom residents to enjoy and be proud of. Can you visualize a development designed, not like University Place, but like old Town Steilacoom? I certainly can!

The rapid growth we are currently experiencing is decreasing the livability of Steilacoom considerably. We need a place where we can get a coffee, take a stroll along the waterfront and enjoy what brings people to want to live here in the first place.

I am aware that the Planning Commission is in negotiations for developing the mill site and I am aware that it will be an incredibly costly venture for anyone to undertake. I urge you, therefore, to consider not just to think “outside the box,” but to throw away the box entirely.

Please pass this on to the rest of the members of the planning commission and copy me in so they can respond individually if they want to.

Sincerely,

Kari Albrecht
310 Puyallup Street