

**Ad Hoc Tree Committee
Meeting Notes
September 15, 2015**

Committee members in attendance: Roger Townsend, Mack Pearl, Jon Quitslund, Sarah Blossom

COBI Staff: Jennifer Sutton, Josh Machen

Public: Charles Schmid

The first agenda item was review and approval of notes from Aug. 11 and Sept. 1 meetings. Aug. 11 notes were Jennifer's in an email sent on Aug. 19, summarizing discussion in a meeting that included only Sarah and Jon with Jennifer. Jon's brief notes from the Sept. 1, distributed at the meeting, led to some discussion; no additions or revisions to the notes were proposed.

We had discussed the "cluster" and "open space" options in the subdivision ordinance at the previous meeting. Jennifer observed, half seriously, "This committee might go rogue and delete the cluster option altogether." We have not yet studied the subdivision ordinance: are we going to do that?

Josh Machen participated in the first half of the meeting, in order to respond to questions Jon had raised about the applicability of the Vegetation Management chapter (BIMC 16.22) when forested properties are 'converted' to residential subdivisions.

Josh stated that the Veg. Management regulations date from the same period as the flex lot ordinance. {BIMC 16.22 was created by Ordinance 97-07, passed in February, 1997; 16.22.010 D states, "Vegetation management is necessary in order to implement the comprehensive plan, the landscape ordinance, the flexible lot design ordinance and to protect the health and safety of citizens."} The flex lot regulations were subsequently changed in response to a Washington Supreme Court case that had the effect of limiting the amount of open space that can be required to 25% of a lot, including buffers.

BIMC 16.22 was not revised to be consistent with the new regulations for subdivisions. It seems, then, that it's a relic, in which some of the regulations are unenforceable, because they are at odds with state law (or, one might say, COBI's interpretation of state law). Josh said that the chapter is pertinent to forested property where the owner plans to harvest timber but retain some of the forest character. It seems, therefore, that it doesn't serve as much of a constraint on clearing and development of forested acreage. Should anything be done to revise BIMC 16.22?

Item 2 on the agenda, debrief from the DNR seminar in Poulsbo on Aug. 25, didn't figure in the discussion. Jon's report on the seminar has been distributed to committee members, and could be made part of the record.

We turned to the matter of roadside buffers and other tree requirements for single-family subdivisions and existing single-family lots (see agenda item 3). Mack observed that the regulations “didn’t make sense from the beginning.”

Can we come up with one method that serves community interests? Sarah proposed that where there are trees to be preserved, the open space option should be required. The committee is just beginning to deal with subdivisions. Should roadside and perimeter buffers be changed?

Mack expressed a concern for preservation of distinctive neighborhoods, which may be negatively impacted by increased traffic and residential development that is obtrusive and not compatible.

There are no tree unit requirements, but it is the case that where possible, property owners retain trees or plant trees – and sometimes they become problematic. What kind of regulation would work? One suggestion: for preservation of existing trees, a minimal tree unit requirement.

Some of the discussion was anecdotal and digressive, identifying problems without proposing solutions. How can we get beyond “This shouldn’t have happened”?

Notes Approved: September 29, 2015