

**2017 Annual Report
of the
Guemes Island Planning Advisory Committee**

Accomplishments and Activities – Highlights

February: Discussed with County's Planning Department timelines for GIPAC's code amendments concerning issuance of new well permits, rainwater catchment, and CaRDs. New well permit amendment (designated P5 by County) and rainwater (P6) unlikely to be completed until second half of 2017. CaRD amendment (P7) likely to be completed by June. All three amendments will require GIPAC participation in hearings before the County Planning Commission.

- Planning Commission outreach. Board discussed offering an afternoon Planning Commission visit to the island to try to improve communication and better inform the Commission of our island issues, including new well permits, CaRD protections, and rainwater catchment.
- Shoreline Restoration Committee formed. Goal is to identify GIPAC-sponsored shoreline restoration project(s) that can make use of Roz Glasser's bequest to GIPAC.

March: In preparation for hearing on GIPAC's proposed CaRD amendment before County's Planning Commission, our March meeting largely devoted to discussion about what land-uses should be allowed in open space created by a CaRD on Guemes and how to define "permanent protection" of this open space. Discussion also informed by different approach to similar issues taken by South Fidalgo community.

- Board votes to support land-uses in CaRD Open Space that would include: agriculture, timber harvesting, passive recreation and outdoor recreational facilities not involving building construction or operation of motorized vehicles such as dirt bikes, all-terrain vehicles or the like, to the extent that such uses are allowed in the underlying zone.

April: Amendments to Skagit County's Shoreline Master Plan (SMP) were supposed to be have been finalized and sent to Olympia in 2015, but they have stalled in the County. GIPAC decided to revisit issues of concern to be prepared if/when the County again resurrects the Plan.

- GIPAC had concerns with the current county proposal on shoreline setbacks. Of particular concern are the granting of 50% reductions in setbacks upon an administrative variance review and the dropping of a standard that allows for averaging the location of neighboring houses when establishing the required setback of a property.
- Vegetation Conservation Areas. It was agreed that the current SMP language is vague on this issue and GIPAC will over time continue to press for tighter language and protection of tree cutting on bluffs.
- Shoreline Protection. Proposed SMP language says hard structural stabilization is allowed only to protect an existing building from imminent threat and only after consideration of all

alternatives. GIPAC feels this is close to the Subarea Plan position, and not worth requesting additional language.

May: GIPAC agreed to write memo to Skagit County requesting reinstatement of setback averaging for Guemes Island. Memo reflected concern that the county has decided to eliminate setback averaging at the same time allowing administrative variances to reduce shoreline setbacks by 50%. Memo was sent to Skagit County Commissioners and the State's Department of Ecology.

June: Status of GIPAC's proposed code amendment requiring notification of new wells being drilled regardless of whether the well is connected to a building permit was discussed. The County has informed GIPAC this proposal raises complicated issues and therefore action is not expected on it this year. Board decided that GIPAC's concern that wells were being drilled without an underlining building permit is important, and therefore our code amendment request should not be withdrawn. Keeping proposal alive will help us continue to educate county staff re our concerns and hopefully lay the groundwork for future progress on the amendment.

- Board approves sending memo to Board of Commissioners regarding Planning Commission's negative recommendation on our CaRD amendment. Memo outlined to Commissioners GIPAC's concerns about the Planning Commission's actions on GIPAC's CaRD amendment specifically, and on the Guemes Subarea plan in general. Memo sent to Commissioners on June 6, 2017.

July: Board voted to send letter to Commissioner Janicki recommending reappointment of Holly DelVechio, and Martha Rose as District 3 appointees on the Planning Commission.

- Variances and setbacks. The Board discussed how the current shoreline setbacks are approved and variances granted. The Board discussed going back to using averages of neighbor's setbacks to determine shoreline development and advocating for that with the County.
- Shoreline Restoration committee discussed a field trip to the Peach Preserve on Guemes by the Skagit Land Trust to look at possible projects to utilize the Roz Glasser bequest.

August: Letter sent from GIPAC to Board of Commissioners concerning the Shoreline Master Plan. GIPAC requests returning to the method of averaging setbacks from the Ordinary High Water mark 300 feet from either side of the proposed development and limiting the ability to get a 50% reduction through variance requests. GIPAC also expressed concern that the Reasonable Use provision is vague and subjective.

- Shoreline Restoration. Discussion of rough drafts of a shoreline pamphlet designed for new people moving to the island to educate them about shoreline issues. Agreement that Shoreline Committee would continue to refine the pamphlet and send back for review and additional comments by August 21st.
- The County is requesting GIPAC's input for a new ferry. Members of GIPAC will go to the August 29th Public Works meeting at the community hall to hear the county's presentation.

- Discussion initiated addressing what priorities GIPAC should address in the upcoming year. Board agreed to come up with 2-3 topics to address and will refine them by the next meeting. It was decided that whatever topics we choose, the annual meeting in November would be the appropriate time and place to present to the island such topics.

September: By consensus, Board agreed that water is and will remain Guemes Islands' biggest issue. GIPAC will focus on developing a strategy to work with the County on well permitting. A working group will be established to prepare a presentation for the annual meeting.

- Discussion of whether to have another Planning Commission visit to the island. It was agreed to try and schedule another tour in October to take advantage of fall weather and before the holidays. County Planning Director Pernula will be contacted before approaching those Planning Commission members who did not participate on the previous visit.
- Board participants on the records management project will meet to determine which documents to preserve, which to donate to the Historical Society, and which to purge.

October: Annual meeting set for Saturday, November 18th, at Community Hall from 3-5 PM. It will include Chair's and Treasurer's reports, and presentations on the issues related to water. Elections will be held for 3 positions on the Board. As always, nominations will be accepted from the floor.

- October 21st was set the new date for the two Planning Commissioners, Martha Rose and Mark Lundsten, to tour the island.
- Updates for the records management project were discussed, specifically where and how to store official GIPAC documents. GIPAC will have a Drop Box set up so that documents produced can be stored in the cloud and accessed by board members.

November: Draft "Water, Wells, and Catchment in Skagit County Code" document, a GIPAC review of County code to support GIPAC's catchment code amendment and other water-related topics, was discussed.

- Barbara Ohms, of CERT, reported on tsunami warning sign or evacuation route options, an issue in the Subarea Plan. Skagit Emergency Management has two signs to choose from. Board consensus was 'route' signs were preferable; GIPAC will send Barbara relevant provisions from the Guemes Island Subarea Plan.
- Progress of the documents archive project: Members met to evaluate contents of archival boxes stored in Sandy McKean's garage. Island historians Randy Schnobel and Win Anderson will provide advice on what to keep. Members also investigating online storage options for digital documents and working on a naming convention for files. The Guemes Tide has donated a printer/scanner for the project
- The Shoreline Restoration Committee presented brochure design options for "Your Guemes Shoreline" and one was chosen by consensus. It will be printed and copies will be available at the Annual Meeting.