

Mayor Buxbaum and Members of the Council:

The recent deliberations of the Council regarding the draft Shorelines Management Plan raise questions regarding the role of the Olympia Planning Commission. Clarification of that role by the Council would be of great value to members of the Planning Commission in our effort to be of service to the Council and to the residents of Olympia.

As you are aware, the Commission devoted countless meetings over a two year period in the drafting Shoreline Management Plan recommendations for the Council. Many of these meetings were contentious. In the end, our recommendations represented what we perceived to be the best compromise among divergent perspectives.

The recent consideration of our recommendations by the Council suggests that our perception of the needs and expectations of the Council may have been inaccurate. We did not expect that the Council would accept our recommendations without serious review. We recognize and appreciate the fact that the Planning Commission is an unelected, advisory body and that the Council alone has the responsibility to establish policy for the City.

However, we did expect that our work would receive a careful and thorough consideration by the Council. Based on the recent deliberations of the Council, it now appears that the Council desires only very broad and general recommendations and sees specific policies to guide land use decisions as best addressed at some future, if unspecified, time.

Quite obviously, the Planning Commission cannot now draft alternative Shoreline Management Plan recommendations consistent with our perception of the apparent intent of the Council. However, for several months we have been fully involved in the review and possible revision of the draft Comprehensive Plan prepared by City staff after more than two years of public meetings and hearings. In the light of Council's apparent view of the focus and utility of our Shoreline recommendations, we request a clarification of the Council's view of our current review of the draft Comprehensive Plan.

We acknowledge that broad objectives for our work were established in the Charter agreed to by the Council and Commission. However, as indicated above, the meaning of that Charter has been put in doubt by the Council's response to our Shoreline Management Plan recommendations.

Sincerely,

(Individual signatures of Planning Commission members)