

Members of the Planning Commission. My name is Daniel Einstein. I am a neighbor from Westside Olympia and a board member of the Northwest Olympia Neighborhood Association. Many of you – hopefully – have heard about the Westside heronry and the threat to that nesting site from development pressures. Out of the neighborhood concern for that heronry, was born the non-profit Olympia Coalition for Ecosystems Preservation or OlyEcosystems for short. I am chairman of the board.

The name Olympia Coalition for Ecosystems Preservation takes in a lot and that is quite deliberate. We aim to be an advocate for Ecosystems Preservation throughout Olympia such that our urban growth can be smartly balanced by environmental concerns. This is also the intent of Washington State's Growth Management Act (GMA), with which you are all familiar. That is why I am here tonight.

The Growth Management Act, as you know, requires all municipalities to come up with an urban growth plan that prioritizes growth in urban areas. However, it is gross misunderstanding of the GMA to suggest that it prioritizes growth in ALL urban areas. This past Saturday I walked the Westside Woods with Tom Campbell, one of the architects of the GMA. I can tell you that he was floored when he saw the slopes associated with the proposed access driveway from Dickinson Ave NW, and that he stood in utter disbelief when he saw the nesting trees of the Pacific Great Blue heron within an arms reach of that roadway - utter disbelief that the City would even contemplate a development there.

Recently, the Utility Advisory Committee commissioned a study from the Storm and Surface Water Utility to determine habitat and stewardship priorities for our city, with a

particular emphasis on aquatic habitats, the preservation of which is one of the three mandates of the Storm and Surface Water Utility.

In Westside Olympia, we quickly determined that development is coming imminently to our neighborhood and that not only the herons are threatened. Looking at that study, we noted that the Woods above West Bay drive and Schneider Creek were both noted as priority areas for habitat conservation. If you are not aware of this document, I would urge you to read it all the way through. In that study, the West Bay Woods and Schneider Creek are separate entities, but I submit to you that to the Westside neighbors and particularly the Westside wildlife that is an artificial distinction. You can step off of Bowan Ave NW and follow Schneider Creek to the Sound. If turn just before West Bay Drive and head south to Brawne Ave NW you will have traveled 1.5 miles and never have crossed a road. This is a critical wildlife corridor.

To conserve that corridor we are calling in Land Trusts and private sponsorship and asking that the City of Olympia do its part. On Tuesday September 9<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 AM, the land Trust Forterra will be meeting near the heronry with relevant and interested City officials. I have already invited your chairman to attend. He appropriately submits that decision to you. Tonight, I simply ask that you designate a representative to attend that meeting. There will be representation from Public Works, the Community Planning and Development Department and the Utility Advisory Committee, two council members and many others. Join us. I feel that your participation is key. If we work creatively and together, we can do a lot. I'd be happy to take any questions.