

TIMBER HARVEST TALKING POINTS

Overarching theme: Clear-cutting should not be allowed in the MPR!

1. Residents purchased property in the Port Ludlow Master Planned Resort based on the moniker, “A Village in the Woods by the Bay.” Although clear-cut logging was a possibility in the forested areas surrounding the MPR, zoning protections were in place within the resort to buffer us from that kind of visual blight.
2. The purpose of an MPR is to allow urban-type development within a rural setting. Commercial timber harvesting is by no means an urban-type land use except when the trees are being removed for a legal purpose such as building a house.
3. Open Space Reserve (OSR) areas within the MPR are to be preserved in perpetuity to promote or enhance the aesthetic qualities of the MPR.
4. Jefferson County Commissioners made a formal “finding” in 1998 that the Port Ludlow MPR is better suited for resort purposes than for commercial timber harvesting. That finding was necessary in order to designate Port Ludlow as an MPR in the first place.
5. We have no objection to “conversion harvests” where trees are removed for a permitted purpose such as building houses; but we object to commercial timber harvests done primarily for the purpose of selling the timber. We are supposed to be living in a Master Planned Resort, not in a commercial forest or a tree farm.
6. In applying for DNR (Department of Natural Resources) permits, PLA acknowledged that despite obtaining a DNR permit it must still comply with other federal, state or local laws. The DNR permits explicitly reiterated that obligation.
7. Severe visual blight resulted from the clear-cutting that was done last year, and it adversely affected the entire community. Visual blight reduces home values.
8. PLA continues to claim it has a right to clear-cut more than 500 acres of forested land within the MPR (nearly a quarter of the entire land area of the MPR), even if it has no actual intention to build houses in the clear-cut areas. The prospect of any further commercial timber harvesting within the MPR is unacceptable.
9. PLA should remediate the visual blight resulting from last year’s clear-cutting.
10. PLA should not be allowed to retain profits realized from harvesting timber in violation of law and in violation of the land use restrictions its predecessor-in-interest (Pope) explicitly agreed to in the Development Agreement.
11. We realize that the commissioners and county staff have spent considerable time and money on these issues, and we appreciate those efforts. However, it is time to step up the efforts to bring this dispute to a reasonable resolution, even if that means commencing litigation against PLA if necessary. The threat of facing far more severe financial penalties in litigation may be what is necessary to induce PLA to come to the bargaining table in good faith in order to settle the matter.