



S S <ssinwell@gmail.com>

Re: Clyde Hill Position #2

1 message

S S <ssinwell@gmail.com>
To: brad@pande-cameron.com

Tue, Jul 18, 2023 at 5:34 PM

Brad, thanks for your patience - below are some of my instant responses, sorry if I rambled on too much. These are important questions, and I appreciate the opportunity to respond. Lastly, to the extent you have preferences/ideas/guidance, I would be most interested; my primary goal is to be an active listener and the carry forward a responsive agenda. Thanks, Steve

What proposed changes to code are you going to advocate for?

Codes that involve substantial remodels and accessory structures need reviewed and updated.

Develop some guidance for design of duplexes and ADUs to ensure some consistency with our existing single family homes – this is not a HOA regime and we don't want a design board for SFH, but with the new requirement from the State, we might benefit from monitoring the building of new ADUs or duplexs (should they be built). I do note that the new law from the State exempts HOA from the additional density requirements (such as Aqua Vista) but most of Clyde Hill is not covered by a HOA.

Code 17.37 (hedges/living fences) focusing on differences between code enforcement and compliance with permits – as I discuss matters with residents, this topic comes up again and again (and again).

The topic of code is large and important; part of my plan is to continue to survey the residents to better understand the expectations and priorities and be their advocate. In other words, I continue to assess what the best options are going forward and have an open mind.

What is your position on the proposed Land use/ design restrictions

General - In my view, the first responsibility of Clyde Hill's city government is with our residents. In my meetings with several residents, most seek to primarily maintain the status quo on land use/design restrictions –

however the outside consultant has proposed a number of changes that are perplexing. Any changes need to be considered very carefully, as they may cause unintended conflicts or consequences. What is interesting that few, if any residents, are participating in these Planning Meetings, especially the one held in June 2023, where proposed changes to Land Use were heavily discussed. The City Council will weigh in on the changes to the Comprehensive Plan (which can/will drive changes in Land Use) after the Planning Committee completes their process. During 2023, the Planning Committee will continue to discuss the Comprehensive Plan, and their vote will occur in 2024, and at that point the changes go to City Council.

A specific comment on Land Use Policy 1.5 from the Current Comprehensive Plan:

The current Land Use (LU) policy 1.5 states “Consider the design, aesthetics and natural environment aesthetics and natural environment when making decisions affecting the use of land and related improvements”

Blueline (the Consultants that are assisting in the development of the next Comprehensive Plan) are recommending LU policy 1.5 be replaced with LU Policy 2.5: “Develop a community design standard or criteria to ensure compatibility with the existing neighborhood design. Design standards can guide the aesthetics and natural environment components when making decisions affecting the use of land and related improvements”

I’m opposed to this change, as the terms are too vague and could be utilized to prevent sufficient flexibility for residents. During my time in another City they adopted very restrictive standards and accordingly I joined that Planning Committee to claw back some of the crazier policies.

A specific comment on LU Goal 2: “Support and promote the predominantly aesthetic of single-family homes...”

I strongly support this LU Goal.

A specific comment on LU Policy 1.7 - the consultant seeks to change the Policy from “provide policy guideline that protects views and helps balance the sometimes-conflicting benefits or views and trees” to “Protect the benefits of views and trees through the Citizen’s Guide to Forest Management”

I am opposed to the change as I believe the overt statement of “protect views” is important and should be retained. Many residents, while they certainly value trees, the views are highly values and in some instances support home values.

Overall commentary about housing scarcity and affordability:

Most residents understand that there are real issues about the scarcity of affordable housing. Before I discuss some proposed responsibilities, it is my view increasing density at Clyde Hill won't solve that issue – and in fact to meet the new requirements from the State, I believe Clyde Hill only needs an additional 10 living units by the year 2044, and much of this could be achieved through building ADUs. A Redfin study from last month determined the median price of a Clyde Hill house to be \$3.3 million, or about \$1,000 per square foot. There are maybe 1,200 homes in Clyde Hill and about 10% of them are occupied by renters. Increasing the number of homes will *might* reduce the median value a bit, but even at the reduced median values, most persons would still view Clyde Hill housing costs at the high end and out of reach, especially with current interest rates for a mortgage. So, a reasoned view is that different zoning rules for Clyde Hill won't really address the affordability issue. Getting back to my point about Clyde Hill residents understanding there is an issue and linking that to what might be our responsibilities - I would utilize a proposed Advisory Committee and the City Council to form a **better** and effective relationship with adjacent cities such as Bellevue, Redmond, Kirkland to provide recommendations and ideas about the best way to develop actionable steps that are time-phased and measurable to address the issue of affordability/scarcity. First prize would also include Medina and Yarrow/Hunt Points as well. In other words, for the State to just render some legislation won't really solve the issue - good intentions usually don't solve complex problems. Accordingly, over the last month since I

registered as a candidate, I have already established relationships with several members of the Bellevue City Council (including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor). This is because while I don't have confidence that the solution to affordable housing will stem from building more Clyde Hill homes on existing lots, I do know that most of us are interested in the topic and want to be part of a solution. And the best way to develop solutions is for the immediate region to create and buy into the action steps. For example, one idea is to create a housing production trust fund (i.e., a fund that would be a source of funds designed to finance production and preservation of affordable housing, providing additional gap financing in addition to other sources like low-income housing tax credits and private subsidies. And we will design additional ideas and actions items to ensure that we don't put our head in the sand about this important issue. We must develop a sustainable solution here on the Eastside to ensure people can thrive and our City remains vibrant.

Budget: what is your mechanism to insure its balanced and does not run in the red?

The summary answer is using my skills from being a CPA for the last 35 years; this skillset is unique among the candidates and places me in a position to challenge processes and generate ideas for revenue generation and expense reduction. One of my last roles at Deloitte was to lead the Microsoft engagement for Deloitte – one only needs to see the Proxy Statement to confirm that the annual relationship exceeded \$50 million, and I was responsible for revenue and management of costs. I will also commit significant time to study the current process used by the City Administrator and also recommend some strong additions to the Budget Advisory Committee – getting persons that are experts in financial processes and that understand activity-based cost mechanisms. But I will provide leadership in this area.

Based on my attendance and observation of Council Meetings and Budget Advisory Committee meetings over the last 18 months, I have concluded the personnel in City Administration are generally reactive on this topic – this is not because they are incompetent, this is because they

don't have the necessary skillsets and we need to help build some skills and provide some toolkits so that we develop a sustainable process concerning all matters financial.

A review of the record over the last year demonstrates an environment where various City Council members (generally Steve Freidman) will generate some good ideas about revenue generation and the City Administration has not invested much time in pursuing. One such idea involves what Steve calls the Heavy Truck fee that would be applied to new construction projects. In any event, over the last six months the discussion has gone too slow, and in the most recent meetings the Administration disclosed the basis for charging fees on permits for new construction is based on a stale study from 2018, and in addition the City does not appear to be capturing additional revenue when the estimated cost of a statement of work increases when compared to the actual costs. In other words, I'm not sure the City totally understands their cost structure and whether the current fees are appropriate not only given today's cost structure but the costs for the next 10 years or so. With my experience in aerospace and technology, I will provide guidance on how to have a robust process and one that can be updated annually.

One additional item: I note from 2013 the expenditures for "General Government" was about \$660,000 and for the Police Department the 2013 expense was \$1,336,000. However, for 2022, the General Gov't expense was about \$1,210,000 and for Police it was \$2,005,000. In other words, the rate of increase for expense for General Government costs more than doubled while the increase for Police was only about 50%.

Storm water system: what changes would you want to enact? What would they cost? How would they be paid for?

I view the topic as a sleeping giant. The initial steps before we commit to an action plan would include 1) develop a current map that defines the current status and risk points; 2) get to work on generating easements for the places that need/will need access (telling an owner that it is their issue because there is no easement does not feel right); 3) all should agree the fixes are not to develop "general" revenue but to address a real issue and

ensure we have a situation that works and continues to work through active monitoring.

The City Council appears well on the way to establishing what they describe as a Stormwater Utility – the steps and studies and analysis will involve complexities and the Utility won't likely be established until 2025 or so. I understand that Yarrow Point set up such a utility a few years ago and the initial monthly rate per lot was something like \$14; however, some are saying that based on updated information the monthly rate might double to \$28.

I agree that establishing a Stormwater Utility is a prudent way to go; the era of funding these costs through the General Fund is now problematic due to increased annual costs and the need for infrastructure.

Based on the meetings that I observed, my view is the City Administrator has a long way to go before we can responsibly and effectively set up the utility. They are going to need financial experts and people who understand financial processes and setting up appropriate checks and balances within the Utility to prevent unwanted surprises at best, and legal exposure at worst.

One question is who pays – under the model, there would be an allocation to property owners, likely based on lot size or based on size of the lot that has an impervious surface – in other words, if my lot is all dirt and my neighbor same sized lot is all concrete, then my neighbor gets a higher allocation. There are pros and cons to each approach, and so I can't quite commit right now – my focus would be to ensure we set this Utility in the right way and avoid the Yarrow Point surprise that seems to be coming.

How many City of Clyde Hill council meetings have you attended?

I first became exposed to City Hall about 18 months ago when I had a small matter to discuss – at that meeting I observed opportunities for improvement - so since that time I have attended just about all meeting either in person or virtually (from memory, I may have missed two). In addition, I have gone back to the website more recently to re-read the

materials and listen to the meetings of the City Council, Planning Committee and Budget Advisory Committee. One last observation is that given the volume of material and the importance of the issues/responsibility, I feel my recent status as “retired” provides me the bandwidth to make the necessary time investment.

On Mon, Jul 17, 2023 at 1:29 PM <brad@pande-cameron.com> wrote:

Of course-- we are not voting until all three have answered our queries!

-----Original Message-----

From: S S <ssinwell@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, July 17, 2023 1:29 PM

To: brad@pande-cameron.com

Subject: Re: Clyde Hill Position #2

Brad - thanks for the email. I'm on a little out of town trip today, it is ok to respond sometime tomorrow ?

Thanks,

Steve

Sent from my iPhone

> On Jul 17, 2023, at 12:20, brad@pande-cameron.com wrote:

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> Steve,

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> We appreciated your mailer and I have a list of questions that I would
> appreciate answers on. We are a household of 4 voters.

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> What proposed changes to code are you going to advocate for?

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> What is your position on the proposed Land use/ design restrictions

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> Budget: what is your mechanism to insure its balanced and does not run
> in the red?

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> Thanks,

> Brad

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