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October 8, 2010

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LAND CONSERVATION
AND DEVELOPMENT

To: Land Conservation and Development Commission, John Van Landingham, Chair
Department of Land Conservation and Development
635 Capitol Street NE, Suite 150
Salem, OR 97301-2540

Re: Portland Metro Area Urban and Rural Reserves Designations: Exceptions to the
Director's Report

Chair VanLandingham and Members of the Commission,

I filed a valid objection to the Portland Metro Area Urban and Rural Reserves Designations. The Department issued their Report, including responses to objections, on September 28, 2010. Pursuant to OAR 660-025-0160(4), I want to enter the following exceptions to the Report.

My real goal for this exception is to share my views with you and to try to correct some potentially misleading information.

The objection to the Portland Metro Area Urban and Rural Reserves Designations filed by Mrs. Sandra J. Baker contains some information that might be misinterpreted.

The December 16, 2009 letter from O'Donnell Clark & Crew LLP on her behalf that is attached to her objection appears to suggest that the Multnomah County Reserves Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) was "manipulated by the Chair of the MCAC who owns property immediately to the east of the Property."

But the CAC did not have a Chair. The committee elected one a committee member (David Treadwell) to be our spokesperson to serve as a media contact. Our meetings were facilitated by Jeanne Lawson, an independent contractor hired by the County, who is very experienced and professional. As far as I know, Ms. Lawson does not own property near Mrs. Baker's.

The CAC was composed entirely of citizens, selected to represent a broad range of views from all parts of Multnomah County, urban and rural, developers and engineers and real estate agents. We had many lively discussions, and we worked hard, but it was a privilege to serve on the committee.

The CAC meeting summaries were sent out to all committee members for comment and review. I did not have any unique responsibility with respect to submitting suggested revisions to the summaries. The committee often had only a day or two to provide comments on the meeting summaries so everyone just did their best to correct problems that they found. I don't remember any rules prohibiting private citizens from suggest or request changes in the meeting summaries; staff was usually very accommodating if the request was reasonable.

Public comment time at most meetings was limited to 10 minutes (total), but everyone was urged to submit written comments to the committee, and many people did, including Mrs. Baker.

As you may know, I have been following the Portland Metro Urban and Rural Reserves process for my neighborhood since early 2007. I knew a lot about the Reserves process before I was selected to serve on the CAC.

Mrs. Baker attached to her objection a copy of an email that I sent to a group of people who already supported Rural Reserve designations for the West Hills. Because I had been doing land use volunteer work for my neighborhood before I was selected to serve on the CAC, I made sure that I asked a lot of questions and tried to clearly understand the CAC protocols as they were developed.

The CAC was asked to play an active role in getting information about the Reserves process out into the community. I sent that email to a relatively small group who want to protect the wildlife habitat and healthy headwater streams in the area, people who were already very interested in making sure the West Hills were designated as rural reserves. The goal was to persuade them to share their views with the two members of the Multnomah County Board of commissioners who represent the neighborhood. The goal was to alert a group who already had an opinion, and motivate them to communicate those opinions to our County Commissioner and the Chair. The email does not urge them to contact the CAC.

The CAC's protocols urged us to communicate with our constituencies about the Reserves process to ensure that they were well informed about the status and the process. It was understood from the beginning of the CAC process that some members were there to represent the views of their neighborhood, but we were asked to set any personal interests aside when it was time to make decisions.

I came to the CAC with an unusual amount of background knowledge about both my neighborhood and about the Reserves rules and process. It took good arguments and data to persuade me to change my mind on some things, but I made a special effort to listen to those who's viewpoint differed from mine to ensure that I heard both sides of some key piece of information, and because I love to learn.

Thank you very much for your time and your consideration.

Carol Chesarek

