

ShoreScore Update

Sept. 17, 2010

A Newsletter For the Friends of WSSA

ShoreScore



Sept. 9th Planning Commission Meeting – Review

At the Commissions meeting last week timing of the remainder of the SMP process was discussed as were concepts for regulating bulkheads (now called shoreline stabilization measures). The **schedule** proposed would produce a draft set of regulations near the end of the year. A public hearing would be held early in 2011.

After describing how they would regulate **bulkheads**, staff received a go ahead to begin drafting regulations for new bulkheads. These will be quite strict, as you might imagine.

For **existing shoreline stabilization**, staff recommended that revetments of any type within 5 feet of the high water mark (OHWM) be considered a bulkhead. They would allow you to maintain and repair up to 50% of what you have now. Beyond that, they would require the repair to consist of “soft stabilization” treatments.

WSSA has objected to both the 5 additional feet landward (which would encompass many more properties’ retaining walls, declaring them bulkheads) and to the forced use of soft stabilization. Given wind, high water, and wave action witnessed on our lakes, soft stabilization is, at best, unproven and might jeopardize both property and the lake. There was no discussion of our recommendation.

You will find the complete Commission agenda of that meeting at this link – [Sept 9 PC Agenda](#)

You will find WSSA’s position statement at this link – [Position Statement](#) (Look for “Proposed Principles...”)

Sept. 22nd Planning Commission Meeting – What’s Anticipated

After dealing with other planning matters at their meeting this week, the Commission will entertain the next round of staff recommendations this coming Wednesday (22nd) at 6:30PM at City Hall. They will take up shoreline Critical Areas, Vegetation Requirements, and Marinas.

At this writing the agenda material has not been released. You can keep checking for it at – [PC Agendas](#)

Critical areas include wetlands, streams, steep slopes, fish and wildlife habitat, and floodplains. It is the latter point that should gain attention of 50 to 60% of residents on Lake Sammamish, more on Phantom Lake, but few on Lake WA. Why not the latter? ... because few properties on Lake WA are mapped by FEMA as flood prone.

If your property shows as having a 100 year predicted flood elevation on your property, extending beyond the OHWM by a recommended 50 ft. setback (!), your rockery, wall, embankment, etc. would be declared a **flood protection measure**. Yes, staff would let you maintain it. You could not harden or extend it, though and they likely would require a permit process to do anything.

Check your property’s features at - [Bellevue Property Maps](#) (Be sure to activate the Layers feature!)

Vegetation Conservation will also be discussed this week. Again, staff recommends the first 50 feet of your property be regulated. Here's what they've told us they will seek –

- Native vegetation is preferred and removal of native vegetation is restricted unless part of an approved plan.
 - Up to 40% of vegetation may be removed subject to an approved plan that includes appropriate mitigation.
 - Tree preservation is a priority and follows similar rules in other parts of the City.
 - Existing landscaping may be maintained in existing condition.
 - New development is required to meet an established landscape standard.
 - Vegetation management practices are restricted to environmentally neutral means.
- The overall objective is no net loss of ecological function.

WSSA is concerned with the reach of 50 feet upland. This matches the reach imposed by the 2006 Critical Areas ordinance which was excessive. In addition, one must ask – “What is native vegetation; one plant or a significant area?”

For trees, we were told that the rule should be “*prune, but do not remove*”. For vegetation, you should seek to retain the same ratio of native to non-native vegetation or to improve that ratio.

When asked about the basic rationale driving these recommendations, staff responded that ***native vegetation habitat is needed by native wildlife.***

As noted above, the staff report and recommendations to the Commission have not been published at this time. WSSA will formulate a response after their release. (Yes, this does put us at a disadvantage. The Commission likes material in advance. We have expressed our concern about these delays.) Simply put, WSSA will point out the over regulation of private property with arbitrary measures for very vague reasons.

Your Support –

We thank you for your continued support. We seek a balance between urbanized residential use of the lakes and their shorelines AND preservation of ecological function using effective means and measures.

We encourage you to attend the PC meetings and to seek opinions from those who don't necessarily agree with our concerns and positions. Consider the facts, as well as the lack thereof, decide where you stand; then stay involved. Your lake and your property are worth it.

Please provide your financial support, if you see the issues the way we do. Make your checks payable to: “WSSA” and mail to PO Box 6773, Bellevue 98008

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