

ShoreScore Update

June 18, 2011



Commission Begins SMP Deliberations

Having conducted a public hearing on May 25th, the City Planning Commission will begin deliberating staffs' proposed shoreline regulations this Wednesday. Their schedule calls for consideration of comments received at the public hearing. As we reported to you in the last ShoreScore Update, these comments were delivered over nearly four hours, so they're copious. As we go to press with this issue of ShoreScore, the comments have not been published by the City. Instead, we suggest you listen to the proceedings online at Bellevue's "BTv" site. The hearing's divided into two sessions. [Click here for session 1](#), or [Click here for session 2](#).

We encourage your continued involvement. Given the appointment of several new Commission members, it will be important that residents continue their presence at these meetings. Next Wednesday's meeting will convene at 6:30 PM at City Hall.

FEMA Floodway Regulations

At the Commission meeting on June 8th, a hearing was held on proposed changes to City codes to bring Bellevue into compliance with federal regulations pertaining to floodways. WSSA was concerned that the proposed regulation changes might affect shoreline regulations and was represented at the hearing by board members and our attorney, Charles Klinge.

Several important distinctions: (1) Floodways are different from floodplains. Only Kelsey Creek in Bellevue has a floodway – characterized by flowing waters as would be found in rivers and streams such as this creek. (2) Floodplains typically extend from a floodway beyond the banks of the moving waters and are the limit expected to which water levels might rise in a "100 year storm" (also known as a 1% chance storm), (3) While it does not have river-like waters, Lake Sammamish has a floodplain that FEMA currently has set at an elevation of 37 ft. (NAVD88), which is some 6.5 ft. above the Corps of Engineer's Ordinary High Water Mark of 30.6 ft.

Based on issues raised by WSSA and our attorney, the Planning Commission did not adopt Staff's recommended changes but instead asked for Staff to make changes to the proposal. This topic will again be on the PC agenda next week.

FEMA Floodplain Regulations

Our monitoring of the floodway and floodplain topics has revealed additional regulations that would be imposed on shoreline properties. However, these would fall primarily on Lake Sammamish, not Lake WA or Phantom Lake. Why only Sammamish? Lake WA essentially does not have a threat of floods given that lake's water level is managed by the locks. Phantom has a floodplain designated but has no endangered salmon, one of the driving elements of these regulations.

A court ruling has stipulated that the area below the 100 year flood elevation (called the Base Flood Elevation or BFE), is critical habitat and is needed to support endangered species. Various restrictions are called for in local codes to comply with the court ruling under threat of federal action under the Endangered Species Act.

WSSA and our attorney have requested more information so as to detail how both the floodway and floodplain restrictions would be reflected in Bellevue codes and what their impacts would be.

What Will It Cost You to Redevelop or Remodel?

WSSA's efforts to represent shoreline homeowners and provide you with information that is not always clearly communicated by the city (and often escapes public scrutiny) requires your continued support. Over the last two years WSSA has spent more than \$75,000 assuring professional input to and oversight of the SMP process, insisting on a rational approach to meeting State requirements.

Some property owners, recognizing the potential impact of the regulations, have contributed more than a thousand dollars each to our efforts. Unfortunately, less than 20% of shoreline owners have contributed. Those who've donated clearly recognize the proposed regulations will not produce real environmental improvements, will negatively impact property values, and, should you desire to make changes to your property, will result in tremendous restrictions and costs. Even maintenance of your yard will be restricted.

How much is our effort worth to you? We ask that you consider both what we've accomplished and that the SMP process is not complete.

If the draft regulations are approved, the potential cost implications to just TWO permit applicants would exceed what WSSA has spent! Consider this an investment against your being one of those two applicants.

HELP US HELP YOU!

Please donate so that we can see this process through, with strong consultant/expert advice.

Mail a donation today to: WSSA, P.O. Box 6773, Bellevue 98008