

REPORT ON SOUTHSIDE CIVIC ACTIVITIES

for

League of Women Voters from Pam Went

Coalition of Southside Neighborhoods: In July the CSN held a forum at the Fire House Performing Arts Center for City primary candidates that would appear on their ballots. It was well attended and the response was good. They will be holding a second forum the evening of October 4th, same time, same place. All City candidates are invited along with candidates for County District 1, and plans are to give other County and school board candidates an opportunity to introduce themselves as well. In addition, the CSN intends to hold educational forums if and when the EIS for the Chuckanut Ridge property has completed its first phase. This will enable citizens to understand their part in the process and aspects of the draft they may wish to formally comment on to the COB.

Chuckanut Mountains Park District: Citizens in both Skagit and Whatcom Counties came together a couple of years ago to investigate ways to protect the unique Chuckanut Mountain Range from development and unmanaged tourism. At the suggestion of former Mayor Mark Asmundson the group began to investigate a “metropolitan park district” as defined by our RCW. After holding informational meetings throughout the proposed district for nearly a year, a petition campaign was successfully completed in order to place the concept on the ballot for voters. For what ever reasons, the whole business only came to the attention of some folks in Skagit as the required Boundary Review process was under way. Fear of new taxes and of the power of eminent domain (and likely logging and development interests) have now fueled this angst into the organized resistance the CMPD faces and that you’ve likely seen in letters to the Herald. Lawsuits are being threatened as the CMPD advisory group continues to forge ahead with a fundraiser at Larrabee State Park on the 8th and ongoing informational and educational presentations for both the public and the Boundary Review Boards.

Fairhaven Neighbors: The City recognized Fairhaven Neighbors association has entered into a “facilitated” process organized by the COB in the hope of resolving differences between the people who live and work there and several developers who own land in neighborhood. Although a spring of 2007 survey with a highly significant response rate makes it clear that both residents and merchants support height limits and preservation of historic character, attempts to put in place code to enforce these has met with resistance. The process is ongoing.

Buzz: Two new FOUR-story buildings to include office, retail and 10 condos are in the permitting stage for 12th & Donovan, the present gas station site. The Southside News shop in Fairhaven has closed. The Fairhaven Laundry is slated to become a Banner Bank branch which will offer various amenities including meeting space for community organizations. And Fools Onion, on Harris Avenue, is now serving lunch!

There's probably more, it's been a busy summer!
Here's to a great year for our LWV!