

Blaine City Council

Feb. 13, 2006

When the times comes for the perennial" renaming of Blaine contest" I am suggesting the name ByPass. If you consider that the Truck Route by design, I-5 with lack of bus service, and the Railroad which has a stop but does not stop, the name ByPass seems appropriate.

Don't get me wrong. I am a firm believer in by passes. Specifically, heart-by-pass surgery can be life saving. Thou usually a somewhat last resort procedure when other approaches have failed they may not occur until some damage to the heart has taken place. I see Blaine as having had a triple or quadruple by-pass and some damage to it's heart---Central Blaine. As with heart-by-pass surgery there is a healing process and there are scars.

The City is in the recovery mode and is assessing the damage. One does not really do this for some time after the surgery. It then becomes a process of determining what can be done to recover vitality and a purpose for continuing. At times the patient may need a pacemaker to allow for greater activity and to act as a governor when an attempt is made to exceed what the heart is capable of. I'll let you come up with an analogy for the City. The problem is you cannot pick and choose when it comes to your body. To do this may cost you your life in spite of a successful operation. The City however, does have some options.

When I-5 was built, when the truck route was built and I imagine when the railroad was moved to its present configuration, a number of local businesses and residents were required to move. The Federal and State governments have a way of making sure this happens. At present the same situation has come up with the Peace Arch crossing expansion. I asked one of the "elder" realtors in town what he would estimate to be the number of homes that have been lost or displaced by these acts. He said "I don't know an exact number but it must be quite a few." As we are well aware these are losses that the City or the home owners have no control over. However, the City of Blaine has the authority to regulate where and what may be constructed by use of zoning. It would be sad if zoning regulation inacted by the City produced the same effect as the construction of I-5, the Truck Route and the expansion of the Peace Arch facility---loss of single family homes. These folks are the part of the heart of Blaine that didn't leave town when the heart attack took place. They stuck around, paid their bills, supported the schools, churches and voted for levies to pay for streets and other infrastructure. Now is the time for the

City to stepup and support these folks as well as the business area of Central Blaine. There were zoning changes inacted in the past that specifically affected single family home owners that were flat wrong and not to correct those now is reprehensible.

I urge the City Council and Staff to seriously review any proposed zoning changes that would negatively impact single family home owners. For many of these people their home is their retirement and much more. To diminish its value is unacceptable.

Hopefully, the by-pass didn't kill the patient! He is alive and with luck will recover. Hopefully, the Council will take to heart my concern for the future of the single family homeowners of Central Blaine. With careful thought and judicious use of the zoning tools you have the ability and duty to save the heart of Blaine in spite of its many by-passes.

Sincerely,
Dennis Olason
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