

Planning Commission
City of Bellingham
210 Lottie Street
Bellingham, WA 98225

February 19, 2008

RE: 2008 Group P-1 Proposal by Applicant Haskell Corporation to change Neighborhood Plan and Zoning from Light Industrial to Planned Commercial for property in Area 4, Fairhaven.

Honorable Commissioners:

On behalf of the Board of Fairhaven Neighbors, I respectfully urge you to recommend against a Zone Change for Area 4 in Fairhaven as requested by the Haskell Corporation. We believe that the applicant's development objectives can be met under our existing zoning codes. We strenuously object to a rezone before our Neighborhood Plan has been adopted. The general concerns expressed in our letter to you of February 8, 2007 remain uppermost in our minds:

1. Building Heights for proposed structures
2. Protection of Padden Creek and Estuary
3. Stormwater mitigation
4. Parking and traffic impacts
5. Loss of Light Industrial Property

In addition, we identify the following specific factors that support our appeal:

- Extending the Planned Commercial Zoning Classification from Area 5 into Area 4 could have serious, unintended, long-term consequences.
- Such a rezone would remove the target property from further regulatory control.
- Approval would violate the City's Memorandum of February 14, 2008 concerning Group P-1 Proposals that states: "Rezoning of Industrial zoned land should not be considered until the results of the Industrial land supply and demand study are known."
- Any decision on such a major portion of Fairhaven's land area should be deferred until the Urban Village Sub-area Section of The Land Use Chapter of the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan has been completed.
- Since the property spans the Fairhaven Historic District's Approach and Influence Zones, any development and/or rezone affecting it should be given close scrutiny.
- A similar rezone proposal was deferred in 2007 pending completion of the Fairhaven Neighborhood Plan Update. This Update is now in process for your review.
- We should distinguish between the property and the applicant. Rezone applies to the property, no matter who is the owner or developer.

We greatly appreciated Mr. Fred Haskell's collaborative participation in Land Use Subcommittee meetings and discussions during our review of the neighborhood plan and wish to point out that most of his suggestions were incorporated in the proposed new section for Area 4. A copy is included for your reference.

We welcome and look forward to participating in the Design Charette proposed by the Planning Director and we feel strongly that the consideration of the Haskell Rezone Request should be deferred until that charette has been concluded and our new Fairhaven Neighborhood Plan has been adopted.

Yours truly,

Vince Biciunas, President
Fairhaven Neighbors

CC: Mayor Dan Pike
City Council
Planning Director Tim Stewart
Fred Haskell
Ronald Jepson

Encl: Area 4 Land Use Fairhaven Neighborhood Plan Update