

City of Sedro-Woolley

325 Metcalf Street

Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284

Dear Mayor Anderson, Mayor Elect Wagoner, Members of the City Council (Kevin Loy, Germaine Kornegay, Brenda Kinzer, Hugh Galbraith, Rick Lemley and Brett Sandstrom) and City Supervisor/Attorney Eron Berg,

I am writing to all of you so everyone has the same information from me concerning your ordinance # 1827-15 adopting a moratorium on land use activity in the mixed commercial zone.

First let me give you some background on my interest in this matter. I am one of the trustees on the board of the Central Skagit Rural Partial County Library District. My interest in the Central Skagit Library District stems from my interest in the youth of our area. I am a retired elementary teacher. When I was teaching, I saw students who were discriminated against because they were poor. If they lived outside of the city limits they could not use the city library without paying a fee. If you can't afford food you are not going to pay for a library card. This was why I agreed to be on this board.

Our Board was appointed by the Skagit County Commissioners on March 25<sup>th</sup> of 2013 and we held our first meeting on April 25<sup>th</sup> of 2013. For our first year in existence we had no funds so we financed our focus groups, mailings and everything we did out of our own personal funds. Shortly after we got started we were invited to meet with Mayor Anderson, Mr. Berg and the City Library Director Ms. Peterson. At that meeting there was a lot of talk about not duplicating services and how great it would be if we went together and located our library in the City of Sedro-Woolley. The abandoned Bank of America building was even given as a suggested possibility along with maybe the old Chevy Dealership. At that time, we were advised against locating outside of our district by the people training us on our new roles from the Washington State Library. After a year of collecting information, ideas and exploring options we were finally able to hire a director, rent an office space and get started providing some services. Once again we met with Mayor Anderson, Mr. Berg and Ms. Peterson along with our new director and once again we were encouraged to look into locating outside of our district but inside the City of Sedro-Woolley and to look for ways to collaborate. We then had a setback when our newly hired director had a family emergency and resigned to move back to her family in Iowa.

So we started a new search for a director and have now hired Ms. Jeanne Williams. Jeanne started on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July and we have been growing by leaps and bounds ever since. She is a very knowledgeable, organized and energetic leader and took the initiative to seek legal advice on where we could locate and then found the location that we are looking into on highway 20.

This location is central to our district, it is near to Cascade Middle School, where all students from our elementary schools located outside the city go. We could afford to provide services there such as meeting rooms, a Wi-Fi Café which would provide some sales tax revenue to the city, a separate children's area and it already has ADA restrooms. It is large enough to allow for expansion and the building itself seems to be in good condition so the cost to make into a library that all could be proud of would be minimal. It has plenty of parking and it even has its entrance on "Central" Avenue. Having had the previous meetings with Mayor Anderson and Mr. Berg encouraging us to locate in Sedro-Woolley, I thought they would be pleased with our plans, so you can imagine my shock and confusion at this moratorium ordinance. Having our library in this location would bring a lot of people into the city of Sedro-Wooley. We have many people in our district who have been going to the Mount Vernon, Burlington, Upper Skagit and even Whatcom County Libraries. I was one of those people because I live between Clear Lake and Big Lake. Due to my affiliation with the Central Skagit Library I now eat at many of the local restaurants (Iron Skillet, Lorenzo's, Joy's Bakery, Coconut Kenney's, Mestizos, Dairy Queen and Little Caesar's rather than Mount Vernon), go to the Skagit Farmers here rather than Burlington, shop at Oliver Hammers, Woolley Market, True Value, Shelley's Shack, Rite Aid and Walgreen's. These places would not have seen my dollars if it were not for this library, so I think we would bring a lot more business into town than you realize. But if your message is you don't really want us here then I realize we will need to go back to looking for locations outside of your city and you will still have an empty restaurant until someone else tries to make a go of it in that location which has not been successful yet. I notice there is another restaurant just down Highway 20 closed and for sale too. I really am surprised and I don't think you really want to give the message out to all of our patrons that we are not welcome here.

For these reasons, I sincerely hope for the benefit of all that you will reconsider your moratorium.

Sincerely,



Chris Silves