To: Coos County Commissioners,
    County Courthouse
    250 N. Baxter Street
    Coquille, OR 97423

Date: October 15, 2014

Re: Proposed changes to Coos County Zoning Ordinance

I am a property owner in Coos County and I received the original undated Measure 56 notice on September 13 from the Planning Department regarding this Public Land Use Hearing. I read it multiple times, and truthfully I found it very difficult to understand and was unsure of what the notice really meant as far as personal ramifications for me.

First, I would like to address the letter written by Jill Rolfe, the Planning Director, to the Board of Commissioners written on October 7, 2014 regarding her responses to Ms. McCaffree’s letter, dated October 2, 2014. In the 4th paragraph of that letter Ms. Rolfe wrote: “Ms. McCaffree needs to stop making allegations that the Comprehensive Plan has been kept from her and other citizens.” I want you, as a board, to know that I personally went to the Coos County Planning Offices on May 14, at approximately 2:30 P.M. and asked Amy Dibble if I could please see the Comprehensive Plan of Coos County. Ms. Dibble told me that it was not available. She also said that the county had received a grant and someone was going to start scanning it so that it would soon be available on line. She said it was many volumes and she did not know where they were. That day I sent an e-mail to Jody McCaffree telling her that I tried to see the plan and was denied access. I was also in the Planning Offices in February 2014 and was involved in asking to see the Plan and Amy said that she did not know where it was. I believe this is part of the reason why Ms. McCaffree wrote in her letter that the Comprehensive Plan was not readily available to citizens, which is the truth.

Also in that same document to the Board of Commissioners dated October 7, 2014, Ms. Rolfe makes the comment in the third paragraph that: “All of the meetings involving language changes are public. Citizen Advisory Committee is the second Wednesday of the month, Planning Commission is the first Thursday of the month and the Board Meetings are posted.” I just want to point out that although I am retired, and thus able to attend your hearing today at 10:00 AM on a week day, when most Coos County Citizens are at work, I would like to believe that the Board of Commissioners and the County Planning Department has the best interests of its Citizen’s at heart. After all, Goal 1 of the Coos County Zoning and Land Development Ordinance is about “promoting and protecting the public health, safety, convenience and general welfare”. But after reading Ms. Rolfe’s document in response to Ms. McCaffree’s letter for the hearing on 2nd of October, when I was out of town, it seems that instead Citizens had to come to the hearing to try and protect their due process rights that you, our elected Board of Commissioners and the Planning Department, were attempting to limit, and in some cases completely deny. I do not believe that I, and all other citizens in the county, should be combing through copious quantities of materials reviewing changes that are difficult to understand for the average person, attempting to second guess your intentions behind your changes. I attended a Planning Commissioners Hearing a few.
months back and it was clear from what I observed, that the Planning Commission was simply rubber stamping whatever Ms. Rolfe thought was a good idea. This is terrifying to me, as I do not feel I can trust what the county is proposing. Ms. Rolfe says, in the original hearings announcement letter I received, that “the changes proposed are not authorizing any type of development, but are streamlining processes, addressing readability, and updating outdated language.” It appears to me that this process is being done under that guise of “just housekeeping”, but it is really meant as cover to slip in a number of changes that take away the rights of citizens and property owners.

I do not believe, for example, that anyone other than me, or a person representing me as the property owner, should be able to take out a land use permit on land I own. It is unbelievable, and shocking, that you have written a document that would allow a corporation to take out a permit on my property creating eminent domain without a public need and without landowner consent. I have to ask why the County would be proposing such a language change in CCZLDO section 5.0.175 unless it was to aid and abet corporations that are seeking eminent domain for a pipeline to run through my property, or perhaps to frack my land, etc. That is not housekeeping, as the planning director has indicated, it is a criminal action. While the Planning Commission proposed some changes in this language, it is completely up to you, the Coos County Commissioners, if you want to incorporate those language changes. I request that you protect me as a property owner, not turn my land over to whatever corporations want to use my land for their profit and benefit. Please make those language changes that protect property owners. Please do not decide to allow this to move forward as written.

In the small amount of time allotted to review these changes I see many due process issues, including the use of eminent domain. I have no idea how many issues I have missed, since the limited time frame has not allowed me to read and understand the ramifications of the hundreds pages of proposed changes, written in the legal language of land use code, where I have to look up every legal term in order to understand. I am outraged that you can’t be trusted and have to be watched at all times. Please grant me, and the public, more time to review the massive changes to the ordinance and keep the record open. I believe 120 days for citizen review and the gathering of legal opinions would be much more reasonable. I ask that you do not make a decision on this until the public has had more time to review the proposed changes and make comment. Please extend the time for review and stop allowing fears about a grant with a timeline to take away our citizens’ right to due process.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my comments.

Janet C. Stoffel
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