Town of Coupeville
Council Workshop
February 10, 2009 -- 5:30 - 6:15 pm
Island County Hearing Room

PRESENT: Mayor Nancy Conard, Councilmembers Dianne Binder, Bob Clay, Ann Dannhauer, Molly Hughes, and Jim Phay.

STAFF PRESENT: Public Works Director Malcolm Bishop, Clerk Treasurer Judy Thomas

EBEY'S LANDING TRUST BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF PRESENT: NPS Rick Wagner, Reserve Manager Mark Preiss, Boardmembers Marilyn Clay, Jan Pickard, Lisa Meserole, Craig Holmquist, NPS John Krambrink

Joint Meeting of Town Council and Ebey's Trust Board

Discussion of potential property acquisition

Mayor Conard showed a map of the area owned by the National Park Service located on the east side of South Main (east of Coupe's Village and Prairie Station) and south of highway 20, and explained that the town may have an interest in owning part of that area for the Reclaimed Water Project.

Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve and the National Park Service have been looking for a site for a visitor center/contact station for the Reserve to be located either in a historic building located in the Town of Coupeville, or located in the historic district somewhere else in the reserve. A property for that purpose has been identified on the southeast corner of Front Street and North Main Street (the McPherson property, aka the Colonel Haller house); which abuts the town-owned property where the Johnson building stands. Informal discussions have taken place with the McPhersons, the Reserve and the Town about the Town purchasing an option on the McPherson property and trading the option for the NPS property. The Town has budgeted to demolish the Johnson building, and would still do that, but that property could be landscaped and used for parking; and included in the land trade. The McPhersons are willing sellers.

Rick Wagner, speaking on behalf of the National Park Service, explained how the NPS land on south side of Highway 20 is a quagmire, it has good soil but it is a wetland, and the Town's needs, for this land, are a perfect fit. He provided a flow chart of how the purchase/exchange agreement process would occur. Essentially, the Town would trade assets, an option to purchase the building from the McPherson's and the Johnson building lot, in exchange for the NPS property on the east side of South Main. This deal is beneficial to NPS and Ebey's as an alternative to the Town purchasing the land for cash. The proceeds of a cash sale go into the federal budget with no benefit directly to Ebey's. A trade of assets provides a direct benefit to Ebey's.

Mark Preiss, Reserve Manager, provided a summary and history on the Haller House and explained that the Reserve and NPS have looked at several different options and are very excited about this option. This is the first time this has been discussed with the Council.

Mayor Conard explained that the purpose of the joint workshop with the Town Council and Ebey's Reserve Trust Board was to get a consensus of whether the Council and Board were interested in them proceeding with proposal to purchase/trade this property. Specific action will require formal Council action in the future, such as approving an option agreement.

Jan Pickard, chair of the Trust Board noted that they are really excited about this proposal. The Town Council did not express any opposition, except Councilmember Dannhauer expressed concerns about having a huge paved parking lot (around the Haller House). Craig Holmquist responded to Dannhauer's concern, that development and improvements to the property will be done through a very public process that is satisfactory to everyone.

ADJOURNMENT OF WORKSHOP: 6:26 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: MAYOR:

_____ _____

Judy A. Thomas, Clerk Treasurer Nancy Conard, Mayor