

Molly McGuire

From: Sarah Fletcher <fletchsa1@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, August 30, 2026 8:50 AM
To: Council; Jeff Thomas; Molly McGuire; Jessi Bon; Planning Commission; Bio Park
Subject: Fwd: JCC Zone - Factual Error - Very Dishonest

Hello, I had previously emailed JB Gibson and staff with regards to my opposition to the rezoning of the JCC. First of all, I would like to know how come the JCC got to send in an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan when it has on the Let's Talk that comments to the Comprehensive Plan can only be done between September 1st and October 1st. So, does that mean preferential treatment is being given to the JCC? Why are they allowed to put in an amendment, but not the rest of us?

And second of all, for the life of me, I do not know how on earth the Planning Commission could find what the JCC is proposing is "compatible with the adjacent land use. They have got to be joking.

"Planning Commission Finding: The City agrees that the proposed CPA is compatible with the adjacent land use and development patterns. Adjacent land use and development patterns include both single-family residences and commercial buildings. The proposed amendment would redesignate four Single-Family Residential parcels to Commercial Office".

The JCC is planning on including four single-family homes combining them, and then asking for those additional 4 properties to be zoned "Commercial Office." If you take the current JCC, not including the FASP building or those 4 single family homes, then that is not the same footprint, it is much larger. It is way too big for the single family neighborhood. Why do you not get that?

And in DP-2, it has **PRIORITIZE HOUSING**," EXCEPT the JCC is **NOT PRIORITIZING HOUSING**, in that it plans on **removing** four single family homes for which the city receives property tax, but by removing the four single family properties, the city will lose out on all that property tax because the JCC is a charity, therefore, does not pay any property tax. So, why do they bother putting that in when it is factually not correct? It is a waste of my time reading such drivel.

And where the JCC is located, there is no "high-capacity transit, there is actually not even any public transit, so what on earth are they talking about and what exactly do they mean by supporting public transit when there is no public transportation, I mean, why put that in when it is drivel. Please ask them to explain because it is not obvious.

"DP-2: **Prioritize housing** and employment growth in cities and centers within the UGA, where residents have higher access to opportunity and high-capacity transit. ..the UGA will include a mix of uses that are convenient to and support public transportation to reduce reliance on SOV travel for most daily activities. The SJCC is the fifth largest employer on Mercer Island. The designation will ensure that this employment continues on the Island. In addition, the SJCC is extremely well-served by bike/trail infrastructure for alternative commuting method." Where the JCC is situated, they will not have higher access to opportunity and high-capacity transit, in fact, there isn't even a Metro bus which goes by the JCC, so what is the point of DP-2?

Third of all, if you look at the definition of "Commercial Office," Commercial Office is designated "office space intended for business operations," but the JCC is a charity (not a business) and has **absolutely nothing to do with providing any office space**. You see, the JCC tried before and asked the City to approve rezoning the JCC to CFZ, but that did not work, so they are trying to get the zone rezoned to CO. And if that doesn't work, then they will no doubt try again to get it rezoned to something. They are relentless. So all it is going to take is for this current council to vote to allow the JCC to get their rezone. And the neighbors once again have no say, and whenever they try and say something, they get ignored. How is the JCC a "good neighbor? Please explain what they have done to ingratiate themselves to the neighbors. And "isolating two houses" doesn't sound like the neighbors first of all have any idea about what that means. What happens if that is something the neighbors don't want? And didn't they put an illegal fence up? When is that going to be removed?

And "DP-6: Adopt land use and community investment strategies that promote public health and address racially and environmentally disparate health outcomes and promote access to opportunity. Focus on residents with the highest needs in providing and enhancing opportunities for employment, safe and convenient daily physical activity, social connectivity, protection from exposure to harmful substances and environments, and housing in high opportunity areas."

EXCEPT, ONCE AGAIN, it has "focus on residents . . ." "in providing. . . housing in high opportunity areas," except, they are not providing any housing they are **removing** four single family homes, and don't ask me what a "high opportunity area" is, so once again, ask them to explain what they mean exactly because it is not obvious. They are not providing any housing, they are removing housing, so they need to remove that segment in its entirety. It is a waste of time.

And "DP-8, The SJCC includes a garden for fresh food production." They already provide all these under their current zoning, so what is the point of the DP-8? Are they trying to inform everyone that if they are not rezoned to Commercial Office, they will stop providing fresh food? That is ridiculous to state that if that is the case. I am quite sure the City would allow them to provide fresh food under the current code, not to mention there is a community Pea Patch garden at the other community center, they don't need to have their code changed to Commercial Office just because they provide a pea patch.

And they keep referring to Mercer Island as an "Urban Growth Area" EXCEPT we are not deemed "Urban Growth Area", we are deemed "High Capacity Area" in which the City needs to add more housing, not remove it which is what the JCC is proposing:

And when I read: As has been documented, the **SJCC facilities are nearing the end of their useful life** and the strict nonconforming provisions of the single family code cannot accommodate the needed remodel/refurbishing/renovation." Please ask them what on earth are they talking about?

In 2014, they built this beautiful performance hall, so are they trying to tell everyone that that newly-built performance hall is at the "end of its useful life" in just over 12 years? They are delusional. I went to a performance not so long ago and I was still impressed with it as I was in 2014.

[New performance hall at SJCC offers both art, opportunity | Mercer Island Reporter](#) "The new facility features nine skylights, blackout shades for films during the day and hearing loop system for senior citizens and the hearing impaired. An adjacent foyer can double as a multi-purpose space, featuring play structures for kids during the day and then transforming into a reception space for events. The room it opens to will serve as JCC's library and a magnetic wall can hold rotating artwork, posters and other exhibits."

And if the facility needs an elevator, contact West Coast Elevator LLC who can install a brand new elevator for under \$500,000. And even if that costs \$1 million, and let's say, they need to have a brand new HVAC system, let's say that costs \$1 million to \$2 million, that is a lot less than the \$25 million they say they will need to improve their facility. How did they come up with the \$25 million cost? Whoever is telling them that they need \$25 million is spinning them a yarn. They really should get other bids as it seems they are being ripped off.

And it isn't helpful when the Planning Commission are tasked with advising the City council, yet at the last meeting, the Planning Commission didn't have a clue about all the possible zones the JCC could have versus CO. CO is the completely wrong zone for the JCC, I just don't know why the Planning Commission thought it was a great zone for them to have when it isn't, far from it.

And neither is "Public Institution" in that that is for government services and public schools (not applicable zone for the JCC), but **Residential-15 (R-15) is the more perfect choice out of all three**. I don't know if you realize the impact of your decision, but it is huge. Why is the JCC wanting to amend their zoning, like what can they not do under the current zoning versus CO zoning apart from wanting to build taller building structures.

"The single-family residential land use designation (R) represents areas within Mercer Island development will be predominantly single-family residential neighborhoods. Complementary land uses (e.g., **private** recreation areas, **schools**, home businesses, public parks, etc.) are **generally supported within this land use designation.**"

And as far as technical errors, under MICC Code 19.04.020, it states "if required by the Design Commission," except there is no longer a Design Commission.

And someone needs to ask if the JCC is allowed to rezone their zone from Residential to Commercial Office, then what about the other institutions on the island? Will every single club, private school, etc be allowed to change their zone and if so, then does that mean that every other single family neighborhood can be changed to Commercial Office? Otherwise, if the answer is no, then that means, this is being done as a spot zone. And this is what it has on the MICC about "spot zoning:"

“Understanding “Spot Zone” in Mercer Island Zoning

In Mercer Island’s land use context, a **spot zone** refers to a zoning change that applies to **a single property or parcel**, rather than to an entire zoning district. It is a type of **rezoning** — changing the official zoning designation for that specific parcel to allow a different use or set of development standards than the surrounding area..."

EXCEPT under the Growth Management Act, Spot Zoning is not allowed. “Mercer Island does **not** currently allow spot zoning in the way that would be considered a **violation of Washington’s Growth Management Act (GMA) or the state’s “spot zoning” provisions.**”

“Spot zones must be **identified in the comprehensive plan** and must meet the **minimum standards** for land use, transportation, housing, environmental protection, and open space." Except once again, the JCC is not offering any housing, not offering any open space.

And the JCC needs to go to the Washington State Department of Commerce for approval according to the GMA: **State review:** Development regulations, including spot zone rules, **must be submitted to the**

Department of Commerce for approval.” So, let’s say, the City council approves this rezone, but hasn’t consulted the Department of Commerce, what happens then?

What the Planning Department should have been asked is "Is the JCC zone change a Spot Zone change? And what the Planning Department should have answered was “yes, what they are asking for is a Spot zone change.” And as far as the City having their rezone, they should not have been allowed to have that rezoned as that seems like it was also a "spot zone change" which according to the GMA, Mercer Island is not allowed. I am copying the City attorney to ask him if what the City and what the JCC are asking, are they spot zones? And he needs to respond as to whether what the City did was legal and whether what the JCC's rezone request is legal. It doesn't seem that either is legal. Thanks.

Sarah Fletcher

I do not know how you are going to correct this misinformation, but you are now going to have to make a statement that you got the zoning completely wrong for the JCC and are going to look at how to amend the Comprehensive Plan, otherwise, it just looks like you are complicit in allowing the JCC to be rezoned under dubious circumstances. Deeming the JCC "Commercial Office" is the completely wrong classification for the JCC. It has nothing to do with Commercial Office. Did you not read the Code before approving the zone amendment which is being passed now to the City Council? All you had to do was ask was CO the correct zone for the JCC to which the City staff should have told you, and you shouldn't have gone off what the JCC's attorney had to say as it was obvious that she was clueless about the Mercer Island City Code.

And there were a few other things that bothered me, but I will just mention one of the things that bothered me and that was the Motion ID 3-C MICC 19.15.230(F)(2)(a). Granted, the Planning Commission did not approve the Motion, but I was concerned about the wording **"isolate a pocket of residentially designated parcels"**. No-one on the Planning Commission asked the attorney or staff what they meant by that and would that be different to what is currently there. Did you know what they were planning to do and let's just say that you passed that and then added the clause "running with the land", do you see how neighbors would not have had a clue as to what was going to happen to their properties and you on the Planning Commission would have made it that this isolation ran with the land and do you realize that the neighbors would have had no say in the matter? That is not right at all. It is actually terrible.

And I am sorry, but the JCC wants to build 36 ft tall buildings. That is like 4-storey buildings in a single family neighborhood. I wouldn't want that next door to where I was living, would you?

I would like to know how you plan on correcting the misinformation because the way I see it, it looks dishonest and it looks like you are complicit.

And what the people standing up to speak just didn't get is that no-one is against the JCC, we all love the Stroum JCC, but what they are not getting is that what the JCC wants to do is enlarge the JCC from what it is to a large campus which is out of proportion to any single family neighborhood and the zone what the JCC is wanting to change it to is the completely wrong zoning for a charity not a commercial business. As a charity, they don't even pay property taxes so that is a lot of money that the City will be missing out on.

