

December 27, 2021

Dear Commission Chair Bugert:

It is with some sadness that I submit my resignation as your Community Development Director. My last day will be January 31, 2022. I will do whatever I can to smooth this transition.

Since day-one, you have followed through in your commitment to give me the support I needed in order to accomplish a great many things. Some of which you hadn't even told me I was needed to do! This position has afforded me personal and professional growth and an opportunity to have built new relationships that would have never happened had I not accepted this position. In my brief time here, I have successfully recruited highly competent, talented, and professional personnel, though recruiting for planners continues to be amazingly difficult. I accomplished a major restructuring of the *entire* department, created an entirely new STR division, and assisted with the creation of a new Code Enforcement Division within the Sheriff's office. Dedicated staff here made this a reality. It was not just me.

I have diligently worked to reduce legal liability to the county, and have clearly improved our trust and working relationship with the Prosecutor's office. I oversaw the creation of an entirely new short-term rental code and utilized a collaborative "*Task Force*" process to finalize that code and, uncharacteristic for eastern Washington, led what was also a collaborative "*Technical Advisory Committee*" process for code amendment and adoption of a new Critical Areas Ordinance, both in about a year of my involvement.

You have very talented staff who work diligently and faithfully in Community Development (CD). This is in spite of the few chronic and loud complainers who are constantly 'slamming' us in public. Their *outsized* voice seems to reflect continued disfunction, when there are clear facts to the contrary. Factually, and provably, several of them are the very reason for the continued conflicts we have to deal with. This criticism is at an intensity I have never before witnessed. And, as you know, I worked in several pretty contentious positions in the past. Dangerous wildlife? Salmon policy? Law enforcement? Tribal relations? Nope, by comparison development and building permit conflicts trump them all.

It is not the recent hearing, nor the outcome of that hearing that is the reason for my departure. I can accept that the process, "was what it was". It wasn't then, and still is not now, personal. However, chief among the reasons for departure is how that hearing illuminated a worsening relationship with one commissioner. This relationship clearly can't be fixed. It is getting in the way of my effectiveness, and is now also affecting staff. It is clear that I no longer have the confidence of the full board and I believe it is time for my departure to pursue excellence elsewhere. So, for the sake of the department I will step away and remove that conflict.

I will always remember the relationships that were built here, and the personal and professional growth I was witness to *for the staff* in CD. I am hopeful that the traction gained holds, and that they can move forward *as a team* and continue to grow and improve CD from here. I will forever be grateful for the confidence and full support shown me by Commissioner Overbay and

you, and from retired Commissioner England, as well. Without that trust and support, I...we...would not have been able to accomplish what we did, especially in such a short time.

Please take care of what remains of a rebuilt CD, particularly the staff. It would not take much to lose the ground gained. These staff deserve your continued support. They've more than earned it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' followed by a horizontal line.

Jim Brown