I'm compelled to counter statements Mr. Bailey of "Neighbors to Save Wellington Park" (Letters to the Editor, March 4 edition of the Woodinville Weekly) made because I believe they are false, misguided and intended to stop the development of what is sure to be a spectacular community asset for generations to come.

First, the Wellington Park plan is not "highly controversial." It is a well thought-out vetted plan that leaves fully 75 percent of the site natural/open green space. This community park is not in violation of the Growth Management Act, the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) or the Snohomish County Parks Comprehensive Plan as Mr. Bailey submits. That is simply a false statement.

Second, Snohomish County had every right to demolish structures on the site. The structures were dilapidated, posed a public hazard, were being vandalized and improperly accessed and certainly not on any historic registries. Snohomish County acquired all the proper permits and in no way did demolishing those old ugly buildings pose a limitation on alternatives under SEPA. The intent of 197-11-070(1)(b) is to forbid the construction of permanent structures on a site prior to SEPA approval.

But speaking of alternatives available to Snohomish County, the Council could still decide that a park isn't in the best interest of the county. Since Snohomish County is in violation of the Fair Share Housing Allocation, thousands [of]low-income housing units could be constructed on that site to bring the county into compliance. According to the 2025 steering committee update, the Growth Management Act mandates identification of sufficient land for all types of housing with parameters for the distribution of affordable housing.

In addition, the CPP HO-4 requires that elected leaders prevent the concentration of low-income and special needs housing in a few areas.

My understanding is there are 83,918 households projected to be cost burdened in Snohomish County, with 53 percent of the need allocated to unincorporated areas or roughly 44,476 households. The south end of Snohomish County has the least available low-income housing in unincorporated areas, and given the requirements for distribution, Snohomish County must provide low income housing for approximately 20,000 families.

Written by Readers

The Wellington site would clearly be the best location available had the park plan not already been well underway. A roof over head is much more important to decision makers than parks and recreation.

If the Snohomish County Council gets too much legal pressure about the Wellington Park plan there is a great likelihood that the Council could pull the plug on the park plan and alternatively capitalize on the site at its highest and best use.

I might also add, that the added expense of countering legal action proposed by this small group of Wellington residents that fight every great development that happens in our region if they don't get their way, will likely be a factor in the Council's consideration of moving forward with this park, despite the fact that they have miraculously secured park development funding already.

The fact is, acquiring financing for a great park is 10 times harder than for low-income housing (think Federal Block grants here, folks). There are no sources of funding comparable to block grants for park developments.

I would hope that those folks opposed to the park development can see the handwriting on the wall and band together in an effort to support the Snohomish County Parks Department and staff immediately before it's too late.

Otherwise they might just save Wellington Park for a major housing development where 100 percent of the green space is developed complete with sewer hookups from Brightwater, and we lose a great park opportunity forever. And that is the truth.

Kristen Rose, Woodinville

CORRECTION

Written by Readers

In the March 18 letters to the editor section, the Wellington Elementary writers were incorrectly identified. The first letter was written by Olivia Anderson, the second was written by Sophia Chiesa, the third letter was written by Sally Beaudette and the fourth letter was by Maya Bhat. The editor apologizes for the error.