

La Conner Town Council
Mayor Ramon Hayes
Planning Commissioners

October 20, 2022

Dear People:

Ever since learning of the Jenson property coming to be owned by Town, I have been asked regularly about my opinion regarding its highest and best use. I live directly behind this land.

I can tell you that the soil here should be appreciated as something beyond an "empty lot". To quote David Hedlin, it's rated in the top 1% of agricultural soils in the world. Composed of eons of salmon and other gifts from the Skagit River, it will grow food, or anything we could ask. To pave it would be a grave error.

I continue to feel its destiny will be determined best by citizen involvement, but I have been visited more than once by an idea, and want to express it now, while certain environmental conditions are vivid:

Climate change is upon us. It no longer can be an abstraction or something that is happening to others. Our air is sometimes dangerous to breathe, and there is already rampant suffering by creatures for lack of rain. Our ecosystem is deteriorating.

Forestry folks can already see the decline in health of one of our most prevalent maritime specimens, the beloved Western Red Cedar. It is predicted that this tree and much of the present ecosystems in the Pacific Northwest will not survive as we know them today. We should be thinking about what we can do for the next generations.

I believe this land that the Jenson's gave could help serve the future needs of La Conner by becoming a community garden, (a popular idea already), one that included a **Climate Change Nursery**. This nursery could begin immediately growing seedlings of tree species that will be in great demand in future years: drought tolerant pines and oak trees, for example. Forward thinking biologists are using the term "migration assistance" to describe ways we humans can help mitigate the damage we've created by supporting the ecosystems of the future. La Conner residents will want to grow more of their own food. (There is currently no garden space for Channel Cove residents.) Yards and our public spaces will need shade from drought tolerant trees. We will need to replace dying vegetation that has supplied us with oxygen and cooled us in the summer. Our parks will need to be replenished with a variety of new plantings.

All this could be accomplished with the many Master Gardeners in our area and other volunteers, and managed by civic groups such as the La Conner Garden Club. It could be a teaching tool for students. Furthermore, as others have

noted, there is a lot of grant money available through the USDA for projects such as community garden space.

And it would be a place to come together in common purpose.
Please consider this proposal. I believe future generations will thank you.

With Gratitude,

Maggie Wilder
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