

One concept for Moore Clark

To whom it may concern,

As a longtime community member, I've seen many of the changes to the parcel at the south end of town, heck, I can remember when San Juan cannery, canned green peas there. It had been a fish cannery in its earlier history, and became a fish food manufacturing ^{plant} for several decades after the peas. I've thought about this property for decades now, and from my perspective, I believe my opinion is worthy of consideration. When the property was functioning in our past, we weren't really a tourist town, we were known as a place to go drink and catch smelt, the smell was not pleasant here, that's why people just stayed drunk much of the time. It's only been since the fish food factory shut down, that we can now reasonably breathe, we don't really want to return to a noisy or smelly industry. When recently passed Vaughn Jolly, put efforts to continue the waterfronts development, he felt pushback by the businesses that saw his efforts as bringing in more competition than the town could handle, so his plan faltered, and he sold it to the present owners, who seem to be struggling to see different potentials. I keep hearing rumors of the place becoming a place to build airplanes? Why not have the port swap properties, giving the present owners some property up at the airport, then have the port build a convention center in collaboration with the county and LaConners chamber of commerce? We could create parking by going up a layer both at the north and south ends of town. If the lot east of city hall were two levels, we could put a second hundred cars there, above that lot could be apartments, that would block next to nobodies view of the bridge, and still be below the thirty foot height level. a sky bridge would keep convention attendees cozy as they park, access their units, and attend the convention and other events and businesses up and down the street. The barn would be rebuilt to be a conference hall, large enough to handle weddings, concerts, and larger gatherings. The white brick building would be remodeled, turning it into a

smaller dinner/drink/theater hall. A thoroughway would be built between Maple hall and the old brick building. I've done drawings that show how it doesn't just take business from the rest of town, but in reality, we don't have enough restaurants to handle a few hundred people at normal breakfast, lunch and dinner schedules, that most conference attendees are used to. LaComer is absolutely viable, as a place to attract conferences too. Many of our businesses struggle to keep their doors open in the down side of winter, creating a wintertime income stream is a needed part of our future. We need to diversify our income stream! Audobon would be a no brainer, along with the Nature Conservancy. I'd bet that with a little marketing we could be an annual destination for numerous groups. We could be the grease for our economic wheels, a place where people would come to learn, and cod their heels, without freezing their noses and toes. We could bring outside money to town, we could employ our community. We could work with the port, county, tribe, DNR, and local business to create a dynamic destination. The housing units above the parking lots, would house most of the conference attendees. A D U's, could house a few more. In his book "Strong Towns", Charles Mahron, writes of this sort of strategy to strengthen the resilience of a town such as ours. We already have the thing half built, in Maple Hall. We have a totally under utilized certified kitchen already. We are the perfect place for such a dream and scheme. Some of the metal buildings could be turned into meeting rooms and vendor spaces, all in an efficient spot. As an attendee of numerous conferences, I've seen many different venues, from a theater in Ritzville, to Yakima's convention center, from Asilomar, in Monterey, California, to the Red Lion in Portland and Vancouver. It's like we're on auto-pilot, to this possibility.

Some of the wood from the barn would be repurposed in the new structure. Organizations would find us so cozy, and close to transportation hubs, that they would give us serious consideration. Paine field, Vancouver, Bellingham, Seattle, I-5, we are in a perfect spot. pretty, rugged coastlines, walkable beaches, famous bridges and farmland, architecture and art.

If we care about our community and its future financial and physical security, we need to create ways to bring more outside money in.

The present owners could be partners, swap properties with the port, and the port could partner with the town, or perhaps a group of non-profits could get involved, help us with writing for grants and public relations pitches.

This prime commercial waterfront property needs to create income, not just be turned into low income housing, although some of the units built above the parking garages could be for the people who are employed by the convention center. Approximately 30 units could be above the south parking lot, while about 70 units could be above the north parking lot, next to the south basin, easily.

Within existing zoning, we could create a community owned asset of massive proportions. In the future, one of those fantastic passenger ferries built here, could be a part of said convention center. A quick scenic water taxi from near any of the nearby airports. A marine research vessel part of the time, an emergency boat in the event it's needed. In the past, this town was not but a stinky spot, now it's not. We've progressed to where we're a very desired spot, to hang your coat on a peg and spend a few days, or a week. Our cool little town needs to see, that we can't be selfish mimby's, we have to create creative ways to share them, those creative endeavors that come from the mucky delta clay, and the

sea, in its tidal slosh and sway. Some of us are steady in our stance to slow the rate of change, while some of us study ways to change, without it being much noticed by the community, just less taxes to pay. Who's to say that we can't own our own convention center, the place could be built to its present height, with a cool caveat that an appropriate firetruck for taller buildings be housed there on the property. With a touch of further creativity, we could rebuild the barn to a more modern design, yet in its present footprint, where it blocks many a soul's view of our famous bridge. Heck, even the housing I propose for the parking lots, have nice views, to the east, the units would look at the catholic church, to the west, the convention center, bridge and Swinomish channel. We could probably pitch a proposal to Holiday Inn or Red Lion, but then they would extract most of the profits. We need to think this through quite thoroughly. Maple hall makes the convention center already started, it's a great jumping off facility for this future phase, just as the Tulip festival is a jumping off festival, leading to a future food festival, that will soon fill some of our summer weekends. The barn would become multi purpose, Concerts, vendor spaces, perhaps some housing units, for special guests and presenters. The platform would become a reception area, enclosed, classed out, it would be the ferry terminal, the brick building would be a dining hall, with history museum crossover. Oh, (as a sidenote) the museum were to move to the waterfront, they would get massively more visitors, and if the present museum were converted to six high end rentals, their income stream would probably be largely increased. Partners at play, town, port, county, Lincoln theater, Skagit history, Skagitonians, Mavrik, others, present owners.

Town hall could ^{become} part of history museum, if the town moves itself to part of maple hall. The parking lot between the two present eyesores would become a covered, and encloseable courtyard. First street would continue as one way to Caledonia, no parking. Parking between Calico and the platform, would be diagonal, and mostly for registrants coming to check in. The double decking of the parking lot on third will more than make up for the lost parking where the covered courtyard would go.

There's no doubt what commercial zoning is about, economic development, income production. This prime property could be thought of as an arm of the Swift center, up in Sedro-Blolly. A collaboration, port, county, and city. Yes, we would see more people in town, thus the need to think this through. Most conferences have pre-conference, special day long seminars, on Thursday, which brings easier money, because most of these early arrivals would eat at local establishments, not at the convention center. Usually, the formal conference convenes ^{Friday} after a buffet style breakfast from 7:00-8:30, with welcoming remarks, housekeeping, introduction of keynote speaker, their presentation, Q&A, filling the main auditorium from 9-12. Friday sets the tone, sometimes the breakout sessions are sold by the each, as with the meals, keynote presentation, entertainment and such. Our local kids could get culinary schooling at Skagit CC, maybe get a decent job cooking at the cooperative convention centers. Attendees usually trickle in all day Friday, getting registered getting parked and settled in. Sometimes the Keynote isn't until Saturday morning, with tours and special meetings filling Friday. Saturday evening is usually for socializing, around food drink and music. As a tight little town, we could showcase our creative artists and architecture, boat building and bridges, our alternative power production, and proud community.

We would soon be employing the community, creating the "Crowning Jewel". Our cool little town would then really be cool, welcome complete, with our own eccentric town fool. Yeah, a pestering pesterer, who thinks himself a fool, but seems to be the only one that knows how to use it. As dignified a gent as you'll ever meet, ^{however,} in a costume all bets are off, he'll dance ^{up} and down the streets! Yet in the auditorium he would soon be known as the filler of seats, for his own renowned speech, about how to solve some of our most perplexing problems.

As a lifelong community resident, living most of it below sea level, making his living from the towns surrounding silty clay, he doesn't consider his crafty writing, as mere child's play, ~~he~~ ^{he} has been considering the towns quandaries for many thousands of days! Sometimes it seems as though ~~he~~ ^{he} sees quite clearly through the foggy haze, a futurist visionary, with a steadfast and steely gaze, like a captain at the helm, of a crewless ship coming down the straits! Yeah, sometimes he has to surf the waves, and make nervous the stowaways that trust his vision, but only part way. It's not easy listening to him talk about tsunamis and floods in our future, but he's been studying the situation here for a very long time, maybe we should take him seriously, really listen to what he has to say. Maybe he's more than a joker, perhaps he is truly a sage, he certainly has a way with putting words down on a page. Nope, not many miscues on display. Sometimes he feels like he's being played the fool, given that he's ignored at nearly every turn. When he told the county that the garbage was too wet to burn, they bought the trash burner anyway, only to have it fail in its mission to create electricity. Its failure was soon evident, whence it was dismantled and hauled away. Some think ~~he~~ ^{he} a smart assed know it all,

Some find him bitter as gall, while nobody has heard him ever address a crowd at town hall. Three minutes at a town council meeting doesn't cut it, neither does fifteen minutes at a port commission mtg, or three minutes at a public hearing or political forum. A doctoral dissertation does not get uploaded in an elevator speech, it requires a listener to really get their head in the game. Otherwise, to the gutsy presenter, people just seem lame. Are they really too lazy to listen to some concepts that might pull them out of their comfort zone? Maybe people are already overloaded with too many things, they can't imagine that another "thing" might improve their life, help them achieve the mission statement of it ~~the life~~, can't imagine that someone else has been thinking and studying, and working on ~~their~~ behalf, since before they were born.

If the town wants to limit conferences to 3-400 attendees, one must understand that that's not as efficient as larger groups can be. Larger groups, that stay three days, create way more cash flow, per overhead cost, than smaller groups. In such a case, (smaller amount) I'm not thinking we could build an Auditorium hall where the old barn is, which would be a real shame. Building a hotel there is the next best thing. This would allow the housing above the parking lot to be dedicated to lower income housing. The question becomes, where do the hotel guests park? A single level lot on first street, (where parking is now) wouldn't be very appealing or cost effective. Perhaps the tribe on the south of Caledonia could collaborate with the building of a parking garage, with additional housing above. It's a long shot that anything I propose might be considered, given my history of being pretty near completely ignored, going back to the eighties, when I discovered that my "mighty microbe" compost, helped control numerous fungal diseases, yet very little interest came to it, or the creator of it, which sometimes makes me scream in my dreams.

In my own community I seem to be as obscure as a stick floating down the Shagite, swirling in eddys, washing up on the beach, being nothing but flotsam on the shore. Nobody has yet asked me about how my dike housing would really "work" for our town. I've studied this place for far longer than my own mere life, my grandad came here as a young man, was part of Lillidbey Islands history, my other grandad begat my uncles and aunts, that brought Ade Harbor from the beach, up the streets. Learned how to keep their customers happy, mostly around the havy. My uncles built housing, pumped water from the wells they dug, became mayors, and board members and real estate dealers. Somehow, I've been skipped, like a ship passing in the night, did we just see something slide bye our port side? It's as though I'm hidden, when I'm standing in plain sight, sometimes dancing and waving with a smile, sometimes with a tear running down my cheek. Maybe people struggle with the negatives that I feel, think I need to go somewhere to heal. I did that, a decade ago, I spent three years travelling the west, to read, write and rest. I read of our history, written by the best writers who were voyagers and discoveres, who wrote of their experiences, didn't have time to write about imagined things. Now it's how we create an economy, explaining a dream into a future reality, please Ms. banker, here out my scheme, doesn't it make sense to you, isn't it but nearly as simple as one and one making two? Yeah, I can see the sense in what you're saying, I'll let you use two letters of support as the collateral for the financing you request. Alright, I thought, my concept made enough sense to not just any old banker, but the owner of bank itself. I'd known all along that in the ears of the right listener, my ideas could capture their attention. I walked into her bank, (my bank) at just

the right moment, my elevator speech slowly spread like real syrup on a pancake, she became enthralled by the depth and breadth of my studies and contemplations. I didn't know what to expect, it was the first time we'd ever spoken ^{or met}. I'd always dealt with my branch manager in the past. Before long I could see that she was keen to both hear and listen, of course I had to explain my backstory, who is this character that comes forth with finely scrolled scribe, with ideas that should be brought to the light of day, not which to hide behind. I was asking for 5 million, when my equity wasn't much more than a quarter million, but she was thoroughly impressed with my manner, and speech, and how many things I'd done, places I'd been, without getting into debt, how smart I was to turn a sow's ear into a silk purse. I didn't give her the complete dissertation, but enough to convince her of the seriousness of my intentions, the logic, physics, and mathematics behind my plan.

An idea that comes to the clever and inventive mind, needs to be looked at, listened too, seen and heard, not be left behind, deep in the dark crevasses of our mind. Cheryl, she was giving me a chance, she was trying to be kind, felt bad about a branch of her bank, kinda leaving me in a bind. Neither of us yet knew that cancer would be coming into her view too. While I was out trying to get those two letters of support, one from the port, the other from the mayor of LaConner, she sold her bank, and died a short time later, which washed tears across my dreams, further complicating my scheme to build the dike that the town needs. I've been studying how to satisfy the wish lists of the community for a very long time. I had a farm aid concert lined up to be at the port, yeah, here in town. I had a plan to help the Hedlins make enough money on a three day weekend, to buy the neighboring Cram farm, more than twenty years ago. They were one of two entities to say

no, claiming to not want the tourists. Then kinda forcing the town to pay them for the ball field, could have been made a moot issue, decades ago.

When I approached the post about writing that letter of support, and mayor Hayes, they were somewhat in a daze, couldn't really capture the concept in their craniums, despite my hired engineers draftings and words of support. My patent attorney and I spent hours looking for "prior art", do you think it being patentable made any difference, or that I might be taken a bit more seriously? I don't really like being involved with questions with "No" for the answer, but there's one. Is it supposed to be my problem that I was gifted with a creative and inventive mind? In the past, people like me would put their creativity to tipping over outhouses, or putting one up on the roof, or in a nearby tree!

I had too many disasters to distract me from common pranksterism. As a pretty young boy I remember realizing that the world was a pretty dangerous place, people could die in a drowning, or a piece of military hardware could mangle your face, or kill you outright, post haste.

As the fifth of six kids, in a dysfunctional family, I became a bug eyed observer. Some people think it was because of my twin sister pushing on me as we were being born. The story goes that I came out so fast that I slid off the end of the bed, where I bonked my head, on the red tiled floor in the brand new maternity home. Yeah, I was the first little fella to be born at the place, the trio of us on the front page of the local paper, we did grace. For many years my nickname was owl, and I did get to where I could see well in the dark of night, all over the place. It was in my youth that I learned to be quiet and motionless, waiting patiently for an approaching flock of ducks, or an elusive buck.

I learned to see what others missed, sometimes I saw things that would cause my eyes to get blurry from the tears that would flow down my cheeks. I challenged myself to change our present trajectory, to one more sustainable. This notion of waging war to create peace, is an idea that needs to see the scrap heap of history. We need models of alternatives to fuming and fighting, silly back biting, and short sightedness. We need to create what we have not yet seen, it's the only reason I persist. What I see, is from years and years of listening to my long and short time neighbors, what people want, is not always what we need. Sometimes we think we'll get a grant to cover the costs, writing a fancy letter of need is way easier than putting a money making plan together. We have a special place, it needs to be part of the changing of the hearts of man. When people come here, they should hear and see a "Strong Town", that has not only the coolest art, but the coolest emergency management plans and projects that create money enough to pay for our own infrastructural needs. We have to see the handwriting on the wall, Doctor Trump has a pain in his rump called Washington. If we think we're going to get federal help with our waterline, or sewage plant upgrade, anytime soon, we should step back and see the facts, we have an opportunity to make serious money, but we're not going to get there without visionary leadership. It requires a serious business acumen to think this size of project through. Between the subject property of approx 5 acres, an acre of south parking lot, the port parking lot of another three acres, and the 10 acres that the port has tabled for redevelopment, that's nearly 20 acres of one story development, nearly 40 acres of floor space with very little filled needing to be purchased and hauled. Between the school, port, and town, we could easily

host conferences of 12-15 hundred attendees. We wouldn't do this in one leap, but slow but steady steps. We should get busy, bringing in bigger and bigger groups, sort of like canoe journey on the west side of the channel. If we included the tribe in our long term planning, our society would be much better served. The housing issue has been in my view for a ~~very~~ long time, I've seen the problem of normal stick frame construction for a very long time. As a soil scientist, I learned the sad reality of how little we understand or appreciate the production of a forest. We build with sticks, and littler steel sticks, that the tornado or hurricane laughs at, but we can't help but arrogantly declare that "we'll rebuild", oh yeah. Heck, doesn't it only make sense that some sensible gent might come up with a new design. Wouldn't it further make sense that the fella might have studied the physics and math and psychology of man, in the process of diagraming his visionary plan. Wouldn't he have asked himself the questions that would probably come from the community? Wouldn't he be fully ready to answer the questions that might come? Little did he expect to be lambasted for building a model of how to get some of what the community said they wished to have on the Jensen property. Why would I even bother to keep my hopes and dreams alive, you may ask? It's only because I've learned a little in this lifetime of mine, about patience, persistence, and yes, perseverance. I've learned what others haven't, yet. I've traveled, on my own, and through the well written words of writer after writer, late into the night. Our history is of innovation. We innovated the jetty, that ended the once great run of Chinook salmon in the Swinomish channel, which led to the

innovation of the Marblemount fish hatchery. We innovated the building of plastic boats, wooden and aluminum, steel and fiberglass. We innovated the best fish food in the industry. We even innovated the only orange bridge in the state. We're a history of history, from the early pioneers, to the ancient, who've been plying these waters for perhaps tens of thousands of years. Some of our innovations weren't all that noticed, while others turned into quite a show, like the Tulips and Peppodils. We became famous for the different types of seed we'd learned to grow. Yeah, they were a creative bunch, those that lived here, they could handle a froe, a spud a sledge, a wedge and a sled, they learned how to see and use their heads, cuz if they didn't, something could cause them to be dead. The water could drown you, or a falling tree could whack you in the head. Of course there were a few of us with heads as thick as lead, couldn't help but see them approaching, with a sense of dread.

As the 5th kid of an alcoholic, the observer in me saw the sense in seeing when to lay low, and hide my head. I learned to get lost in the fields and forests along the river, watched the fish and fowl, looked them in the eye, sometimes as I prepped them for fryin or bakin in the pan. I saw the river running high, watched it breach the levee, and couldn't believe how quickly it washed away! In the furious force of the waters flow, I saw that the manmade levee had not the final say. What should we expect, they're just long lines of piled up dirt and rock, with some clay mixed in to help it stay. Since they're seen as a necessary "cost" of farming, below sea level. We try to "minimize," the amount of money put to their maintenance,

with nothing spent on researching and developing any new design of the very important things. Dikes, especially those that are missing, are not understood quite the same as some of us ^{who} have the lions share of a lifetime, lived behind the river levees, and sea dikes. This letter ~~could~~ easily continue "ad nauseum", as some people have been ~~known~~ to claim, perhaps they fail to find any humor in my simple, self deprecating style. At least I see some fun in working to satisfy our communities needs, despite being seen as some sort of backwater bayou hayseed. In truth, I look quite dashing in a brown suit of tweed. There's no way I can reasonably expect most folks to read a dozen page essay, especially when the subject is as complex as clay, fire tax parcels, partnerships, innovations, thinking several generations out. Creating good jobs for our community, not just expecting our kids to all move out. As a farmland preservationist, I've had to figure a few dang things out! I'm not a nitwit who only knows how to shout, I've studied in depth about what I spout.

Sometimes it rattles my brain, trying to turn my prattle, into something that with which the community can reasonably contemplate and grapple. I don't really like people thinking I'm just a sour apple, especially when it's about the community's concerns, that I continually consider creative solutions. It's about this town and surrounding region, that my mind spends its time considering concepts with pragmatic reason.

It's the season for being thankful, it's the season for giving, it's the season for thinking about how in the future, we'll be ^{living}. Will we be conservative and not want to listen to new ideas, or will we appreciate innovation, heck, we gave Marrik some time

to explain the need for a sixty foot building. For some unknown reason, I've been boxed out of most discussions, despite being quite diplomatic in those that I have had. Most of the time it seems like people tire quickly from perhaps the tone of my voice, or perhaps it's the urgency of subjects about which I speak, and how many problems we could solve, if we'd just listen to someone who's a lifelong resident, someone who has observed, and heard the frogs song and swans snore, and the feel of the draft under the door. Hmm, and the shifting sands at the towns shoreline, and how we still cement our housing to the sub-tidal, silty soil. Hope, nobody seemed interested when I innovated a way to have new housing be able to accurately float up and then back down on its foundation without much damage at all. I sometimes feel a bit depressed, about evidently being thought of as a clay clod, when its from us silly clod busters, that we know how to hock hock, and keep back the rivers and bays, how we feed the world from this special mix of sand, silt and clay. If we don't think outside the box, our whole dang town could be part of the Skagit river and bay! It's as though nobody knows enough about the subject, to debate my assertions and assumptions, with any question at all. At least half of our towns residents would be under water during most high tides, if the dikes weren't here. I'd like to think I've thought this pretty thoroughly through, how the convention center draws worldwide visitors to see our creative architecture, to include my innovations, in housing, farming, emergency power production, fish production, and several other issues that are ~~interconnected~~ interconnected. I'm a permaculturist in the purest sense, I pursue numerous solutions, with multi-faceted projects, that fit together

like a hand in glove, quite literally. A handful of solutions at one time is much more efficient than each project being thought of singularly. The port has the mission of creating good jobs for our community, our community is responsible to educate our kids, and produce the said good jobs that the port promotes and helps get developed. County and city planning has to be focused on these mission statements and stated goals. All I'm trying to do is stretch us like the limber limb of a willow tree, maybe we can see, through the thicket, to the other side of the slough, and maybe see the dream from my view.

As a farmland preservationist, I believe I'm the only person who has devised a plan that creates sustainable jobs, affordable housing, with more income from our lower yielding ag. land. Raising a sustainable community has been my mission statement and goal. We have a history and culture based around manufacturing, and extractive resources, we are in our infancy when it comes to hospitality and tourism. Even though we send seeds and foods to the world, we seem to forget that we're a destination for the world. We are a prime place for not only producing, but marketing and promotion of our innovations, art, and architecture, value added farm products, seafood, education, these are all in our wheelhouse. Some of us see clearly through the foggy haze, don't even have to move the limber limbs, we can see at night, the coming day.

Sincerely,

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