

"The difference between a city and a town is sidewalks"

-Jane Jacobs

I would respectfully ask the Town Council to review the current policy on new sidewalks. These requirements appear to be somewhat arbitrary. I was recently told by the Town Planner, requirements such as the width of planter strips and frontage requirements are at the discretion of the Department of Public Works.

This policy has resulted in a varied application , recently most visible on the East side of Maple Ave. The Maple Fields development has no planter strip (perhaps to maximize the development) where as the other new developments do have 5 foot planter strips . In other areas of town planter strips vary from 2'3' to no planting strip. This policy has resulted in what I term "sidewalks to nowhere". It should be noted that a perfectly good ADA compliant sidewalk exists the length of Maple Ave. on the West side.

The sidewalks to nowhere on Maple Ave also represent a serious liability for the town. The short sections of sidewalk end abruptly, with as much of 12 inch drop at the edge of the property line. How long until some elderly person or child seriously injures themselves by stepping off the edge. It should be noted that a remedy would involve a requirement on the neighboring property. Surely these requirements as executed are not ADA compliant. Who faces a lawsuit in the event of serious injury, the property owner, the Dept. of Public Works, or the Town?

Part of the charm of La Conner is what citizens have done with landscaping their yards that front the street. Fruit trees , flowers, and sculptures all add to the feeling of a small town. Imagine a 8'plus strip running through all those yards. The Heritage Maple tree on Maple Ave. would fall within the current requirements. This natural landscaping has significant environmental benefits as it acts as a sponge similar to a rain garden that helps to reduce oils brake dust and other toxic road debris from entering the storm water system. The Town invested \$25,000 in a rain garden near the Fire hall which has fallen into disrepair. At one point the town contracted a consultant on rain gardens and permeable surfaces and the positive effects of reducing toxic road material for storm water runoff. There may well be a report from the consultant on file with the Town

The cost of these sidewalk requirements contribute to the cost of new homes, seemingly contrary to the goal of providing more affordable homes. Our personal situation has prompted me to bring this issue to your attention. The sidewalk requirements for our preliminary Plat Approval granted August 4th 2021 mandates 400 feet of sidewalk with a 5'planter strip. (see attachment). I recently had a developer look at the property, his estimate to comply with the



sidewalk requirements was \$100,000. This requirement would necessitate the removal of the existing hedge on the Caledonia St. side and would put existing utility poles in the sidewalk area, and would require realignment of the storm drain on the 4th St. side. The curb requirement would also add additional flow to the storm water system. It should be noted that a ADA compliant sidewalk runs the length of Caledonia St. on the North side.

I thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stuart Welch".

Stuart Welch

connection to that system. All utility improvements shall conform to the T Infrastructure Improvement Manual. Right-of-way and/or street excavation required.

(h) Parks, playgrounds and recreation;

Page 2 of 4

*This material was presented to the
Planning Commission 9/11/22
Town of La Conner Planning Department P
Ch*

No park, playground or recreational facilities will be required of this development fees are adopted by the Town prior to the issuance of building permits, payment required at the time of building permit application.

(i) Schools and school grounds;

The proposal is not located in the vicinity of the schools or school grounds. When built they will pay any applicable school impact fees.

(j) All other relevant facts, including sidewalks and other planning features that are conditions;

This short plat will be required to provide a 5 foot planter strip and 5 foot frontages on Caledonia Street, South Third Street, and South Fourth Street. ADA required.

(k) Whether the public interest will be served by the proposed subdivision and dedications;

The public interest is served by creating additional, affordable housing opportunities for the community.

(l) Compliance with the Town of La Conner comprehensive plan, shoreline management code.

The proposed residential use of the property is consistent with the town's Comprehensive Land Use and Housing Elements, and with existing zoning requirements. The property is located within the flood plain. All of the homes will be required to meet flood plain development standards.

D. PRELIMINARY PLAT CONDITIONS

Prior to approval of the Final Short Plat, the following conditions must be met:













