

From: [Oliver Orjiako](#)
To: [Jeffrey Delapena](#)
Subject: FW: The County's Permitting Process is Woefully Broken and it needs fixed
Date: Monday, September 16, 2024 8:17:24 AM

Jeff,

More, thanks.

From: Clark County Citizens United, Inc. <cccuinc@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, September 13, 2024 7:35 PM
To: Gary Medvigy <Gary.Medvigy@clark.wa.gov>; Karen Bowerman <Karen.Bowerman@clark.wa.gov>; Michelle Belkot <Michelle.Belkot@clark.wa.gov>; Glen Yung <Glen.Yung@clark.wa.gov>; Sue Marshall <Sue.Marshall@clark.wa.gov>; Kathleen Otto <Kathleen.Otto@clark.wa.gov>; Oliver Orjiako <Oliver.Orjiako@clark.wa.gov>; Jose Alvarez <Jose.Alvarez@clark.wa.gov>; Brent Davis <Brent.Davis@clark.wa.gov>; CommDev OA Land Use <CommDevOALandUse@clark.wa.gov>; sherrie@swca.org; Eric Golemo <egolemo@sgaengineering.com>
Subject: Fw: The County's Permitting Process is Woefully Broken and it needs fixed

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Clark County Council
13, 2024
P.O.Box 5000
Vancouver, Washington 98666

September

FOR THE PUBLIC RECORD AND THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Re: The County's Permitting Process is Woefully Broken and it needs fixed

Dear Councilors,

I grew up in a military family thinking the government's systems should work. As a member of Clark County Citizens United, my work with Clark County landowners has given me a unique perspective on local permitting processes and procedures. This different perspective offers me opportunities to see a dark side of the permitting system that I never knew existed in Clark County. CCCU has been called countless times, to work on many cases to help find permitting relief for landowners. This is happening particularly in the wetland and critical land permitting process.

These cases have created windows into this dark, underworld that is part of the county's system. And the Councilors are enabling them when they ignore the problems. Why? The cases are so numerous, it appears the system normally works this way. The landowners are innocently unaware of the hazards and damage that

will happen to their property rights, their land uses and plans they've made for their properties.

CCCU does the work to enable corrections to their permits. That includes extensive research that is critical to revealing the truth on the land. Very often, the research contradicts what staff reports indicate, and critical areas do not exist on particular properties. This means the landowner is innocent of requiring mitigations of some sort. We know because we have investigated the land and its history. We know what's really on the ground and the real truth becomes evident. We've seen old stock ponds mislabeled as wetlands. Stormwater runoff mischaracterized as streams requiring large buffers. Historical hayfields now deemed wetlands and requiring untold numbers of plantings. The list of obvious errors goes on and on and on.

- **CCCU writes reports that are emailed to the county on behalf of landowners.**
- **The landowners are innocent yet must spend precious time, energy and funds to make corrections to the county's faulty data contained in their permits.**
- **On occasion, after grievances are noted, the wrongs are overturned.**
- **To this day, never has any public department manager or staff admitted county data was faulty in their permitting system.**

From my perspective, I can't believe this comes from people who are public servants and tasked with being the guardians of the county permitting system. I can't believe this comes from public servants who took oaths to uphold the law and do the right things. I can't believe they are unable to fix obvious and tragic miscarriages in the permitting system. I can't believe they won't admit when they are so wrong, and insist that they are right, no matter what. I can't believe the County Manager and the Council let them get away with it. I can't believe the County literally forces the landowner into court, only to lose to the landowner, on the taxpayers dime. What kind of government is this, anyway?

It's not just one case we've investigated and found faults, there are countless of cases that follow the same pattern. Most troubling, staff's persistence and the lack of will to make corrections, when confronted with them in black and white. Staff goes silent and inaction is normal. But the councilors and county manager are silent, too. They are legally responsible for what these people do. All the while, the landowners are burdened with indecision, no occupancy permits, personal stress, extra costs and no finality. **NO ONE EVER BOTHERS TO RESPOND TO THEM.** In one case, the landowner has been waiting 6 long years! The landowner and taxpaying citizen should never have been put in this position to begin with. When is someone going to care?

This indicates massive department failures and speaks volumes about the flawed permitting system. Land owners should not have to resort to extreme measures to make data corrections that drive harm and cause further damage to land use restrictions with recorded conservation covenants on a deed to their properties. It

shouldn't require CCCU's interventions to make permitting corrections.

At this point, we've documented too many landowner grievances to dismiss this as a mere casual occurrence. That fact alone sends a powerful message that this permitting process is woefully broken.

I believe CCCU has only touched the tip of the iceberg. I also believe there are direct consequences to the county's housing affordability crises. God help all the landowners that have come before, and that will be coming in the future, if these failures are allowed to go unabated. It is clear, the Clark County government system is broken, and the elected policymakers need to fix it.

Sincerely,

Susan Rasmussen, President

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