

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

NORTH/EAST CITIES REGIONAL MUNICIPAL JAIL PLANNING
EIS SCOPING MEETING

<<>><<>>

January 8, 2009

6:30 p.m.

Seattle City Hall - Bertha Landes Room
600 Fourth Avenue
Seattle, Washington

KATHERINE CULLMAN, CCR 3001

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

I N D E X O F S P E A K E R S

Page

Mr. Edward Sherman 3

* * * * *

Court Reporter:

KATHERINE CULLMAN
VAN PELT, CORBETT & BELLOWS
100 South King Street, Suite 360
Seattle, WA 98104

* * * * *

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

EDWARD SHERMAN

I haven't done much public speaking, but I find it makes it simple if I can just sort of imagine that I'm addressing each of you individually and not a crowd. It doesn't make me so nervous. I will be trying to think of you as just a pal across the way here to whom I'm talking.

My name is Edward Sherman, and I'm a partner in a company called Pacific Plumbing Supply Company, and we -- the reason I'm here is that we -- we have -- we're very interested in where this jail would be sited. We want the best for the city. And I must commend all of you folks here tonight who are explaining the situation who are working with the city and are part of the city that you're doing a really good job. As I said a minute ago, you wouldn't find this happening in another country. This is just terrific. So thank you on behalf of myself and my friends.

I have -- I have two documents I want to submit to you for the environmental staff to study, and I'll present them to you after I finish up here. One is some questions I have about the -- about this site in relationship, this potential jail site, in relationship to the other regional sites. And then I have an e-mail letter that I sent a few days ago to the Blethens at the Seattle Times, and I also spoke with Puget Sound Business News and with the Seattle PI. And I have this letter, and I think

1 it's pertinent if you would allow me to quote a few excerpts from
2 it rather than speaking extemporaneously. It would be very fast
3 if I just read from the letter.

4 Just a few words to start, generally. I do have an
5 interest in this, I will tell you. I have a business that
6 employs seventy or eighty people, and we have 7,000 customer
7 comings and goings every month. We run a wholesale plumbing
8 supply distributor business, and plumbers and dealers come and
9 will call in their trucks all the time to pick up merchandise and
10 we have trucks delivery.

11 Anyway, you know this site was also temporarily the
12 home of the homeless. You saw all the publicity in the paper,
13 and from our offices you could throw a baseball about from the
14 outfield to the catcher, and that's how close our business is to
15 this site. So naturally we have interest in it.

16 But I'm more -- I'm also very interested in the best
17 for the people of Seattle, as you all are; we have that in
18 common. And the reason I'm here tonight is to tell you I
19 absolutely, one hundred percent, endorse this site that you're
20 studying here right in Seattle. I think it's -- it's made in
21 heaven. This location is directly, of course, next to the
22 existing jail, and a causeway can be put right across from the
23 existing jail to the new building right next door so that inmates
24 can go back and forth and under great security. You save so much
25 money. After the jail was built, you're going to realize for the

1 public of Seattle so many dollars of savings; huge amounts of
2 money that will be saved, because you will eliminate what you
3 would have if you went regional to one of the outskirts, where
4 there you have transportation with buses back and forth from the
5 old site, to this jail, to that jail, back and forth. That's
6 going to cost a lot of money in transportation and people
7 employed, and so I'm asking in my request is that that issue,
8 that cost, be studied with a projection to be made that what will
9 be the costs over a ten-year period for all of this
10 transportation back and forth to these regional sites versus no
11 cost with the jail site right here. There's going to be no
12 transportation; you don't have to hire any people. And you're
13 not going to realize that savings when you built this building,
14 but it's -- it's -- it's hand in hand, it's connected. So I
15 think part of this analysis of all sites should be the issue of
16 transportation to these outer areas versus absolutely none for
17 this site right here.

18 The second point is, in other words, another
19 relationship, I would like to see a ten-year estimate and a
20 twenty-year estimate of the overhead savings that will be made by
21 having the jail right next door versus one of these regional
22 locations. I'm talking about duplicate employees, duplicate
23 policemen. You see, I think there could be some shared
24 opportunities here with the buildings right next to each other.
25 I don't know what they could be, but I'm thinking about a number

1 of people employed to watch the inmates; I'm thinking about food
2 and cafeteria and things like that. Seems to me you're putting
3 up a complete new branch of the jail way out in Shoreline or
4 Interbay or Highland Park, you don't need it, because this is
5 tremendous. You're right next door.

6 So anyway, if you do go regionally over a ten- or
7 twenty-year period, you're going to have a lot of duplicate
8 employees that you won't need here. And so I'd like to see here
9 zero costs and all these regionals, costs. And what kind of
10 money are we talking about? I think over a ten-year period
11 there'd be hundreds of thousands of dollars; in a twenty-year
12 period, twice that. And the savings would be very meaningful to
13 the people of Seattle because it may forestall some sort of
14 incremental raise in taxes, which we don't need.

15 So I don't think you can look at this jail just as,
16 what's the impact of building the jail? It's also, what's the
17 impact ten years down the road and twenty years down the road of
18 the extra expense necessary to operate branch jails as opposed to
19 the one right here.

20 I am in love with the one right here for the reasons I
21 just stated; the proximity is wonderful. And if I just may say
22 so, I think the real issue is going to be that the City Council
23 and the County Council really get together and cooperate and make
24 a marriage in heaven between them two and figure out a
25 partnership or joint venture in this land so that -- so that

1 there's some additional jail space for the city folks and for the
2 county jail folks, all in one building.

3 There can't be any fighting between them because the
4 people they're trying to satisfy, the constituents, are the same
5 in both cases. We all are the city of Seattle citizens; we're
6 also, obviously, a county citizen. So we have a common purpose,
7 and to me it would seem that the city of Seattle's attitude would
8 be, Okay, county, okay, city, make a deal because it's going to
9 benefit all of us with a lot of savings and a lot less trouble.
10 Make a deal. Let's not have any political factions that keep us
11 from making a deal on this site. It's perfect.

12 I also think, if for some reason, that a deal for some
13 reason can't be made, there's other property right down here in
14 Seattle that could be investigated to see if it were available to
15 sell -- to be sold. I personally know a lot of developers
16 around; I went to school with some of them. Maybe some of them
17 are sitting on a piece of land right nearby who would be happy to
18 build the building for the city or sell the land to the city and
19 let them build.

20 You see, one of the major reasons why this is so
21 wonderful is because it's already zoned, zoned for jails.
22 That's really a key point. What's going to happen? What kind
23 of impact is there going to be? You're going to have an
24 expanded jail; that's all the impact is going to be here.
25 Nobody's going to look twice at this. They're not going to

1 think it's an issue.

2 But you go out regionally, and in every one of these
3 regional jails here you got the issue that none of them are
4 zoned for jails. For instance, the Highland Park area where we
5 are is zoned manufacturing industrial. And in the manufacturing
6 industrial zoning it's maybe a twenty- or thirty-page document,
7 and it lists maybe a hundred items of what's permitted and not
8 permitted. And clearly number fifty or fifty-five says jails,
9 not permitted; work-release, not permitted. Residents nearby
10 and businesses nearby. For instance, we're also zoned
11 manufacturing industrial. We went out on the limb, and we went
12 and bought our property to develop it into a building such as we
13 have on the strength of the zoning laws, with the protection of
14 those zoning laws. I looked at it personally. I saw that
15 issue. I felt perfectly comfortable in building the building.
16 Invested millions of dollars in this. Hundreds of West Seattle
17 residents invested hundreds of thousands of dollars each in
18 their homes. They are entitled to quiet enjoyment. If they
19 knew that the zoning that they're in allowed jails or a jail
20 would be built nearby, they would never have bought there. What
21 is it? Who wants to buy -- buy a piece of property right near a
22 jail? You know, it's a threat to the families and their peace,
23 and it certainly is a threat to a business. You know, with a
24 lot of employees and a lot of customers, you know, let there be
25 one mishap, one breakout. Maybe they won't be discharged in the

1 city; maybe they'll be discharged right at one of these regional
2 sites. That'd be terrible.

3 I think I can speed up the amount of my comments and not
4 take up so much of your time if I read to you, if you'll allow
5 me to, this letter I wrote to the Blethens at the Seattle Times.
6 It's sort of, it gets everything down to many less words than
7 I'm -- and I apologize for what I'm -- your time I'm taking
8 tonight.

9 But I said, "Dear Frank and Ryan Blethen. As you know,
10 there is a determined effort -- there's an effort to determine an
11 appropriate site for the new jail." And then I go on to some of
12 the statistics that, you know, I mentioned these -- these
13 various meetings that you're having and suggested they send a
14 reporter to cover. And here's where it gets kind of
15 interesting. Okay. "I've been concerned with the news coverage
16 of so far missing important points from the city's proposed
17 sites within Seattle. The situation is probably not surprising
18 since there's so many issues to be concerned with." And then I
19 say that I have a business near a regional site. And that I
20 say, here we go, "Downtown is a better alternative. That said,
21 there are some larger concerns about both Interbay and West
22 Marginal Way sites." Here we go. "Industrial policy and
23 zoning. The city has made much of its desire to preserve
24 industrial jobs in Seattle. They have passed an ordinance to
25 limit commercial and retail space and have eliminated

1 residential uses within industrially zoned areas. Both the
2 Marginal Way and Interbay sites are zoned industrial. Selecting
3 either would require rezoning to allow jails in all industrial
4 areas -- in all industrial areas -- of the city. That would run
5 directly contrary to city policy.

6 Logistics and operational efficiency. The downtown site
7 was added only after official study process was completed.
8 There are significant logistical advantages and operational
9 efficiencies to locate the jail downtown near the existing
10 municipal and county jail facility. For example, there could be
11 a tunnel, as" -- and I'm -- just okay.

12 Then the last part. "Who is going to defend the common
13 man? Hundreds of hardworking homeowners and businessmen and
14 women in the Marginal Way and Interbay sites have purchased
15 their properties, trusting in the protection of the zoning laws
16 of both the manufacturing industrial and residential zones which
17 prohibits the existence of jails. These folks are entitled to
18 quiet enjoyment of their properties.

19 Now the threat is to break these existing laws by
20 changing it to allow jails. This act will negate and ignore the
21 needs of thousands of homeowners and business folks who trusted
22 the protection of the existing zoning laws. The city who was
23 charged with enforcing its zoning laws on all of us and to whom
24 we dutifully pay our taxes may now change the law to satisfy its
25 own need while ignoring the need of thousands of its citizens.

1 Breaking, changing the existing zoning laws jeopardizes the
2 safety of the folks in their homes and employees and customers
3 of businesses. These folks will fear potential outbreak from
4 the prison; the potential selling of drugs in business and
5 residential areas, thefts, and worst of all potential kidnapping
6 of a young mother with a child from a residence or a business
7 near the jail."

8 Shortly we are going to have a beautiful showroom and
9 addition. We have a 50,000 foot building; it's full of
10 merchandise. Going to have a nice showroom. There was going to
11 be a lot of designers coming down with homeowners, some mothers
12 with young children to pick out their stuff, fixtures, toilets,
13 plumbing, all that. So let's take a day like today. Okay?
14 Four o'clock in the afternoon, 4:30 in the afternoon, it's
15 getting dark already. Mother leaves. They go together in their
16 car. One of the folks from the jail who is released comes
17 across the street, kidnaps the mother in the car and takes off
18 with them. That's all we need. Or they break into a car. Or
19 they -- they break into our store. And we didn't -- we didn't
20 buy into this deal to have this threat. It's not right.

21 So and the drugs is the other thing. Usually, with
22 misdemeanor folks, I'm told that there's a lot of drug use. And
23 since they can't use drugs in the jails, as soon as they get out
24 they're looking for the drugs, and there's a greenbelt right
25 next door to us where they could be gathering to sell and buy

1 drugs and a greenbelt adjoins the residential community of
2 Highland Park, and it all is very scary.

3 There's also an economic issue. The property values of
4 businesses and homes will be in jeopardy. The chance of a
5 natural rise in the value of the homes and properties will be
6 slim. There goes the nest egg for retirement of the children of
7 the common man. Who would want to buy a business property or
8 residence near a jail? And, you know, I can see, you know, a
9 normal rise in inflation for homes and businesses is maybe,
10 inflation rate is an average over many years of 5 percent a
11 year, and you take over the next 20 years, what if that's cut to
12 2 1/2 percent? I mean, you know -- and you know what, this is
13 done after the investment has been made by homeowners, after the
14 investment has been made by the business owners. It should be
15 told ahead of time. There could have been a comprehensive plan.
16 If there was a comprehensive plan that says ten years, within
17 the next ten years we expect jails to be built here, everybody
18 would be on notice. But this is like an attack after everybody
19 is in economically; now we're going -- now we're going to take
20 advantage of you.

21 Anyway, the litmus test to this is, would the city allow
22 a jail downtown between Macy's and Nordstroms? Of course not.
23 Because the same fears of attack on their many customers,
24 employees exists. So the question becomes, is the safety of
25 lives of folks living and shopping and employed near the

1 Marginal Way site or the Interbay site any less precious than
2 the safety of lives of the employees and shoppers at Macy's and
3 Nordstroms? We say they're just as precious.

4 So if a jail wouldn't be built near Macy's or Nordstroms,
5 then it should not be built at Marginal Way and the Interbay
6 sites.

7 There seems to be only one place for this jail, and
8 that's where the zoning already allows a jail, and that's
9 downtown Seattle. The infrastructure is there. There is a
10 piece of vacant land immediately next; as you know that. And a
11 walkway; you know that. And that there would have to be a
12 cordial agreement between the city and county in order to get
13 this thing built, and the Highland Park Action Committee of West
14 Seattle has been actively fighting this jail at the Marginal Way
15 site for months. The committee is made up of hundreds of
16 concerned citizens who fear the jail for all the reasons stated
17 in this letter. This is a good source of important information
18 concerning the site.

19 For these reasons I encourage the Seattle Times, and as I
20 said I sent it to the Puget Sound Business Journal and the PI,
21 that they should come into some of these scoping sessions and
22 see what's going on.

23 So that's the gist, that's the gist of the letter I sent.

24 I think that there is one other important thing is that
25 in my submittal of -- to this -- for the environmental impact,

1 and what I think should be checked out is one other item and
2 that is the fact that there's already an infrastructure right
3 here at this jail, a bail bondsman, of drugstores, groceries,
4 hardware, any kind of -- any kind of thing that discharged
5 inmates need to buy is already right there. Nothing like that
6 exists at any of these other sites, Interbay or Highland Park.
7 And they would come -- and now this represents additional
8 investment and additional costs that has to be spent in order to
9 make the site complete. So just building of this for
10 170 million of this new jail is only -- is part of the cost; the
11 other part are -- certainly has to do with who's going to pay
12 for -- and who's going to -- where's the property come from,
13 who's going to pay for all these associated business
14 infrastructure businesses that are already here and already paid
15 for?

16 I've said too much, and I thank you very much for
17 listening, and you -- you may not agree with me or some of what
18 I've said, you may agree with me. But no matter what, at least
19 you've heard it and I'm on record for what I think. And I'm
20 also open to hear what anybody else thinks, too.

21 Thank you so much for your time.

22 [Hearing concluded at 7:24 p.m.]

23

24

25

