

This case is important to examine because there is a lot more here than a disgruntled homeowner standing up to DDES. Charles Strous' history with King County goes back years and the details point out much that is wrong with the way the county deals with rural landowners. A look at these details reveals the hypocrisy, unfairness and double dealing that are root causes to the present controversy over regulation, policy and the new Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO). I will look at the details in several contexts, including DDES' history of trespass on private property and a private individual's attempts to divide a rural property, along with comparing these efforts and results to those of more moneyed and influential nearby neighbors.

A short summary of Strous' attempts to develop his property in his own words:

In 1986, I was looking for property around the Seattle area to build a home. My partner and I wanted a fair amount of privacy, and also wanted to be close enough to enjoy our friends and cultural lives in Seattle. We found some nice properties in Rainier and Lake City that were within our budget, but their privacy only existed because of "green belts" on neighbors' land. We were ideologically opposed to trying to tell others what to do with their land - we felt that we needed to own enough land to guarantee our own "privacy buffer" without trying to dictate our neighbors' landscaping practices.

We found a beautiful 49 acres just east of Rainier. It was rather expensive, more than we could really afford, but it was zoned "G", which meant it could potentially be divided into more than 10 separate lots if we needed to sell some property to help make the payments in the future. I could drive to downtown Seattle in less than a half-hour. It was immediately adjacent to a "G" zoning subdi-

vision next door were opposed to my project, because it would increase the number of vehicle trips through their neighborhood. (Their streets were designated "collectors", designed to carry the number of cars that were expected from the adjacent properties like mine, as required by the King County codes.)

In particular, a group called the "236th Avenue Community Corridor Council" hired an attorney to oppose my project. They filed several papers, trying to block my application.

The hearing examiner at BALD, however, decided my application was legal and appropriate and approved it. The final step was for the County Council to review the case - which is normally a formality - they just approve whatever the hearing examiner sends up to them.

However, in my case, our water district found itself overextended by the time our case came to the County Council. We had a "Water Commitment Letter" from them, but because BALD had taken so long to process our application, its one-year term had expired.

In normal circumstances, our case would have been put on administrative hold until the water district could solve their supply problems. In our case, however, the County Council was trying to find every possible reason to deny our application. It came down to a tied County Council. Except for Brian Dudauskis, Mr. Dudauskis was a member of the aforementioned "236th Avenue Community Corridor Council", which was appearing in opposition to our project. This means he had an ethical obligation to recuse himself from the vote. However, he claimed that his membership was only a conscience issue on which he happened to live, and he went ahead and cast the deciding vote against us. Apparently it had nothing to do with the fact that he was a multi-unit anti-growth advocate, and the 236th Ave

at the corner of SR 900 & 164th Avenue NE

[www.maycreek.com](http://www.maycreek.com)

#### Four Creeks Unincorporated Area Council

meets the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

May Valley Alliance Church  
16431 SE Renton-Issaquah Rd

See their web site at [council@fourcreeks.org](mailto:council@fourcreeks.org)

#### Upcoming Elections

The Four Creeks Council has several positions open in the election of November 8, 2005. The deadline for candidates to declare their intention to run and submit 250-word summaries of their qualifications is September 24, 2005. Declarations should be sent to Four Creeks Unincorporated Area Council, P.O. Box 3501, Renton, WA 98056. The open districts are:

- |                                      |                                 |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 - Coalfield, Renhill               | 2 - Tamm, O'Donnell, Ida, Brigd |
| 3 - Eastwood, Daniel                 | 4 - Husky, Valencia             |
| 5 - Jacqueline, Hillcrest, Briar     | 7 - Tanner, May Valley          |
| 8 - Four Lakes, Marlowe, Maple Hills | 11 - Tiger Mountain, Hutchisson |

Two AT-LARGE positions are also open. Anyone living in the precincts listed above or George Mc., High Valley, Squak, Nalla, McDonald, Mirrorstone, Hass, or Colleen are eligible for those two positions.

#### Greater Maple Valley Area Council

meets the first Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

King County Police Precinct #3  
22300 SE 231st, Maple Valley

See their web site at  
[http://www.metrokc.gov/dchs/uac/uac\\_gmv.htm](http://www.metrokc.gov/dchs/uac/uac_gmv.htm)