

September 21, 2020

State Representative Mosbrucker:

I wish to take a moment and thank you for the effort you've been making on behalf of Washington State, and for Skamania County. The tasks before you given these unprecedented times could not have been anticipated, and you deserve our gratitude.

I am writing to correct any misconceptions you may have been given over these last few months. We all have different opinions and concerns around the pandemic, as to be expected. What is not expected, however, is when a single individual chooses to use his office to circumvent the legislative body that is meant to give him direction, and creates a narrative that may not be as accurate as conveyed.

Specifically, I am addressing some correspondence you have had with Scott Anderson, Mayor of Stevenson. While the mayor "speaks for the city" during official meetings, I feel it is worth noting that he is speaking for but a few. On multiple occasions, Scott Anderson has been rebuked by members of Stevenson City Council for taking actions on his own that tie the City to his personal viewpoints and for not consulting with City Council.

Scott Anderson's viewpoints, in my personal opinion, are well-meaning but wholly shortsighted. His frustrations are understandable with Skamania County being held back by restrictions despite our thus-far successful limiting of positive infections. His caring for struggling businesses and families is admirable. He wants to see his city and county thrive again, and who does not share that hope?

However, Mr. Anderson is so focused on the "now" he is overlooking the future ramifications of those changes he is championing. Skamania residents travel out of the county, and others travel into our county; as the county begins to thrive that travel will increase, thus also increasing likelihood of infection spreading. Another aspect he likes to tout is social gatherings and not restaurant usage is deemed to be more of the culprit of infections. Yet, increase restaurant capacity and there is the potential for increased exposure inside the restaurant, increased travel from neighboring communities, increased interactions at the door and on the streets. A recent study even indicated a correlation between those who frequent restaurants have a higher likelihood of eventually being infected (perhaps not by being at the restaurant but rather their other behaviors); why invite that risk? Loss of income is devastating, but not as much as death. Death is so final. And let us not discount all of the known (and yet unknown) medical ramifications for those that do survive.

You may or may not agree with Mr. Anderson, or even with my personal statement above. I simply want to draw your attention to the fact some members of City Council, and many members of the public, do not share his views, and are dismayed at his continued use of his office to press his personal agenda without taking into account the views of others and framing his statements as such. There is not a united city behind his statements.

We all want to return to normal, and we all have different ideas of how to get there. Avoiding conversation and charging ahead cloaked in mayoral authority is not the way of doing it.

Matthew Knudsen  
City of Stevenson  
Councilmember, Seat 5