

Dear City of Stevenson Council Members:

June 9, 2021

From observing the Stevenson Council meetings, it appears that the City of Stevenson is ostensibly focused on promoting more opportunities for residential housing because of an acute housing shortage. Thus, it is confusing to become cognizant of the multitude of obstacles that the planning director has put forward to stall and prevent this from happening. One notable and heart wrenching case is that of Cesar Hernandez, who through years of hard work in the Gorge area, saved enough to buy the property located on Del Ray in the City of Stevenson, with the dream of building a house for his wife and children. Instead, he has encountered a myriad of bureaucratic obstacles to prevent this dream for home ownership and upward mobility in his adopted country. Some of the nonsensical obstacles he is facing include:

- 1) The denial of a biologist's report paid for by Mr. Hernandez, that would have cleared the way for the construction of a small house, because it does not follow the precise format required by Mr. Shumaker.
- 2) The seemingly arbitrary setback of 50 ft required by the Planning Commission when Mr. Hernandez' plans include a 37 ft setback. This is doubly confusing because, the "stream" in actually is a drainage ditch that dries up during the summer, and the construction of his home would have absolutely no impact on any fish or wildlife that might inhabit it (because they don't). Additionally, I find it puzzling that the previously built house was in almost the exact spot that Mr. Hernandez intends to build. Equally disconcerting, is the fact that the neighboring school's property is not limited to any buffer zone at all. While, I understand the need to preserve and protect the wildlife in both Stevenson and Skamania county, the discrepancy between 25 ft buffer requirements for Skamania County, North Bonneville, Camas, and other Gorge towns are so marked, (25 ft, opposed to 50 ft required by the City of Stevenson's planning director).

This unfair situation leads to me to wonder: Does the City of Stevenson truly want to invite hardworking families to build here, live here, prosper, and contribute to the well-being of Stevenson? Does the City of Stevenson truly want to be inclusive and egalitarian, welcoming new residents from all walks of life? Which leaves the unthinkable: Does the City of Stevenson want to prevent hard working people with a dream, such as Cesar Hernandez from becoming established residents of our city? As a resident of Stevenson, I'm requesting that the nonsensical obstacles preventing this family from settling in our city be reconsidered. There are a number of us that believe that his presence would benefit our city.

Thank you for your consideration,

Margie Hidalgo
Stevenson, WA