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**Fw: Public comment for the next city council meeting**

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**From:** Mitch Patton <nwtsrinc@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Friday, March 6, 2026 9:46 AM

**To:** Cody Rosander <cody@ci.stevenson.wa.us>

**Cc:** City Council <citycouncil@ci.stevenson.wa.us>; planningcommissioners <planningcommissioners@co.skamania.wa.us>; Commissioners <commiss@co.skamania.wa.us>

**Subject:** Public comment for the next city council meeting

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Good morning Cody and Stevenson Council Members,

I am writing today for clarification on a few things surrounding the ongoing situation with the Rock Creek water intake system and its location. I know dealing with Ecology is not pleasant at all, but I also understand that, as this is the city's water intake, there should be alternatives to a complete water loss, such as having emergency intake access at that location. A complete loss of water would be devastating for the City of Stevenson and could pose serious fire and public health risks for the town. I also believe we should be careful about how this issue is communicated to the public. Statements suggesting that the city will completely run out of water if money is not immediately spent on this intake may create unnecessary fear within the community. In reality, several things would have to fail before the City of Stevenson experienced a total loss of water. It may be more accurate to say that temporary water restrictions might be necessary while one of the city's water sources is repaired. From my understanding, the city's wells could continue supplying water for some time even if the Rock Creek intake were temporarily offline, possibly without immediately placing restrictions on residents. In addition, if large water users such as the breweries or the lodge were to have immediate temporary water use restrictions from the city's water system, it could significantly extend the available supply for the community.

My guess is that the breweries and the lodge may have contributed to the catastrophic failure at the sewer treatment plant, ultimately at the expense of the landowners in Stevenson. Because of that, future planning around these two very large users could potentially relieve a significant burden on the taxpayers of Stevenson.

The lodge, in particular, has been a concern of mine for many years. From my understanding, the lodge purchases its water from the City of Stevenson, and its sewer bill is based on water meter usage. However, as we all know, the amount of wastewater treated from that site is likely much greater than the water recorded by the meter. There can be thousands of additional gallons of wastewater generated from human waste and liquids dumped down drains, including drinks discarded from the dining room and wastewater from the lodging rooms.

I am not sure how the city currently accounts for or manages that difference. I have also been told that there may already be existing wells on the lodge property, and there is a possibility that some of that water could be used in areas such as the spa. If that water eventually drains into the city sewer system, it could be adding additional load to the treatment plant that is not reflected in the city's water meter usage.

As I said, these are simply ideas and observations, but they may be worth looking at as possible ways to reduce demand on the city's water and wastewater treatment systems.

I am not certain whether the lodge is currently connected to the city water system but that's what I've been told, but if it is, that property could potentially drill its own new well that would more than supply its needs. This could relieve millions of gallons of demand from the city system. Likewise, if breweries were placed under temporary water restrictions during an emergency, it could make a significant difference in both water supply and treatment capacity. The new well at the lodge could also be for emergency use like a failure to the city water system. I'm sure they have a backup generator for power failures. Things like this truly should have been addressed years ago during the business plan proposed to the city or county at that time it could also fall under its emergency fire protection plan if the city water system failed.

These are simply ideas and considerations. I am sure many of these possibilities have already been discussed. However, we need to continue planning for the future and honestly address the challenges the city is facing today. Otherwise, without thoughtful planning and diversification of water sources, the city could eventually find itself facing a more serious water shortage in the future.

Here are a few questions I would like clarification on:

1. What is the total amount of money that has been spent on this project or paid to engineers working on it since the first billing? I would also like to see the receipts or invoices that have been paid.
2. Has a new pump been installed in recent history? If not, when was the last time the pump was rebuilt or replaced?
3. Have you looked at an alternative pump location? I feel this could be a win-win situation if there is access to Rock Creek through the county transfer site or possibly from the opposite side of the river where the city has an easement at the end of the street or road. There was quite a bit of discussion about that location near the cemetery in the past.

My thought is that the entire city currently relies on one intake in Rock Creek, and we should really be concentrating on having two intakes on Rock Creek. My guess is the existing intake could be repaired for much less than the \$500,000 being discussed.

Many pump stations I have seen over the years have not been designed like this one. The ones I have seen typically have a much better intake design, using a vertical inlet in a deep water hole in the river or stream rather than a trench at the bottom of the river. This current setup seems like a failing system.

4. How many water wells does the city already own, and have they been tested for gallons per minute in recent history? What were the GPM outputs when they were drilled compared to today?

In my work, I have seen many older wells improved significantly. My thought is that investing in a deep water well could also be money well spent. We all know that the EPA and Ecology, USACE are making it increasingly difficult across Washington State to take water from surface streams or rivers. Because of that, I feel we need to look harder at improving our city-owned water wells while making minimal repairs to the Rock Creek intake. These kinds of things can be done through staff or department heads and not pay an engineer to research ideas.

If large amounts of money are going to be spent on the Rock Creek intake, it may make more sense to build it in a new location if possible. That way the city would have a backup plan in place. However, if we spend a significant amount of money repairing the old intake and make no improvements to the existing water wells, then we may be leaving the city in a failing position once again.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Also feel free to call me at any time. And yes let's keep youtube running. It's a great tool for the public to review past meetings and see who's attending the meetings.

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[Mitch Patton 360-903-9040](tel:360-903-9040)

**"Never give up, for that is just the place and time that the tide will  
turn."**

- Harriet Beecher Stowe, from "Oldtown Folks"