



P.O. Box 177 Quilcene, WA 98376

October 8, 2019

Jefferson County Board of Commissioners
The Honorable Kate Dean, Chair
P.O. Box 1220
Port Townsend, WA 98368

RE: Preparations to comply with GMHB Final Decision and Order

Dear Commissioners,

On January 16, 2018, prior to any hearings or officially adopting a moratorium on shooting range permit applications, the BoCC entered into a mediation agreement with Fort Discovery Inc., ostensibly to discuss how the moratorium might affect the corporation's nascent concept to build a shooting compound near Tarboo Lake.

As Jefferson County prepares to draft a new shooting range ordinance, TRC respectfully requests that the BoCC terminate Jefferson County's mediation agreement with Fort Discovery Corporation and release all the documents and records related to it.

You'll recall that, as allowed by law, TRC asked to observe but not participate in, the mediation. Our request was summarily denied and thus began 20 months of secret discussions between Fort Discovery officials, the county Deputy Civil Prosecutor, and occasionally other county representatives. In nearly two years of mediation meetings the parties have yet to appear before the mediator.

Numerous meetings between the parties were held behind closed doors throughout 2018 while the (now invalid) ordinances were being written and while the BoCC was holding public hearings and receiving testimony. Public Records Requests for minutes and other records of those private meetings have yielded hundreds of pages of documents, nearly all with redactions—many pages are almost totally blacked out. The County claims the documents are the work product of "preparing for mediation" and thus eligible to be shielded from public review.

However well-meaning the County's intentions were, the goal of avoiding litigation was not successful and the secret meetings have tainted the process with the stigma of favoritism.

The stigma is exacerbated by Fort Discovery's history with Jefferson County. The fact that the corporation is continuing its practice of building without permits while the County fails to restrain the illegal construction or issue stop work orders works an impossible hardship on the public's trust and confidence in the fairness of its government.

As we begin anew, the public interest is best served by a full understanding of the facts. Closed-door meetings with Fort Discovery officials should not be allowed to taint the redrafting of Title 8 and 18. The GMHB has given our community a second chance. We urge the BoCC to clear the air and start the redrafting process on an open, trustworthy, positive path.

Regards,
Tarboo Ridge Coalition

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Newland", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Peter Newland, Chair
Legal and Government Affairs Committee
P.O. Box 177
Quilcene WA 98376