**LWVSJ Observer Corps\*: County Council November 29-30, 2022**

During public access a citizen raised concerns about the amount of **roadkill in the county** and offered to provide some **Watch for Wildlife Road Signs at key points** to help reduce the problem.

A citizen raised concerns about the Egg Lake Quarry; that is lacks the 100-acre buffer zone of other SJI quarries and asked that the rock crusher be removed to another site owned by the business.

Receiving no public comment, the Council **approved** the **2023 and the 2023-2028 Capital Improvement Plans;** adopted the **levies** for **Land Conservation Futures, County Roads, and Current Expenses** for 2023; adopted an ordinance cancelling prior unclaimed accounts payable and payroll warrants. They adopted 2022 budget supplemental and emergency appropriations for which the Friends of the San Juans expressed concern that code enforcement could remain understaffed. They approved a **temporary construction easement for the Fish Trap Creek Culvert** on Orcas.

Public hearing for the adoption of the 2023 budget mid-biennial Review was continued to the December 6 Council meeting as was discussion/action on 2023 staffing levels, pay and benefits.

The Council approved the **Recreation, Open Space and Stewardship Plan Update** for 2023-2028.

The Council held the final public hearing and action on Comprehensive Plan. **Public testimony** mainly addressed two issues- **Egg Lake Quarry and agricultural and forest resource lands.**

Citizens raised concerns that the **Egg Lake Quarry** did not meet several requirements and standards for a mining operation; no buffer zone, operates in a mainly residential area, has major impacts in terms of noise, road wear and tear, and environmental impacts on adjacent wetlands, and has outstanding fines for mine safety violations. A representative of the mine owner refuted some of these points. There were specific requests that Council require the geological survey and economic need assessment; require notification of blasting and demolition to neighbors in a five-mile radius and require contributions for road repair and maintenance.

Citizens raised concerns that designation of **agricultural and forest resource land** was being done not in accordance with a county wide plan but based on ad hoc requests from individual property owners, which is contrary to law, and which has resulted in the de-designation of such lands but no designation of new resource lands, and thus a net loss. They asked that policy of a net gain be adopted or at a minimum a policy of no net loss.

The Council began to review the **comprehensive plan** accepting or making final amendments to the language section by section, completing the introduction and most of the elements, then continuing that item to November 30.

The County Manager reported that **Moody’s** is changing its bond rating process and is reassessing the County; as their financial position is strong, he does not anticipate a change in the **county’s bond rating.**

Council Members Wolfe and Stephens met with the State Director of Transportation about **ferry issues** especially the **impact of cancelled interisland sailings**. Ferry staff shortages will be easing.

Councilors put a preliminary **update of legislative priorities** on the **December 13** meeting agenda.

The Health and Community Services Director informed the Council a that the incorrect deadline for a state grant they were pursuing required immediate action. As there was not time to announce to the public this item for an earlier meeting, it was put on the December 6 meeting agenda.

**Nov. 30**

**Comprehensive Plan Review Continued:**

In the final element, the County removed language about not engaging in **regional transportation** efforts.

Public works properties on SJI at the gravel pit/Jackson Beach and at McKay Harbor on Lopez were redesignated from rural residential to rural industrial to adhere to historic use and incorrect designations. The Community Center Overlay was removed in Deer Harbor. Density increases were approved for two areas of Eastsound. On Lopez a density boundary line was changed to conform to land designations. And Island Center land use designation was amended.

All other requests were not approved. Four Proposals to add parcels to the Town of Friday Harbor and the Urban Growth Area were not approved, pending the submission by the town of required housing needs assessments, which are underway, expected to be complete until 2023. A request from Shaw Island School to change land use designated was not approved, but the use for its current designation will be amended to allow existing schools bringing it into conformity. Finally. To request for Mineral Resource Land Overlays (MRLO) were not approved, but staff was instructed to move the applications to the 2023 docket to allow more research and review of legal issues involved.

Council **approved the San Juan County Comprehensive Plan Update** with an effective date of April1. 2023. Council expressed gratitude for the teamwork, community participation, and staff professionalism in this massive undertaking.

\*The **League of Women Voters,** a nonpartisan organization encourages informed participation in government. The Observer Corps attends and takes notes at government meetings to expand public understanding of public policy and decisions. The notes do not necessarily reflect the views of the League or its members.