

Port/Sheriff Candidates

Port of Bellingham, District 3

Questions

1. How do you propose to advance the redevelopment of the former Georgia-Pacific site?

2. Are you for or against the proposed SSA Cherry Point bulk coal terminal? Why?

3. The current Bellingham irport terminal expansion is underway, funded by \$30 million in borrowings. The expansion assumes continuing growth in passenger traffic, primarily from Canadians seeking cheaper fares. What are your plans should the price of oil surpass its prior peak of \$140 per barrel (current price about \$85 – \$90 per barrel), and air travel become a luxury available only to the rich?



Jim Jorgensen

1. The G-P site is a parcel of land that will sell itself. It is unique and eventually it will become part of downtown Bellingham. Though progress has been slow due to the economic downturn, reduced staff in the Department of Ecology and changes in cleanup regulations, the port cleanup has now begun. Also, the City's planning staff has stabilized and we can move forward with a Master Plan. I intend to advance the redevelopment of this historic site by working with the Department of Ecology and the City to realize a plan that satisfies the Port, City and the public.

2. For many people, it's not difficult to choose a side regarding the proposed SSA deepwater port at Cherry Point. On the pro side people see the future jobs and increase in the county's tax base. On the other side are traffic obstructions, noise, coal dust, etc. For me the answer is not easy. I believe it's important to gather all the facts, weigh the pros and cons, and then make an informed decision. So I will withhold my decision until all the facts have been researched and until the public has had an opportunity to express their views.

3. The funding for the Bellingham International Airport expansion is a combination of FAA money and money from bonds purchased by the Port. Canadians do comprise 40% of the airport's customers, but Whatcom and Skagit County passengers comprise 60%. True, the value of the Canadian dollar can change and the cost of oil can go up. However, the factors that increase fares here would likely increase fares in Canada, so our airport should maintain a relative advantage. The economy will fluctuate, but air travel will continue to be an important means of transportation for both business and leisure passengers.



Michael J. Murphy

1. As far as I know the port already has a plan for cleaning and developing the site. The question is who pays? I do not support taxpayers picking up the bill. Not known everything that has been discussed by the port and Board I would favor working with grants and developers in the redevelopment of the former Georgia-Pacific site.

2. As long as the coal is transferred and stored in a way that does not negatively impact our county, yes. I have watch trains roll through Ferndale loaded with U.S. coal heading to a Canadian port. I like the idea of jobs and revenue for our area but I am cautious of the promised number of jobs, wages and what else may be going on at the site. The coal maybe a short-lived thing as China has 50 nuclear plants planed with 27 being built right now. They want to be independent of any outside source.

3. Air transportation will never be a luxury only for the rich. The plans/expansion to the airport terminal are over do and needs to happen. One trip to the airport told me that.

Whatcom County Sheriff

Questions

1. Regarding the current situation of the county jail: Increasing costs of running the facilities (7.51 percent compounded per year, 1998 to 2010 (Whatcom Watch, August, 2011); overcrowding; and needing significant upgrades:

2. What is your position on medical marijuana dispensaries operating in Whatcom County? Where federal and State law conflict in this regard, will you follow only state law?

3. What in your view is the best use of the sheriff's deputies to make our community safer? Please limit your answers to 100 words.

a. How do you propose to improve the situation?
b. How do you propose to pay for your preferred course of action, considering that the balance in the jail fund was only \$3.8 million at Dec. 31, 2010, 77 percent percent of the voter-approved jail tax having been spent in jail operating expenses, and each additional bed space in the jail will cost at least \$27,500 per year?



Bill Elfo

1a. We operate the most robust jail-alternative program in Washington and need authority to build on success. A day-reporting program for non-violent offenders, enhanced mental health and substance abuse treatment and a community-based mental health stabilization center will reduce jail needs. 1b. An efficiently designed facility maximizing the use of modern technology will reduce future "per bed" operational costs. I support the Executive's plan to fund a multi-million dollar jail without raising taxes through the sale of the jail work center, reallocation of funds currently paying off the 1990 courthouse remodel (2012), and funds currently rebated to cities for jail costs (2014).

2. The Sheriff's Office does not have the authority to enforce federal laws prohibiting marijuana dispensaries. These laws are in direct conflict with state law. Enforcement action will not be taken against dispensaries that are in compliance with Washington state legislation and voter-approved initiatives. Dispensary operators are in a precarious position. Although in compliance with Washington law, they are at risk of federal prosecution. I will be attending a meeting of state and federal prosecutors and law enforcement officials to advocate for enforcement policies that are consistent, predictable and that safely permit citizens to exercise their rights under State law.

3. Community-based policing strategies, eliminating meth labs, serious approaches toward domestic violence and DUI drivers, improved training and options for dealing with the mentally ill have reduced crime over 40% in the past 8 years. This progress will be continued and enhanced. I am leading an increased focus on the leadership of over 30 criminal gangs and 400 gang members that plague our community with violence and property crime. Gangs have increased in sophistication and organization. Their hardened leadership recruit vulnerable youth into an often-inescapable lifestyle. By working with community partners, we will strive to drive this menace from Whatcom County.



Steve Harris

1. The County Council has already approved funding (over 3 million dollars) to make much needed "physical plant" repairs to the current main jail, but, this will not solve the issues with overcrowding and program space. We need to take a hard look at alternatives to incarcerating minor offenders that pose no threat to public safety. By reducing the number of people we jail and providing resources and programs to help alleviate recidivism we can end the seemingly endless requests for bigger budgets and the need to build bigger jails.

2. Commercial "dispensaries" are currently illegal in WA, but I do support "collective gardens" (as allowed under state law. I believe it's time to recognize the issue of medical marijuana as that of a public health issue, NOT as a law enforcement issue. I support changing Federal law to allow its medical use nationwide. As Sheriff, my deputies will not be enforcing Federal laws against the use of medical marijuana.

3. First, our deputies need to be out in the community and not in the office tasked with updating social media pages. With the worst clearance (i.e. solve) rate of any other law enforcement agency in Whatcom County (or comparable Sheriff's Office), we need to do a better job investigating, not just reporting crimes. We need to embrace a justice based enforcement model that relies on community involvement and mutual respect rather than a command-and-control model that relies on fear and compliance. Finally, limited training dollars need to be focused on basic investigative and de-escalation skills, not on seldom used ancillary duties.