

**From:** [Sue Wilmot](#)  
**To:** [PCD](#)  
**Subject:** Wintergreen Project and Affordable Housing  
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Hello Bainbridge Island Planning Commission.

I first have to clarify that I am writing a citizen of Bainbridge Island, not from my role on the Bainbridge Island Race Equity Advisory Committee.

I am in favor of the Wintergreen Project. I retired from 40 years as a grocery checker in March (27 of them on the island) and am now working for my labor union UFCW 21 in our Member Resource Center. I have been a shop steward, executive board member and have served on our bargaining team. I have connections with union workers in our city and throughout Kitsap County.

When I moved here in 1994, my family was able to purchase a fixer home. My husband and I live here still, on Old Mill Road. It was affordable. For a family of six. Today, this is near to impossible with a grocery worker family income. The high price of rent is also prohibitive, and takes away from someone trying to save up to buy.

UFCW 21 has over 300 union grocery workers, plus more union healthcare workers employed on the island. This workforce is much more diverse than our populace and we are proud of that and feel supported by the community. The island welcomed and cheered our grocery folks in wearing our union Black Lives matter buttons last summer, where other locations and communities within our union did not. Our local Town and Country is a UFCW 21 union store with about 175 of these workers. These union jobs include top industry wages, excellent healthcare and a secure pension. But even with that it saddens me that 60% of our grocery workforce lives off island and has to commute here. Many grew up here, like my own daughter who works as a union barista manager, but cannot afford to live here.

It is always hard to keep these stores completely staffed because of the drive. This has continued to be an added hardship during throughout the pandemic, especially for members with children at home and remote school. (I have heard stories and cannot even imagine.) Yet, these folks have stepped up and continue to serve our community well. There is a connection with grocery workers and the community here and an unspoken devotion to serve and take care of this community as their own.

Bainbridge Island honored and recognized grocery workers with hazard pay for a short time. I am hopeful that the Wintergreen Project would continue to consider them and provide an opportunity for more of the island's workforce to be able to buy a home and become a full time part of our community. If we are to be sustainable, we have to make room for all who participate in our island community.

Sincerely,  
Sue Wilmot

Old Mill Road, Bainbridge island, WA

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