From: Stefan Goldby
To: PCD
Subject: In Support of the Wintergreen Townhomes Project
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Greetings from the Bainbridge Island Chamber of Commerce,

With the Wintergreen Project continuing to be on the agenda for further discussion at this week's Planning Commission meeting, I would like to lend a voice of support on behalf of the Chamber's 500+ members, and our Island business community in general.

A current point of commonality across the employers of Bainbridge Island is the difficulty in finding new local employees, especially those of a younger (sub-40) generation. This affects all manner of businesses on Bainbridge, from retail and restaurants to manufacturing and makers, and from education and healthcare to nonprofits and service providers. The issues are perhaps clearest for all to see in Winslow, with multiple shops, restaurants, museums not open on Monday, Tuesday and even Wednesday due to a lack of staffing.

While not the only solution to that problem, the lack of affordable housing on Bainbridge is a factor often brought up in direct connection to the issue as a root cause, one that is often stated by potential new hires turning down job offers.

This project has the potential to make the first significant impact on the Island's stock of affordable housing in years. As a collaboration with (Chamber Board members) Housing Resources Bainbridge, alongside Housing Kitsap and Central Highlands, Wintergreen creates 31 units featuring income-limited "in perpetuity affordability". This is a land trust model which has already been proven successful by HRB within the Ferncliff Village community, even down to multiple resales of a single unit allowing new rounds of homebuyers who meet the affordability criteria to purchase a Bainbridge home.

The additional 43 Wintergreen units being offered less restrictively, but still at a below-market price will offer an additional short-term benefit to address one of the biggest economic challenges for Bainbridge business in 2021.

While we respect and fully defer to your experience and insight with regards to the best version of the Wintergreen Townhomes Project, in general, the Chamber and our members humbly hope you will look upon this opportunity with open hearts and minds. Please make every effort to allow this vital effort to create improved local housing affordability and help maintain the rich diversity of residents and workforce that helps keep our community as special as it has continued to be since the Chamber's formation in 1927.

Thank you for your consideration and time - please feel free to contact me at any time for clarifications, queries or input from the Island's business community.

Yours,

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