

Brooke Sullivan

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To: Brooke Sullivan
Subject: Support For Dancing Seeds/Glad Acres

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Brooke Sullivan:

I own a small business on spring street and am writing this in support of Dancing Seeds/Glad Acres, but more importantly in support of an open conversation between the county and its citizens. My wife and I heard about the change from Dancing Seeds to Glad Acres and went to visit the farm recently. It was less than 15 minutes from Friday Harbor center along one of the best maintained arterial veins of the island. Once there the entrance was but a couple of yards from ample designated parking. The facilities were clean and spacious, you could see that it was a working farm as there were people working and I was pleased to meet the women who run this farm as well as the women who work it. Nicole Fuenzalida gave us a tour and outlined her dream for the future. I could see how it would work in practice because it does not need much more than county approval and a couple of weeks work to get it up and running. It was less than 10 minutes from my own house and immediately read her proposal to the county and found it very acceptable. It does not call for adding or contributing to any nuisance to the environment or quality of life for the neighborhood. It aims to operate as a sustainable business, and I found it measured and well thought out.

I was left confused by the lack of response from the county staff. I wondered what exactly about her proposal did the members find so unappealing that they outright denied the zone change. As an immigrant from Mexico, I always looked to the American government as a beacon of hope that helps its citizens grow and thrive, unlike the government that I grew up in which finds ways to confuse and extort. A non-response seems like a pointed end to the conversation.

I wonder, wouldn't it be better to have an open discussion as to why the proposal wouldn't pass? How else are we, the people, going to help this community thrive if we do not allow our locally owned farms to find a way to earn capital? A farm to table model has historically been a way to help working farms, and has been found to be a sustainable business model. One of the best restaurants on this island is a working farm called Westcott Bay, and they are located through not only a small neighborhood but also a national park, a 30-minute ride from the city center.

I don't understand what it is about the Glad Acres proposal that goes against county wishes. It would be such a great story for the island if we found a way to help this farm grow. A women operated farm in the middle of a beautiful yet thriving island serving locally grown and processed food. It would seem to me like a feather in the cap of the community, and the council to have shepherded such an eco-conscious enterprise.

What I'm suggesting is that we find a way to make this work in a way that it pleases the county members, a start to a conversation to find the solutions that everyone will be pleased with. If there is something about the proposal that the county finds troubling, let's discuss ways to mitigate it. My dream was always to live in a community where the government represents the needs of the people, a government that helps find solutions to problems and makes things happen we otherwise thought we couldn't. Let's help the women of Glad Acres find success in what they are proposing by guiding them in the right direction.

We need places like Glad Acres, not only to provide jobs, but to have a place to gather as a community, a place to celebrate the small and big things in life alike, surrounded by the very people who helped us succeed.

-Roberto Hollis Moya

