

# Cluster subdivision attracts foes

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A project to develop a 27-lot cluster subdivision on Game Farm Road is opposed by several nearby property owners, but proponents of the 75-acre project believe they are following the law and conserving land and water.

The proposal involves 27 one-acre lots connect-

ed to a community water system clustered near 46 acres of the tract that will be kept in open space with no development.

The subdivision is proposed by landowner Laurin Mellergaard south of Game Farm Road, north of Vantage Highway and west of Naneum Road.

"We don't want city-type density in a rural area next to where we live and farm,"

said Charles Weidenbach, who owns and farms 110 acres on Naneum Road. "It's a health-and-safety issue and a quality-of-rural-life issue."

He said a petition signed by about 70 people opposed to the subdivision was given to the Kittitas County Planning Commission during a June 27 hearing on the project. He said about 12

spoke against the development at the hearing.

Weidenbach said there is a group of 15 property owners opposed to the project calling themselves Concerned Kittitas County Citizens for Quality Rural Living.

The Planning Commission voted 4-1 at the hearing to recommend

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preliminary plat approval for the subdivision. Kittitas County commissioners during their 2 p.m. Tuesday meeting will consider granting preliminary approval. If approval is granted, the developer must make subdivision improvements before gaining final approval when home construction would be allowed.

Todd Mellergaard of Mellergaard Properties in Ellensburg is Laurin's son and said the development follows all county rules and utilizes cluster subdivision provisions in county code.

"We are operating under

the law and doing all we can to do it right," Todd Mellergaard said. "The cluster subdivision rules were put in place by the elected representatives of the people. They have been around for quite a while and we are utilizing them as they were envisioned to be used."

He said cluster subdivisions allow a higher density than the zoning allows because it sets aside rural land that can't be developed and uses a community water system rather than having each lot owner drill their own well. The zoning at the site is agricultural 3 where the minimum lot

size is three acres.

Mellergaard said in a community water system, each lot owner will use an estimated 220 to 350 gallons of water a day. If each lot had its own well, it could draw up to 5,000 gallons a day.

He said the demand for rural homesites is strong, and the development meets that demand and reduces the buying of 20-acre tracts of farm land for residential homesites.

A letter from the group opposed to the development said a high water table on the property will create flooding and problems with septic systems. The development also will

harm the rural views, and more noise and traffic hazards will result, the letter stated.

Harvey Dodge, who farms land immediately north of the site, said the development will create unsafe traffic conditions on portions of Game Farm Road that already have poor visibility for drivers.

"There will be more and more conflicts with residential traffic coming up on slow-moving farm machinery," Dodge said. "There's going to be accidents."

When it comes down to it, Dodge said, "I don't want a city development in my backyard."