

My name is Mark Blatter, and I live at 223 Middlepoint Road, Port Townsend.

I was the Director of Real Estate Development for Historic Seattle PDA, and most of my work life has been with nonprofit community and affordable housing developers. More importantly, I love and frequent Fort Worden and appreciate all it has to offer our community.

I've asked many questions over the course of your reorganization planning, and some of them were even answered. Yet after all the time I've spent trying to understand the plan, its context, and how it will impact the long-term health of the Fort and Port Townsend, I'm left with many more questions and your assurances that this specific plan is urgently needed and must move forward immediately.

Just one question for today - why the hurry?

Let's give the community the chance to understand why no other models work, why investors and lenders need a new organization to support hospitality operations, why government and foundation grants can't be made to the PDA through the Fort Worden Foundation. And why the plan reduces income to the PDA as well as opportunities for community members to have their voices heard.

I'm skeptical that the plans you are proposing will achieve the mission, provide public benefits, be supported by the State Parks Commission, and garner public support. The scant community process and rush to get this through seems to say you agree.

Please delay your decision to assign the Fort's hospitality operations – and the millions in earned income - to a private corporation focused on the business at the expense of programs and preservation.