

Status of the BBWARM Fee

Jim Johnson and Don Schleuse have been in contact with Kraig Olason, a Whatcom County Senior Planner concerning the recent **Birch Bay Watershed Aquatic and Resource Management District (BBWARM)** fee which recently appeared on your tax bill.

When Mr. Olason first contacted Latitude 49 concerning the new fees, we were told it would add approximately \$2,500 **A MONTH** to the Latitude 49 tax bill. At that time he did not know that the lots within the development were individually owned so was passing the total amount on to the Association. Upon receiving this information, Mr. Olason stated that he would go back and recompute the Associations fee and compute the fees for the individually owned lots using aerial photographs. He said at the time that the fee would probably be in the neighborhood of \$5-\$8 per month per lot.

As you can see, the amount assessed our lots is significantly higher than that assessed to residential lots within Birch Bay. The assessment is based not the amount of impervious area but a percentage based on the size of your lot. This means a 2,500 sq.ft. lot with 1,500 sq.ft. of impervious surface will have a higher rate of assessment than a 12,000 sq.ft. lot with 1,500 sq.ft of impervious surfaces. Assessments are made only if there is some improvement on the lot. If there is a driveway or a shed, that counts as an improvement. A bare lot with nothing on it will not be assessed the WARM fee. When the question came up about some of our lots being in use for only six months of the year, Mr. Olason said that the impervious surface is there all year round thus there is no reduction.

Don Schleuse explained to Mr. Olason that Latitude 49 has restrictions in place via our declaration that limit lot owners to a certain square footage of impervious surfaces dependant upon the section the lot is in but in no case is anything over 1,750 sq.ft. allowed. He was also told that there was probably going to be a flood of requests to adjust the rate. Based on this info, Mr. Olason stated that he is very interested in looking into the more collective option for establishing the "small residential" rate adjustment for those qualifying properties within the park. He will seek advice from the county legal office to see if this will be possible and let us know. He will also meet with Jim Johnson and take a look at some lots within the park to see if they will fall within the county requirements.

For more information you can visit the Whatcom County Public Works page at:
www.co.whatcom.wa.us/publicworks/birchbay/index.jsp

Update

Don Schleuse has received an email from Mr. Olason in which he stated that he had met with the county attorney and that it is felt that a rate adjustment is doable so we may proceed. Mr. Olason will meet with Jim Johnson on March 26th to review some of our documents and inspect a few questionable lots within the park.