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From: [REDACTED]
To: mayoroffice@cob.org; citycouncil@cob.org; RCarroll@cob.org
Sent: Tue, 29 Jan 2008 3:05 pm
Subject: Downtown music venues
Greetings to all,

I read with great interest the article on the front page of Sunday's *Herald* pertaining to Bellingham's downtown music venues, titled "When the Music Died." On the surface, it appears that some feel there's a conspiracy afoot to keep music out of the downtown area. This couldn't be further from the truth and bears a closer look than the reporter took on the issue.

One property owner seems concerned about the "cultural gentrification" of the downtown area, and she is quoted as saying that "people may be supportive of the Mount Baker Theater, but not support a place like the 3-B Tavern." The Mount Baker Theater often plays host to some of the loudest of the hard-core rock bands and there's never a complaint. This is primarily because the Mount Baker keeps the music inside their building; the Mount Baker does not serve alcohol to concert attendees; and the Mount Baker concerts do not go on until 2 AM or later. The accompanying front page photograph taken at the 3-B Tavern displays a marked difference between the two venues.

Downtown Bellingham is changing and more people are choosing to become residents of the downtown core, for any number of reasons. The city noise ordinances are quite clear and are geared to responsible operation of all businesses, regardless of the nature of their product. When you add the fuel of alcohol to loud music and late hours, there's bound to be a conflict between residents who might be trying to get a good night's sleep and those who behave irresponsibly. When your fun infringes on another's right to rest and repose in their own home, you need to rethink your actions. It doesn't matter where you might be.

The police department is unfairly singled out in this article as is anyone else who thinks there should be some sensible control of the nuisance factor of these overly loud and often chaotic scenes. I'm a music lover, myself, but overly loud music of any type, pouring out of a club or a moving automobile is not only inconsiderate, but also illegal. It's unfortunate that we have to regulate the behavior of some, but we do so for the benefit of all. I support enforcement of all city ordinances because they are all enacted out of necessity.

One of your council members, Terry Bornemann, has said that he is in the "early stages of trying to ease noise regulations for the downtown area, allowing music to thrive." It's safe to say that Mr. Bornemann does not or did not live across the street from a loud bar that stays open until 2 AM and releases its intoxicated revelers into the streets until they "run out of fuel." If he does or did, he might better understand the intent of the ordinances that are currently in place. I strongly urge that he reconsider "crafting a revised noise ordinance." Downtown Bellingham can be vibrant without being noisy to the point of distraction.

There is no conspiracy to keep the music business from thriving in Bellingham. There simply needs to be responsible, considerate behavior and a more civil downtown after hours. We have ordinances like the noise ordinances in place for a reason, and the police department needs the support of the mayor and the city council on this front. Do not change the ordinances to favor the noisemakers. Instead, strengthen them to support the police when we call on them to do the "dirty work."

Joe Meche
[REDACTED]

*An experienced downtown resident for the past eight years and a downtown property owner for the past eleven years.