

City of Yelm
Press Release

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The City of Yelm is pleased with Thurston County Superior Court Judge Chris Wickham's decision to deny JZ Knight's request to overturn preliminary land use approvals for five separate subdivisions in the City.

Yelm's permitting process is consistent with that of jurisdictions throughout the state of Washington.

Richard Settle, representing the City of Yelm in this case, is pleased and not surprised by Judge Wickham's favorable decision.

"The decision essentially upholds the City's approvals of the preliminary subdivisions. The only required change was a minor clarification," Settle said. "The City has long agreed that this clarification is appropriate. The record before the Court was created when JZ Knight was making a far different argument, that proof of sufficient water rights to serve eventual development is required before preliminary subdivision approval. The Court noted in its opinion that Knight changed this argument during the proceedings."

Settle noted that the City is doing a fine job in its water system management and expressed confidence that Yelm's land use permitting process will be upheld if Knight continues her appeals.

"To set aside water rights at a time other than building permit does not make sense. In essence, the City would have to set aside water for lots that might not ever be developed," said Yelm Mayor Ron Harding, who is happy with the decision.

"If the judge had agreed with Knight," Harding explained, "all growth in Yelm, including the construction of new homes and businesses would stop."

"With the economic challenges we are facing, both nationally and locally, continued development is essential to maintain a healthy community," Harding concluded.

"In light of the vast time and money dedicated to this case," said City Administrator Shelly Badger, "it is ironic that the decision equates to Yelm doing business as usual. The permitting process isn't changed."