

GENE SEIBEL

TAPE 3, Side 1

August 8, 1996

M.O'R.: This is a continuation of the interview with Gene Seibel on August 8th, 1996.

G.S.: So you know, here a while back there was some talk about - well, it started, you know, with USA having the erosion control now in the county. It's a big issue for subdivisions. I mean, there's a lot of soil lost the way it rains here and the way we're building and everything. And again, that was a burden that was put on them that I think is a tough one to handle. But I think they get more cooperation now.

It seems to me that we can't do it hit and miss. And I don't mean to pick on USA on this, but USA can't have - or Washington County can't have a statewide surface water plan - a county-wide surface water plan, and then you've got the adjoining counties that don't have anything yet. So everything that Washington County does that we pay through our bill for surface water, it seems to me that to do it right, again it's got to be management. It's got to be a tri-county issue, anyway. One county isn't going to make that - well, it will make an effect, but not as much effect as it should.

So although we in Washington County are paying for rooftops and impervious ground cover and stuff like that, when you've got the adjoining counties not doing it, that runoff goes right back in the river, too. So we've got an issue there that - those are some of the things that need - and I'm not a Metro fan, don't get me

wrong - but I think those are some things that need to be done by a bigger government than a county government.

M.O'R.: Why aren't you a Metro fan?

G.S.: They don't have any successes. You know, what have they done for us?

M.O'R.: Eldon Mills stands in your camp, too.

G.S.: Maybe that's why we get along so well.

M.O'R.: Because I was talking to him about this, as well. But the concept of an organization like Metro, though, you're saying is something that ...

G.S.: Yeah, I think so. Yeah, I think Metro's got the opportunities to do stuff, but I - I don't want to get into that. They need some success stories. Sure, the zoo's been successful, and the zoo was successful before, but I'm real concerned on this 2040 Plan. Not only is that going to have a lot - impact on utilities, especially water and sewer, but what's it going to do to our society in the future? When we start stacking people on top of people, you know, I don't know how you live. When we start building on 3,000 foot square lots, how is society going to react in the future when we've got all the social problems that we have now and that type of thing? Aren't we just breeding more? I mean, we saw what happened in Columbia Villa when we put people on top of people, and we're coming out here and going to do the same thing. So I have some real concerns about the European plan for development.

M.O'R.: So this relates to the urban growth boundary?

G.S.: The urban growth, and the amount of people, you know.

See, I think - sure, I'm going to tell you I'd fight them, but the land where I live up here is not farmland. I mean, it's rock and it's clay and everything. This area should be developed. This is where the development should be, from here all the way along the West Hills into Portland. Not down there in the farmland and that sort of thing.

Sure, it might cost a little bit more money to get utilities here, but not that much more. So I have a real problem with developing the valley floor when we've got all this land around us. You've got the land between Mt. Scott and Gresham, and that land that's not farmland; that should be developed, not the stuff down there along Sunset Highway.

M.O'R.: And the way things sit now, this land is ...

G.S.: Yeah, this is - you've got to have 38 acres up here to building on now.

M.O'R.: Oh, yeah? And that's by virtue of its specific location relative to ...

G.S.: Well, it's - yeah.

M.O'R.: It's inside - or no, outside ...

G.S.: It's outside the UGB. Outside the UGB.

M.O'R.: Right. But was the urban growth boundary, then - well, I guess I can almost answer my own question. I suppose the politics of it dictated that the valley floor would be ...

G.S.: Oh, sure.

M.O'R.: ... within the urban growth boundary?

G.S.: Sure. And that's the easiest to develop; let's face it. That's easy. I mean, it's within the corridor, the transportation's there and everything.

But my biggest issue, and I - you know, back when Senate Bill 1 was passed - and I'm kind of a Mike Ragsdale fan because he's helped out the water industry a lot when he was in the legislature. But Mike and I argue about this all the time. When you set up a government agency that sets property values, that goes against everything the way this country was set up.

I mean, it used to be free enterprise, and if you had - if you improved something and got more money than the next guy, that was fine. But now, when we've got an urban growth boundary and we set where that line is, that imaginary line, we're setting real estate prices. We set some - you know, when you talk about the economic impact of the Tualatin River, the economic impact on this area is because of the urban growth boundary. I mean, when you pay \$135,000 an acre for - to build homes on it, there's something wrong. And that's what some of the prices are going around here for development land.

But we're off the subject.

M.O'R.: Well, that's all right. It's all related, I think. Well, in fact I'm starting to run out of questions.

G.S.: Good. I'm running out of answers.

M.O'R.: I was going to ask you, though, if there's any issue or topic that you can think of that's within our ...

G.S.: Well, I guess one thing I would say: I don't think - and I don't want to include myself here - but I don't think there's some people that got enough credit. I think the Gary Krahmers, the Eldon Mills - I mean, Eldon had a future in sight when he built Barney in 1970 and the second phase now.

Some of the long-term or the older politicians for the City of Portland that had the foresight to build the Bull Run, and even some of the people I've been acquainted with the Tualatin Valley Water District and the foresight to get the water rights on the Willamette River. These are dedicated individuals that have spent a lot of time and a lot of hassle looking out for the future, and they don't get enough credit.

There's just a lot of work done in this county, and Washington has been blessed with some very, very good people to move the county into the future. Working with these people over the past 30 years, I don't have any concerns about whether we're going to meet the future needs. I feel very confident in what's been done ahead of me.

M.O'R.: Besides Gary Krahmer and Eldon Mills, who would you name?

G.S.: Oh, I think there's some people that have done a good job. I think - geez, names escape me.

Eldon, Gary, I think Steve - he left the City of Tualatin and went to Clackamas County? Was City Manager of the City of Tualatin for years and years. I think Dan Potter, who just passed away, was a futuristic person in the County. He was County Administrator for quite a while.

I don't think anybody can hold a match to Charlie Cameron. I think the County is so fortunate to have Charlie Cameron as the County Administrator right now. And you've had some other ones: Ed Tenney from the Portland Water Bureau.

There have been some good people in Washington County. Of course, you go back, Oscar Hagg and those people that had the idea that pushed and pushed.

Another fellow that doesn't get much recognition is Dave Dickens. Now, I don't know if you've - have you talked to Dave at all yet?

M.O'R.: No, I haven't.

G.S.: Dave is with - what is it? - the Rural Conservation Development Commission. It's a kind of a state and federally funded group that helps out agencies and individuals with problems. They don't have a lot of money, but they seem to know the right people to get to and talk to and stuff. He's done a lot for this county behind the scenes.

Bonnie Hays did a good job for the county.

M.O'R.: The former ...

G.S.: Former County Chair.

M.O'R.: Right.

G.S.: Another fellow that I think - he's not been involved recently, but Dr. Martin Johnson was involved with a lot of this stuff back in the 70's and 80's that we're starting to see come to fact now. Marty was - Marty's a medical doctor. He's got Tigard Clinic in Tigard. But he was involved with the early portions of water and sewer and planning, and has kind of been out of it the last few years, but a lot of the stuff that he worked on back in the 70's we're starting to see happen now.

We've had some good people in this county. And I'm sure every county has the same thing, but -.

I've got to tell you a story off the record. On the Regional Water Plan we had a number of public hearings throughout the region to just let people know what our findings had been and everything. And we tried to attend the ones that we weren't - you know, I didn't go to the Washington County ones, for instance. I went to the Clackamas County, and the folks from Multnomah and Clackamas came out here.

When I went to the Clackamas County one, some old gentleman got up, an elderly gentleman. He was on a cane, and he wanted the floor. And he came up to the podium, and he said, "When are we going to start acting like Washington County? Because Washington County is so far ahead of us in planning. They're 20 years in the future, and we're still back in the Dark Ages out here, and we just can't figure out why we can't get our county moving like Washington County is."

And I took that as a compliment. He didn't know who I was or where I was from or anything else, but he was really upset because Clackamas County had not gotten into the 20th Century yet.

M.O'R.: That's a nice compliment to Washington County. Any other topics we haven't discussed that you think ...

G.S.: No, I can't think of anything.

M.O'R.: Anything that we did talk about that you'd like to add anything to?

G.S.: No. I think we about covered it.

M.O'R.: Okay. Well, thank you very much, Gene.

G.S.: You bet.

[end of side one; end of tape]