

RECEIVED
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
EL DORADO COUNTY
10:36 am, Jan 06, 2011

13

LATE DISTRIBUTION

Date 10:36 am, Jan 06, 2011

PO Box 33
Pilot Hill CA 95664

4 Jan 2011

El Dorado County Supervisors
2850 Fairland Court
Placerville CA 95667

Attention El Dorado County Supervisor:

As residents of parcel #104-250-29-100, 4770 Pilot Creek Lane, that borders the proposed Sundance Subdivision on the east, we wish to make our position clear with respect to the proposed development:

In particular, we wish to comment on several statements in the proposed draft of the environmental impact report.

I AESTHETICS -When it comes to the matter of aesthetics, we agree that the proposed subdivision would not create an adverse effect on the surrounding area, as long as the tree cover is not substantially decimated during the process of development of the land. The land in question comprises a part of our view of the surrounding landscape, and we would consider it to be unacceptable to allow the developer to exceed the removal of trees as described in General Plan Policy 7.4.4.4.

II AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES -As an agricultural resource, the land was grazing land for many years, but the pasture was abandoned about a decade ago. Except when used as pasture, the nature of the steep, dry, rocky terrain is not consistent with commercial agricultural needs.

III AIR QUALITY -Air quality in the area would be adversely affected during the construction phase of the development if care is not taken, especially during the dry months, to control construction dust. In addition, downed trees and construction waste would provide smoke pollution unless the developer and builders are required to remove all such waste from the property or chip it to make mulch, rather than burn it on site.

IV BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES -The biological resources of the area, both flora and fauna, are considerable. The area has been allowed to develop without human interference for some years. Deer, fox, coyotes, and some bob cats roam freely along the entire north slope of Pilot Hill, and many birds and other species, including desirable predatory species are part of the natural landscape. We consider such wildlife to be an important feature of the Pilot Hill area and would expect the developer to preserve the wellbeing of the present inhabitants of the proposed subdivision and preserve the travel corridors of the native species..

V CULTURAL RESOURCES -We have lived in the area for about thirty years and have explored much of the area by foot. As an employee of PG&E I hiked extensively throughout the Georgetown Divide area. Both the Native Americans and the gold miners have left signs of their habitation throughout the whole Divide. Without an extensive survey, there is no way to determine the significance of the remaining cultural artifacts that might be present in the proposed subdivision land. We suggest that as the land is developed the developer be required to pause as needed to allow for a thorough investigation of discovered culturally significant areas.

VI GEOLOGY AND SOILS -This is an area with outcrops of very dense rock and veins of clay that turn to concrete in dry weather and turn into gooey mud in wet weather. We know from experience that the ground drains poorly, requiring large septic system leach fields. Ten acre parcels should be of adequate size to provide room for the necessary septic systems, but prospective homeowners should be made aware that extensive work with heavy equipment may be required to provide the necessary utility systems and foundation work for the building of houses.

VII HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS -Without an extensive survey, it is unknown whether or not the proposed subdivision contains caved in or partially caved in old mine sites that might require mitigation. Our five acres contained such a site, as does much of the land in these foothills. The developer needs to be responsible for discovering and removing the possible dangers of such sites.

The most serious hazardous concern involved in the current proposed plan for the subdivision is the a lack of provision for emergency response and evacuation in the current proposed plan. Wildfire is always a possibility in the Sierra Foothills, and at present the proposed subdivision is ripe for such a fire. Many of the residents of the parcels along Pilot Creek Lane that abut the proposed development have cleared their land right up to the proposed subdivision boundary in hopes that the fire department will be able to stop a wildfire on the proposed subdivision before it damages our property.

In addition, the proposed subdivision plan gives residents of the proposed subdivision only one exit route in case of emergency, although the developer has proposed that he be allowed to connect his proposed subdivision road to an adjoining dead end road, a move that is not welcomed by the residents of the dead end road.

A more reasonable plan for the proposed subdivision would be to construct a horseshoe-shaped circle road serving all of the proposed parcels in the proposed subdivision and providing both the emergency response teams and the residents with two possible ingress/egress routes to Rattlesnake Bar Road.

VIII HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY -Before we risked building our house on our property in Pilot Hill, we had Dave Rambo drill us a 135' deep well in 1977. That well was the first well to be drilled on our side of the hill, and it initially produced about 20 gallons per minute of clear, cool water. By the 1990s, after many people had moved into the area, the production of our well had dropped sufficiently that we had Dave Rambo drill us an additional 185' deep well, so that we could drip irrigate our ten fruit trees and a few hardy plants around the house. At the present time, since building in the area has continued to increase, the production of both wells has decreased sufficiently

that we are preparing the ground to install a holding tank to provide drip irrigation water for those same ten fruit trees and the few hardy plants around the house during our long, dry summers.

I have no idea what criteria were used to decide that the proposed subdivision had enough land to provide water for wells for 28 parcels. However, after over 30 years of watching the water available on our land decrease with the increase of water consumption in the surrounding area, I strongly dispute that the drilling of 28 more wells on this hill will not adversely effect the availability of water the for presently existing residents. The owner of the large property down in the valley across from the Pilot Hill store had intended to plant a vineyard, but he was not able to obtain enough well water to support his plans, so he ended up raising horses and relying on Georgetown PUB irrigation water for his animals.

It has been well known ever since Gold Rush times that water is scarce in the Sierra Foothills. Georgetown PUD is working hard to provide drinking water to an increasingly larger Divide population, in an area where private wells are becoming increasingly questionable. The developer needs to spend the additional money to tap into Georgetown PUD's drinking water supply and pump the water up the hill to his proposed subdivision, instead of forcing his neighbors to spend additional monies to alleviate the damage that his 28 additional wells will cause to our existing wells.

IX LAND USE PLANNING -If properly designed, the proposed Sundance subdivision would fit in well in our area of Pilot Hill. We welcome neighbors who would clean up the wooded areas adjoining our property and help us slow down the advance of wildfires. The ten acre parcel size is reasonable, given the steep, dry, rocky land, where acceptable building sites are at a premium. The additional property tax money would be welcome to our budget-strained area. Given the uncertainties of population in the scattered Pilot Hill area, adding another one hundred or so people to the area would hopefully not adversely impact the Black Oak Mine School District, given the additional monies that the increased pupil population would draw into the district. Has the school district stated that the proposed subdivision will cause them no problems?

At the same time, Rattlesnake Bar Road is poorly designed for the traffic it currently endures. The line on the pavement indicating that it is a two-lane road stops before it reaches the proposed subdivision. Rattlesnake Bar Road is narrow and curvy and often in need of increased maintenance. Salmon Falls Road is also heavily utilized by the existing residents of the area, and there are several areas on that road that need upgrading to provide a safe passage for the existing residents. I commuted on the local roads for many years. Especially in rainy weather, or when the roads are icy, the local roads can be dangerous, even in slack traffic conditions. If Pilot Hill is to become home to 28 more families, Rattlesnake Bar Road and Salmon Falls Road, to say nothing of State Highway 49, will have to accept more traffic. What is going to be done to improve those roads to accommodate the additional traffic, besides taxing the existing residents to pay for the increased road hazards created by this subdivision? The developer needs to provide additional money to mitigate the impact of his subdivision on the local roads.

X MINERAL RESOURCES -It is the hope of the local residents that no company might decide to extract whatever mineral resources might exist on the proposed

subdivision land. Certainly, the gold miners have already turned over every stone on Pilot Hill in search of gold.

XI NOISE -Pilot Creek Lane and Pilot View Drive are dead end roads. There was once a hiking and equestrian path between Pilot Creek Lane and Pilot View Drive. By mutual consent, that path was fenced off years ago and prospective trail users were sent away by the land owners, precisely because none of us wanted that path to become a public, or semi-public recreational trail. Pilot View Drive also used to be a through road, as did Safari Trail. In each case, the residents worked very hard to prevent their road from becoming a short cut to Peninsula Park for various non-resident individuals seeking shorter routes to their desired recreation areas. It is not that we dislike non-residents; it is just that the crowds of non-residents that stream into the area on weekends cause noise and leave trash and threaten our private pets and our friendly wildlife. We don't want the proposed subdivision to provide a shortcut to the river.

If the developer redesigns the proposed subdivision to remove that "gated" invitation for non-residents to break down the gate and take a short cut, the noise problem will be avoided. The presence of twenty-eight more families on this hill will not create a noise problem, after their houses are built. However, the developer needs to ensure that the lives of his neighbors are not unduly disrupted by noise and other commotion involved in the construction phase of his development.

XII POPULATION AND HOUSING -At the present time, the proposed subdivision land is empty of human inhabitants and housing for any human population. Land buyers will have to provide for their own dwellings, as in most rural developments. There is no one to displace, except for the wildlife, whose habitats should be preserved.

XIII PUBLIC SERVICES -Our area is already far away from the police in Placerville and within a reasonable distance from the fire fighters. Having 28 more families will not adversely effect our police and fire service, except that there will be more houses to protect in the case of criminal activity or wildfire.

XIV RECREATION -Pilot Hill has just one little park, certainly not a sufficient sized park for all of our current residents, let alone the future residents of the proposed subdivision. The periodic closing of Peninsula Park is a blow to our area. With Peninsula Park closed, Pilot Hill is greatly lacking in recreational areas. Perhaps the developer should provide additional usable public park area along Rattlesnake Bar Road.

XV TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC -As mentioned above, neither Rattlesnake Bar Road, Salmon Falls Road, nor State Highway 49 is presently adequate for the existing traffic loads on those roads. Certainly, the proposed subdivision will increase the congestion, especially commuter traffic, along those roads.

In addition, the developer's proposal to link his development with Pilot View Drive, except for a tiny gate that will soon be destroyed will further add to the traffic problems of our area. As the fire department states, they will forbid the instillation of such a gate, so Pilot View Drive and the road through the proposed subdivision will become just another local road private in name only. Pilot View Drive, even widened, is

not designed to accommodate the sort of traffic that that short cut to Peninsula Park will provide. As currently designed, the proposed subdivision road will add to the area's traffic problems.

Our area is not currently supportive of alternate means of transportation. Bicycling is dangerous on both Salmon Falls and Rattlesnake Bar. No matter what the design of the proposed subdivision, alternate means of transportation are beyond the scope of this project.

XVI UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

d. Once more, we question the statement that it will be possible to drill 28 more habitation-supporting water wells on this hill without farther lowering the area water table and adversely effecting the production of the existing water wells already in use on this hill.

e. As another consideration, will the garbage collection service be satisfied to drive up to the proposed gate, probably non-existent gate, at the end of Pilot View Drive and then turn around and drive the additional miles to collect the garbage in the proposed subdivision? The garbage truck currently serving our area is large and heavy. Will the developer provide an adequate road to support the big garbage truck, as well as all of the construction trucks that will be needed to construct 28 new houses?

XVII Considered as a cumulative effect, the proposed subdivision will further tax our fragile local infrastructure. How much money is the developer willing to advance to remediate the damage that the increased population will do to the Pilot Hill area?

Summary:

-A well designed subdivision would be a welcome addition to our area.

-We question the wisdom of allowing the drilling of 28 additional private water wells in an area where the scant original water resources are dwindling and the water table dropping. As existing residents, we have no wish to be forced to spend considerable additional monies to remediate a water problem caused because the developer did not provide his proposed subdivision with a public water supply.

-The current proposed subdivision road design forces the neighboring landowners to bear the burden of providing ingress/egress for the proposed subdivision, despite the fact that none of the neighboring landowners wish to do so. A redrawing of the proposed subdivision road to allow two ingress/egress routes onto Rattlesnake Bar Road would eliminate a good deal of the disruption of the peace of the area that the currently proposed road would create.

-Traffic on the existing public roads serving Pilot Hill is already taxing the ability of the roads to serve that area, especially at commute times. What will the developer do to help mitigate the effects of increased traffic that the proposed subdivision will create?

-The developer states that the proposed development will not adversely affect the existing level of local public services. As local residents, we would like to hear representatives of our local public services comment upon the developer's assertion.

-A well designed subdivision would be welcome; however, as it is now proposed, the Sundance subdivision is poorly designed. The developer is attempting to force neighboring landowners to bear the financial and quality-of-life costs of his cost-cutting design decisions.

Sincerely,

Ann L. Fiske