

From: [Dan Carlson](#)
To: [Kelly Bacon \(CD\)](#)
Cc: [Jeremy Johnston](#)
Subject: FW: Concerns regarding proposed guest ranch on Lookout Mountain
Date: Monday, December 14, 2020 8:52:21 AM
Attachments: [Sven project 35 acres 2020.docx](#)
[lookout mountain development up_top.docx](#)

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From: Barbara Seemeyer <haschen1@hotmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, December 13, 2020 5:50 PM
To: Dan Carlson <dan.carlson@co.kittitas.wa.us>
Subject: Concerns regarding proposed guest ranch on Lookout Mountain

Hello Mr. Carlson, My name is Barb Seemeyer and I am a resident of the Lookout Mountain neighborhood situated on Emerick Rd. in Cle Elum. I learned in late spring that a parcel of property totaling 35 acres was sold to a developer from Bellevue. Over time and several changing stories by the new owner of the property, it has come to our attention that the developer is not using this property as a family retreat, as we were originally told, but indeed, wants to establish a guest property consisting of 24 cabins, accommodating 48 individuals, a swimming pool, cabana and common kitchen for all to use. I have included two letters that I had written, one earlier in the year, prior to our new understanding of this property's intended use, and the second letter written recently to highlight my concerns after reading the proposal for the property. I thank you in advance for taking the time to read my letters.

Regards,

Barb Seemeyer

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October 20, 2020

Barb Seemeyer

640 Emerick Rd.

Cle Elum, Wa509.857.2094

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter out of the concern I have regarding a developing property in my neighborhood. We live on a forested mountain east of town. The zoning is considered rural/ag 20. The properties are ranches, single family homes, or cabins owned by folks who live full time elsewhere. We are situated near a section of public land, and thus the area has remained relatively pristine, including habitat for our local Elk herd (numbering 70 ish), deer, wild turkeys, cougar, black bear, and an array of woodland creatures and birds. This is not an easy environment sometimes, we have icy hills, weather concerns at times, and the Taylor Bridge fire 8 years ago was devastating. Given that, we love it here, and the full time residents do as well. In the 18 years of our residence, we have learned about our habitat, treasure the solitude, and appreciate the nature that surrounds us.

Last spring, a 35 acre parcel was sold to a developer in Bellevue. My concern stems from the ever changing stories I'm hearing about the potential use of the property. At first the owner told me that he had bought the property for his daughter and her husband, and that it was not likely they would reside full time, but it would be recreational property for their use. Then I heard from a trusted source that the intention was to build a main house at the crest of the property (this property has little to no flat area, it is steep on both sides and has a crest in the middle), and then build 8-10 guest cabins for family to enjoy. The story changed yet again from a different source that was told that the number of cabins could approach 20. Lastly, I've learned that the owner has articulated his intent on building a guest ranch at the site. When I think of guest ranch, I'm reminded of Unionville Ranch, a stone's throw from this property, which has boarding facilities

for the livestock, a barn, arena, hay storage, and guest facilities. While it is no longer functioning as a ranch, but a corporate headquarters for the owners business, I remind you of the property description: a steeply sloped property, not conducive to excessive building. So, needless to say, I'm confused about this potential change to our environment.

My concerns are this: We live on a steep, dirt/gravel road with one way in and one way out. The traffic and noise level has already been accentuated by the building boon in the area. If they intend on having a guest ranch, will the owners be permanently locating here to oversee and maintain the property and animals? I've personally witnessed an unattended bon fire last spring at the location, and since Taylor Bridge have a heightened sense of concern for wildfires. If the owners do not intend to reside on property and monitor their guests, who will be informing and enforcing trespassing onto neighbors land, littering, destruction of habitat, hunting rules and noise?

I realize, thus far, the owner has built a shop and a small foundation for a structure, no problem, but why are the stories conflicting? What is the goal for this property and is it commensurate with the agreed use of this land?

I appreciate your taking the time to read this letter. We live here because we love and appreciate our Lookout Mountain. We enjoy riding our horses in the forest with the smell of pine, and peacefulness. We appreciate our neighbors because they enjoy the same thing, that's why we live here full time. We don't want to lose that to a commercial development and all that brings.

Much Appreciation,

Barb Seemeyer

Barbara Seemeyer

December 5, 2020

Hi Gretchen, Thank you for sending me the copy of the CUP initiated and submitted to our county offices by Sven. After reading the proposal, I believe it contains, or doesn't contain, enough pertinent data to make an informed decision by the county as to whether to approve or disapprove this project.

If I may point out my questions, for your consideration, I'd appreciate it.

The proposal states that no one will be in residence on the property, and a maintenance worker will visit the property on a regular basis. What does regular mean? Daily, twice daily, weekly? Also, who will greet the guests, show them around, explain the rules of the resort, monitor safety issues, remove garbage, make sure people are respecting and aware that unless they are on the road, they are trespassing onto private property of others? I believe an unattended facility is asking for problems due to the client's lack of awareness.

Another question: Is this a seasonal resort or open year round? Sven needs to be aware that NO fires are allowed during the spring and summer months, so guests may not have any fire while visiting due to wildfire danger. If it is to be open during winter also, who will plow the road and ensure the safety of arriving guests?

Question: Sven does not specify how many gallons per minute his well produces and no mention is made of cisterns or storage tanks to ensure adequate water.

Phase 1 would allow for 4 bunkhouses to house 8 people. He states that their water usage would be 985 gallons per day, which translates to 123 gallons per person per day.

Phase two would add an additional 20 cabins housing 40 additional people. He places their usage at 1995 gallons a day which translates to approximately 50 gals per person per day.

Sven states that phase two includes both phases and puts that usage at 1995 gals per day for all 48 clients in all 24 cabins. This number now drops the daily usage of all cabins to 42 gallons per day.

Why the disparity between usage for the first 4 cabins and the remaining? The average household uses 80-100 gallons of water per day per person. Even if we go on the low end and use his 42 gallons of water per person per day, we end up with usage of 2016 gallons just for human consumption. If we use his high end number of 123 gallons, as with the phase 1 group, we need 5904 gallons daily!!

I need clarification on this.

Also what size pool does he intend to build in phase two? How many gallons of water will that require? Since sanitation regulations require public use pools to be chlorinated, where will Sven drain the water off in the fall when it starts to freeze at night and there is no public sewage pipes? This is an environmental issue to me.

Sven also says phase two will have a cabana at poolside to accommodate his guests. Will this cabana contain showers and restrooms for clients to use as they enter or exit the pool? These will require more water usage.

Sven states that there will be one central kitchen to accommodate their guests. I must assume all guests bring in their own food and beverages and must communally use a central refrigerator. Cooking, it appears is up to the guests, so is one stove slated for use or several? A central kitchen requires each participant to clean up after themselves, and thus must do their own dishes. This requires additional water usage I don't believe was accounted for. Who is responsible for general garbage pick daily while guests are in residence? Forty eight people can leave quite a bit of trash.

My concern is that Sven's water usage is likely underestimated. This can have a large impact on our ever decreasing aquifer.

With regard to the wildlife impact: Sven did not identify the native wildlife that inhabits his land.

I include elk, deer, black bear, turkeys, eagles, ravens, bobcats, cougar and coyotes, as all have migrated through our mountain including his property. He indicated no impact to wildlife, but it is noted that since he denuded the native vegetation, he destroyed sanctuary areas for birthing babies, shelter from the elements and escape from predators!

Of course, the addition of potentially 24 cars at any given time going up and down Emerick Rd. to approach or leave the resort, places a huge burden on our dirt road, as Hidden Valley Rd. is paved up to Emerick, where it transitions to graded dirt and the occasional rock. The additional traffic would add carbon emissions, road wear and noise all day long. Also, what road is designated for his clients to make their approach? Do they go up in front of Daugherty's property, or go around in front of Unionville to reach the resort?

Sven also states that horseback riding is one of the activities that his clients may enjoy while visiting. Is he going to allow clients to bring their own horses, if so, what facilities do they have for containment and feeding? If not, both Unionville and Hidden Valley ranch do not have any equine activities, including renting horses to ride, so I'm not sure why horses are included unless it is simply to justify calling it a ranch!

As we discussed on the phone, I believe this project would negatively impact not only abutted properties to the target property, but would change the aesthetics, the enjoyment, the serenity and appreciation of Lookout Mountain. I feel that his proposal is not complete and leaves out important unanswered questions which would further add negative impact to this project.

I believe having foot traffic on a 35 acre piece by up to 48 people at a time would degrade, erode and turn that property into dirt. The natural environment would be busy, noisy, and rife with human activity constantly.

I wholeheartedly hope that the county really knows what impact this project would have on our neighborhood and disallow the proposal.

Thanks for reading, Barb

