

18 December 2020

From: Colonel D. E. Trafton, USMC (Ret)

To: Kittitas County Commissioners

Subj: Hidden Point LLC (CU-20-00005)

RECEIVED
DEC 22 2020

Dear Commissioners,

Kittitas County CDS

I am a retired Kittitas County resident living at 4091 Emerick Road, Cle Elum, WA 98922. My home is two miles from the end of the county-maintained portion of Emerick, near the top of Lookout Mountain. Living here year around requires a community effort – both cooperatively and financially. Full-time and part-time residents voluntarily work together in the Hidden Valley and Lookout Mountain community to create a safe, secure family environment, while respecting the privacy and rights of individual property owners. It is unique to find such a community that does so without covenants or HOAs. Unfortunately, such a community can be susceptible to those who are inclined to “take value” from their neighbors without “making value” – whether intentionally or unintentionally. This is why the case of Hidden Point LLC is being brought to your attention.

Specific concerns and questions regarding Hidden Point from my perspective as a Hidden Valley and Lookout Mountain community member include:

- **Road Maintenance.** After over a year of heavy truck traffic in and out of Hidden Point, there has been no visible effort to maintain the private portion of Emerick Road beyond the end of the county-maintained road. Emerick is a light duty, all-weather road maintained by residents. It can accommodate occasional heavy trucks for building projects, but the current usage has seriously degraded the road beyond that level and is the worst I have seen in six years of living here. There is no indication of Hidden Point taking responsibility for this road deterioration or reaching out to the community to address the growing problem. *What is Hidden Point's road plan to maintain the shared community roads?*
- **Wildfire Danger.** After the 2012 Taylor Bridge Fire, the Hidden Valley Community and Lookout Mountain were left with lost structures and burned-over forest land; we still live with the consequences of that fire. Inattention at the wrong time of a single work crew devastated Lookout Mountain and Hidden Valley. The approval of Hidden Point's project would bring a large influx of people into an environment where simply pulling off to the side of the road in dry grass or dragging trailer chains can cause a runaway wildfire. *Does Hidden Point have a plan to mitigate the increased fire danger? Does their plan include liability caused by fire resulting from their activities? Will their road plan facilitate simultaneous ingress and egress of vehicles on graveled surface in a wildfire situation?*
- **Water.** Hidden Valley and Lookout Mountain residents are challenged by the quality and uncertain longevity of their wells. Over the past several years flow rates have gone down, and some wells go dry in summer. These water issues are concerning, particularly in light of continual drought concerns and water resource control measures enacted over the past

decade. Hidden Point's development of a large number of cabins, kitchen and swimming pool would put new demands on water resources available to the community. *Has Hidden Point executed the Kittitas County Water Bank Ecology Approval Required Mitigation, and how does it differ from that required of a single-family residence?*

- **Trespassing.** Our Community is made up of private landholdings, generally of ten acres or more. Recreation users often see this open land and the private roads that run through it as free for their use – from motor sports to hunting. Residents stopping trespassers to inform them they are on private land or roads are often met with scorn and arguments. Hidden Point will bring more recreational users into a rural community of privately owned land, increasing these interactions and subsequent burden of “policing” on landowners. *What is Hidden Point's plan to prevent this additional burden on the Hidden Valley and Lookout Mountain Community? What county and state policing assets are available to respond to escalated incidents?*

Above are the immediate concerns and questions regarding the proposed Hidden Point project. Of longer term concern is the tearing of the community fabric that approval of this project would cause. While part of the attraction of the Hidden Valley and Lookout Mountain community is doing with your land as you wish in accordance with Kittitas County regulations, the failure of Hidden Point landowners to communicate with their neighbors and consider the impacts on the community is profoundly disappointing. Many neighbors undoubtedly feel misled and taken advantage of, especially considering the “out of the blue” way the Hidden Point proposal came to light in the Hidden Valley community. The social fabric of Hidden Valley and Lookout Mountain is based on respect and honesty with neighbors, even though at times we may disagree. I hope regardless of the decision regarding this project, that the Commissioners may facilitate the mending of our community's fabric.

Respectfully submitted,

Dwight E. Trafton

Dwight E. Trafton

dwright.trafton@yahoo.com