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December 14, 2020

Mr. Dan Carlson, Director
Kittitas County Community
Development Services
Kittitas County Courthouse
205 West Fifth Avenue
Ellensburg, WA 98926-2887

Kittitas County
Board of Commissioners
205 West Fifth Avenue, Suite 108
Ellensburg, WA 98926-2887

Re: **Hidden Point LLC (Conditional Use Permit Application CU-20-00005)**

Dear Director Carlson and County Commissioners:

We, John P. and Lynn A. Ahlers, reside at 2111 Hidden Valley Road on 16 acres. Our property is located in close vicinity to the Hidden Point LLC (“HP”) property (Parcels 877634 and 867634). HP recently posted a land use sign, and has, to our knowledge, submitted an Application for a Conditional Use Permit (“CUP”). HP is proposing a recreational ranch of up to 24 bunkhouses with a swimming pool and a community kitchen.

We object to the approval of the CUP for multiple reasons set forth below, it does not appear that HP’s CUP Application is in accordance with the Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan, and will severely detract from and injure the rural character of the community surrounding the proposed development in which we live.

We have lived at this address for four years, we moved here from Seattle. We are retired, participate actively in the community, including we contribute to a number of local charities and veterans organizations, we enjoy the quality of life that this rural community affords us. When we developed our property, we made sure that our structures fit with bucolic nature of Hidden Valley, we followed the County’s regulations even though the access to our property cost us in excess of \$100,000 just to bring in a road. We, better than most, understand that roads are expensive, and we agree with the reasoning behind the County’s process and regulations. We expect that our neighbors, including HP, will be held to the same standards as we were when we developed our property.

Our concerns are numerous, we were provided with a copy of Mrs. Galloway’s letter dated December 11, 2020, and we agree with the concerns set forth in her correspondence. They are all well stated and articulately set forth. Here are some issues for you to consider:

- **Access / Roads** – As already mentioned above, the roads in this area are generally either chip coated or gravel, by choice of this community. Emerick Road is a gravel county road and remains gravel past the county gate on the private road. We are unaware of anyone in our community that wishes the roads to be upgraded to asphalt or concrete. This community understands were that to occur, the detriment of such an upgrade outweighs any convenience that might otherwise be attendant with better roads.

Our local roads have already been severely impacted by the single-family development that has occurred in the last few years in this area. The heavy construction traffic has pot-holed the roads, making them dangerous in winter conditions. Again, we put up with that inconvenience, we drive slower, we are aware of the safety concerns, and we have adapted our driving habits to the local conditions. Persons unfamiliar with this area (HP's transient weekenders) accessing those roads will present a safety hazard to the existing residents and to themselves. Further, gravel roads in summertime present a significant environmental concern, some days we cannot open the windows in our home because the dust clouds from the county road are so dense, that were we to open the windows, our home would be filled with dust. Encouraging more and denser development as HP is seeking will only exacerbate the dust issue in this area.

- **Noise / Traffic** – Of further concern are the noise and traffic increases that HP's development will bring. We moved to Hidden Valley because we wanted to live in a rural setting that was quiet, relaxed, on which we could take unimpeded and safe walks and jogs. Increasing the traffic level as HP is seeking will increase noise, will present safety hazards for locals who enjoy walking and jogging, and is inconsistent with the rural character of our community.
- **Water / Aquifer** – Water is a significant concern in this rural community. We must purchase water rights, wells are precious, and in summertime, we all conserve water to ensure that the aquifer remains available to all in this community. In fact, we have no lawns, we only irrigate a few fruit trees in the summertime, and otherwise, we leave our 16 acres of property unirrigated.

Inconsistent with that conservation, HP seeks to drill a number of wells, increase the water usage, and even squander water by putting in a swimming pool. Of great concern is that the persons using the HP facility will be transitory, will have no interest in the preservation of this precious resource, and will simply use water without regard to the effect that their indiscriminate usage will have on the community as a whole.

- **Safety** – HP intends to have up to 48 people residing in their “bunkhouses,” 48 people with various recreational vehicles, 48 people who have no idea as to what community-acceptable behavior is, 48 people who have no interest in the community except to spend a weekend in the country. Of great concern is that these 48 people who are unfamiliar with our community, unfamiliar with the fact that the property ownership is not divided with fence lines, as it is in the big city, that they will simply ride their ATVs and motorcycles on our property and cause significant environmental damage and disturb our quiet enjoyment of our property. Further, if those 48 people end up walking or jogging, they will add to the potential safety concerns in this area.

Lastly, and most importantly, we participate every year in the search and rescue auction and are familiar with the local challenge to assist people in our community who have medical or other emergencies. It is difficult to foresee what challenges may exist should one of the 48 residents have a medical emergency, but suffice it to say that our search and rescue and medical emergency first responders are already taxed to the limit by the rural nature of this community and adding 48 transient residents to this community will only further create challenges for those important first responders.

- **Fire** – Fire is a yearly issue in our community, we have used special building materials when we constructed the structures on our property, we have fire barriers that we mow around our property every year, our trees are skirted to reduce the possibility of disastrous fire consequences. The more people that are added to this community, the fire concern is greater, particularly with weekenders who are unfamiliar with the safe practices to reduce fire danger, practices which are second nature to the Hidden Valley residents.
- **Wildlife** – There is a wide variety of wildlife in this community, including birds, both song birds and raptors, deer, elk, a variety of weasels, skunks, badgers, bears, turkeys, etc., all of which cross our unfenced properties and take advantage of the low density residential community that exists in Hidden Valley. Adding a 48-person, high-density development will deter wildlife from crossing from the mountains into the valley, and will be inconsistent with the nature of friendly development that has been created in Hidden Valley. Mrs. Galloway makes very good points regarding wildlife in her letter which we adopt.

Finally, as pertains to the compliance with the zoning code, we defer to Patricia Galloway’s letter and our lawyer who will provide this analysis to you.

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In closing, we are vehemently opposed to this development, it is inconsistent with the community in which we live, it will greatly impact our quiet enjoyment of our property, it will impact wildlife, and it imposes significant safety concerns. We thank you in advance for your attention to this matter and urge you to deny the HP Conditional Use Application.

Very truly yours,

AHLERS CRESSMAN & SLEIGHT PLLC



John P. Ahlers

JPA:ww

cc: Kevin Bacon, Community Development Services
Chief Sinclair, Fire District 7
Sherry Marusa, President, Life Support and
Senior Director of Community Development, Forterra
Sid Morrison, Chairman, Life Support and
Former State Representative and Congressman
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