

520 RANCH ROAD
CLE ELUM, WA. 98922
AUGUST 24, 2006

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KITITAS COUNTY
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KITITAS COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
411 N. RUBY ST., SUITE 2
ELLENSBURG, WA. 98926

I am writing this letter in response to the information you sent dated August 1, regarding The rezoning of part of the Ranch on Swauk Creek.

What has been planned as explained on the application memorandum sounds very appealing. Almost like a little corner of paradise. However, I feel that Pat Deneen has not shown himself to be a responsible landowner nor one who is concerned about the impact of what he does or does not do has on his neighbors. I will explain why I feel this way.

1. Mr. Deneen has several pieces of property on the north side of Ranch Road. He allowed the weeds to mature and go to seed before cutting them down. Even then several patches of high density Canadian thistles and weeds were left, and are going to seed. Those of us who have homes here on Ranch road received notice from the County Weed Control people that we should take care of these noxious weeds. If we did not, the county would, and send us the bill. My question is this: why did this not happen with Mr. Deneen's property? I have worked very hard and gone to considerable expense to control the weeds on my property, even using herbicide twice this season, and keeping it mowed. Now, his property is re-seeding all our property. Even if he is fined for his neglect, this only benefits the county, but does nothing for the homeowners.
2. There is a sixty foot easement off Ranch road to the South for access to his ranch. There is a considerable amount of traffic consisting of cars, trucks, and farming equipment using this easement. During this dry season, this is a considerable dust problem from all this traffic. Since my house is less than 100 feet from this easement, we are constantly having to hose down our Back patio. During the wet season, a lot of mud is tracked onto Ranch road, which impacts all of us living here. Just driving down the street gets our cars all muddy. The simple solution for this problem would be to spread two or three loads of 1 ½ inch crushed gravel on the easement. The cost would be minimal as compared to the benefits. Mr. Deneen plans to build a horse arena on that property just to the south of our home. Some of the material for this has already been delivered. This is only going to increase the traffic, including trucks and horse trailers on this easement.
3. There is an irrigation ditch that runs parallel to Ranch road and then turns West and goes to the West side of his property for irrigating his hay fields. This has caused problems for two of the homeowners on Ranch Road. Water seeps through the ground onto their property. While this Ditch was there long before the homes, a concerned neighbor would want to do something about this problem. For example, the ditch could be lined at least by these two homes. Since water is so precious in this area, this would only serve to give more water to irrigate the property.

4. In the application, page 8, par. 1, Mr. Deneen complains about one of the neighbors who has used a corner of his property for a track for dirt bikes. He claims that he cannot now use the adjacent pasture for cattle, because the noise disturbs the cattle. Let's be real. When he bought the property, one of the first things he did was to tear down the fence along the north end of this property, and he has not replaced it. There is only 200 feet at most that adjoins his property to this track. When the previous owner, Mrs. Burke, had a herd of cattle in that pasture, I certainly did not observe that the noise from the dirt bikes disturbed the cows. They would just stand there and watch them. This track has been used very little since then. I think this is just smoke to sway the thinking of the planning commission. Besides, I doubt if he really planned to run cattle on that part of the ranch. After all, he is putting in a horse arena.

5. In the application, page 6, par. 2, he seems to intimate that our modest homes (mid to low income bracket) detract from the aesthetic value to his property by blocking the "view shed". He has several parcels of land on the north side of Ranch road. What does he plan to do with this property? Is he going to leave it vacant and as farmland? As for the "view shed", when I look out my picture window of my living room, there are beautiful treed hills all around. But I also have to look at some buildings that are about ready to fall down, and a long stack of bailed hay covered with multi-colored tarps. The he plans to build a horse arena back there, which will probably create a dust bown along with the added horse pucky which attracts flies. Then, when his project of high-density housing is complete, I can look up there on the hill and see that. So much for aesthetics!

6. Mr. Deneen says in this application that the profits from this high-density project are needed in order for him to continue his farm operation. Has this been the case with any other farmers in the area?

To sum this up, I am not against progress. But say like it is. Mr. Deneen has made a considerable investment on this property, and would like to make a return on his investment. No one can fault him for that. And certainly, this would increase the tax base for the county. He has proposed some very nice things for his mid to high income bracked project, but how many will be followed through on? Your commissssion has a weighty decision!

Very Respectfully

Merwyn D. Blanchard

