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[Planning] Tin Roof Cabin Resort rezone for Overnight Accommodations Overlay

1 message

Jim Richard <campmoab@gmail.com>

Fri, Feb 4, 2022 at 11:00 PM

To: "Planning@grandcountyutah.net" <Planning@grandcountyutah.net>

Re: public hearing, Feb. 14th, 2022

Grand County Planning Commission & Planning and Zoning Department:

The northeast side of the La Sal Mountains is the quietest and least visited area of the entire mountain range. From Hidden Lake to Beaver Mesa, wildlife is abundant and cars and people are few. It is a literal oasis for the few locals who go up there, with only very occasional tourists seen driving or biking on the main road. The area is dominated by US Forest Service, the SITLA North Block, and several undeveloped, large acreage private ranches primarily used for cattle grazing.

Approving a zoning change to allow for subdivision for development in this area or, as in this case, clustered resort developed for overnight accommodations, would be an absolutely terrible idea for several reasons.

With increased development and use comes increased risk for wildfire. More people, more campers, more cabins= more campfires, more cigarettes, and more sparks from dragging trailer chains and vehicles in this area which is thick with oak brush. As we've seen with the Pack Creek fire, our mountains are experiencing long-term drought, and wildfires can be devastating on creeks and water resources. According to Utah's Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal (<https://utahwildfirerisk.utah.gov/Map/Public/#map-themes>), the proposed Tin Roof Cabin Resort area ranks as:

Wildland development area impacts: very high

Drinking water impacts: 6 (out of 9)

Wildfire threat & risk: moderate high

Surface fuels: very high load, dry climate shrub

Wildfire rate of spread: very high

The nearest fire department and engine is about 45 minutes away in Castle Valley. Have you discussed the possibility of allowing future subdivision and structure development in the northeast end of the La Sals with them? Do you realize that they may not be able to commit coverage to this remote area due to lack of volunteer, qualified firefighters?

The Castleton- Gateway road is often rugged and 4wd only in the spring after snowmelt, and slick with impassable mud during monsoon season and in the fall. It is impassable in winter due to snow. It is severely washboarded in the summer. These factors also help keep the number of visitors down.

Thanks to Google maps, several ill prepared travelers have attempted this road in adverse conditions and have had to be rescued by Grand County SAR. For example:

<https://kslnnewsradio.com/1945860/castleton-gateway-rescue-after-24-hours/amp/>

Overnight rentals or a commercial campground would no doubt increase traffic on this road between Gateway, CO and Castleton, UT. Is the Grand County Road department staffed sufficiently and financially able to maintain this route on a more regular basis?

Permitting this zoning change would be a first for this area (at least in decades), and would open the floodgates for potential development on the other tens of thousands of acres of private lands found here. Setting a precedent now with this decision will determine future requests. It is not in the best interest of Grand County's natural resources or it's citizens to allow development in this area. I encourage you to reach out to wildfire experts, state wildland-urban interface professionals, wildlife biologists, water resource experts, and hunting organizations for input before considering any change in zoning.

Please do your due diligence before consideration of this matter. Thank you.