

Contract Planner

From: Planning & Building
Sent: Friday, April 20, 2012 2:01 PM
To: Ken MacNab; Contract Planner
Cc: Erik Lundquist
Subject: FW: comments on Silver Rose Resort and Arden winery

Replied to sender, js

From: Molly Hill [mailto:mwhill16@hotmail.com]
Sent: Friday, April 20, 2012 1:50 PM
To: Plans Department; Richard Spittler; Jack Gingles; Michael Dunsford; Chris Canning; Gary Kraus; Karen Slusser
Subject: comments on Silver Rose Resort and Arden winery

Dear officials (ideally this is for the planning commission as well):

I would like to again express my thoughts on the Silver Rose Resort and Arden Winery. I realize the planning commission meeting was two nights ago, but being the mother of two small children makes it difficult to attend the meetings. I was able to catch some of it on TV. I believe there are many more points to be brought up, especially about the Silver Rose resort, so I hope that there will still be an opportunity for the public to comment and bring up issues.

Here are some of my comments on the Silver Rose Resort:

1. Please abide by the General plan using the strictest of interpretations, keeping homes to one acre parcels (or not allowing at all?????) and NOT allowing a resort any bigger than the existing one. The developer said the project would not be cost effective without the existing homes and I believe that is completely bogus. Who determines what is cost effective? Do we just have to take his word for it? If one builds something, then sells it for more than the cost to build it, that is making a profit and that is cost effective. The developer wants to maximize profit by squeezing as many money making buildings on the property as possible. It is your and our job to counter balance that desire with what is practical for our little town.
2. There are studies that show that at a certain point in the growth of a town, the additional growth/income does not cover the additional demand for services (water, sewer, police, fire, safety). It seems to be we are potentially reaching that point here especially based on comments by the developer. He is not volunteering to put in a cross walk for his guests, rather he wants either the city to pay for it or for them to fend for themselves on a 55 mile per hour highway! I also want someone to check the hard water figures. It seems to me that a public works director that only cites good years of rainfall (this year and last as was stated in the meeting) as examples of how we have enough water needs to be double and triple checked on his assumptions. It doesn't make me feel secure that we buy all of our water. Didn't our rates just go up? Was that to pave the way for new development? I hope not! Furthermore, the developer was giving extremely vague answers to questions that are important to understand completely before a project is approved (number of visitors, look of houses). How can we trust that these potentially heavy water using resorts are estimating correctly? Wouldn't it be in their best interest to give the lowest figures?
3. Traffic: The fact that the developer does not know how many potential visitors is very concerning. 400,000 visitors was the number stated that V. Sattui winery sees yearly. Traffic is often very congested in St. Helena all hours of the day but especially rush hour. Hotel and resort check-in is usually after 3pm. When I travel I usually arrive between 3 and 5pm=same as rush hour. As I have also stated previously, many locals seem to drive down Lake St. to avoid downtown and they are usually driving over

4/25/2012

the speed limit...near a school and near my house.....with two young children. I have no doubt this would increase with this resort. Additionally, riding bikes into town appeals to a certain type of guest. Not all guests would probably choose to do this. Where is everyone going to park in town?

4. Look of the homes/resort: One of the reasons Calistoga is so charming is because we have very few cookie cutter developments. The developer stated these homes would all go up at the same time. This screams cookie cutter quick development to me. How will these homes look? Is it possible to have each be unique? This will be the first view that visitors see. Can there be full grown trees required to soften the look? How will the resort look? Please require some relief as the building increases in height so there is not a straight wall of building facing the street.

5. Fences and wildlife: Will there be fences put up to stop wildlife from entering? What will happen with the existing water area? Please try to conserve areas for wildlife as much as possible.

On Arden Winery, please follow the general plan again using the strictist of interpretations.

I apologize for the tardiness of this note and hope it is not too late to give input.

I thank you very much for the hard work you are doing on behalf of this town. Please please make your decisions very carefully. Much is at stake.

Sincerely,
Molly Bjorkman
1599 Lake St.