

Sexton, Daniel

From: bvandoren01 <bvandoren01@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, July 14, 2021 11:34 AM
To: Sexton, Daniel
Cc: Jeanette; Elaine Knight; RUDY BULMANN; Tracy Gowler
Subject: Mark Dabling Cottages
Attachments: Sexton email.pdf; Risk Area 2.pdf; Happen Again 1.pdf

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June 14th, 2021

Dear Mr. Sexton,

We've communicated and talked before, in your earlier online Neighborhood Meeting about projects CPC ZC 21-0029 and CPC CP 21-00030, which propose rezoning and construction of domiciles adjacent to the BNSF railroad tracks. Once again I want to express multiple concerns, including a significant noise issue I've investigated that the project represents to any residents of this development. Colorado Springs is a growing city. We understand that growth is inevitable, but the City is not properly considering the realities of geography, water, neighborhoods, roads, and vegetation. Perhaps most importantly, the City is ignoring the safety of the existing population, as well as that of the Cottage residents.

— **Geography and Population:** Attached is an annotated map of the huge wildland area we have been concerned about for more than a decade. This Rockrimmon area, between I-25 and the foothills east-to-west, and between the Air Force Academy and South Rockrimmon Blvd north-to-south, is a two-sided box with only three exits. ALL the traffic goes through three funnels — Woodmen at I-25, Rockrimmon Blvd at I-25, and the Centennial-Vindicator intersection.

Any further increase in population and traffic to this area adds significant risk to the tens of thousands of citizens living and working in the 80919 area with only three ways in or out during an evacuation. It was evacuated in 2012 for the Waldo Canyon Fire, and the panic of that evacuation is still central in the minds of those who experienced it. Since then, more people and houses have been added, and the fire risk has become much bigger, due to the extended drought being experienced nationally. But we still have to funnel through the same three exits. It's a shame that the City seems determined to ignore this risk, but our concerns were summarily dismissed in hearings about other developments in the area. But it is a fact: Any addition of housing to this area adds risk to a wildland fire evacuation, and wildfires WILL happen again (see attached statement from CSFD). You're an experienced city planner, but I posit to you that, as a recent resident coming from places other than Western wildland settings, you cannot appreciate the emotions experienced when seeing a pyroclastic cloud directly over your head, from a fire big enough to generate its own weather. This same cloud collapsed on Mountain Shadows, destroyed 346 homes and killed two people. Add to this the recent announcement by our Fire Department that they are lagging behind the demands of this growing city, in personnel, equipment and facilities, and the problem becomes worse.

— **Water Shortages in the Continuing Drought:** It is now predicted that most of the western US is entering, or is already in, a "mega-drought." Some predictions are that the entire west is in the worst drought in 1,200 years. The Southern Delivery System is thought of as the water source of the future that makes Southern Colorado's water future bright, but the water sources it depends on may well not deliver in accordance with original assumptions. We are uphill from every western state; we owe water to virtually every western state through agreements in water compacts. The City is already adding thousands of housing units, every one needing water. We will not be a viable city if water is too precious. Water must be a primary concern in every development project, and I do not see it being seriously addressed.

— **Noise Damage to Humans:** We live about 150 yards uphill from the BNSF track. The decibel level and sound pressure level generated by a passing train is loud enough to make conversation difficult at my house. The Mark Dabling Cottages units will be 100 feet from those tracks. I have no equipment to measure this, but it's been proven that recurring noise at consistently high levels is damaging to humans. It is simply not a good place for people or residences. Noise and pollution from the 29 trains per day traveling this track would make living there very difficult and hazardous. What family would want to live next to the railroad tracks and bordered by a boulevard to the east with increasing traffic? Only those with extremely limited housing options will endure these conditions, and when the housing crunch lessens, citizens will refuse to live in these units.

— **City Codes:** I truly believe the issues posed here make it clear that several applicable City Codes have not been met for any development that would be built on this site:

7.5.501 The purposes of the concept plan review are:

1. To ensure use to use compatibility between the proposed land uses, zone district with the surrounding area;
2. To minimize potential hazardous, adverse or objectionable effects of the proposal;
- ...
7. To evaluate existing and proposed road systems, utilities, schools, parks and other public facilities to determine if they are adequate to serve the proposed project;

7.5.704 Authorization and Findings: *The Planning Commission may approve and/or modify a conditional use application in whole or in part, with or without conditions, ONLY if all three (3) of the following findings are made:*

A. Surrounding Neighborhood: That the value and qualities of the neighborhood surrounding the conditional use are not substantially injured.

B. Intent Of Zoning Code: That the conditional use is consistent with the intent and purpose of this Zoning Code to promote public health, safety and general welfare.

C. Comprehensive Plan: That the conditional use is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan of the City.

Our Planners and our City Council have a sworn duty to uphold our City's code. I do not believe they can say honestly that the Cottages development meets these three conditions. If the Mark Dabling Cottages are approved, I request a written statement from Planning on specifically why they believe the project meets these criteria.

Thank you,

Edmond (Buddy) Van Doren, 6565 Bull Hill Court

719-598-2992

Attachments:

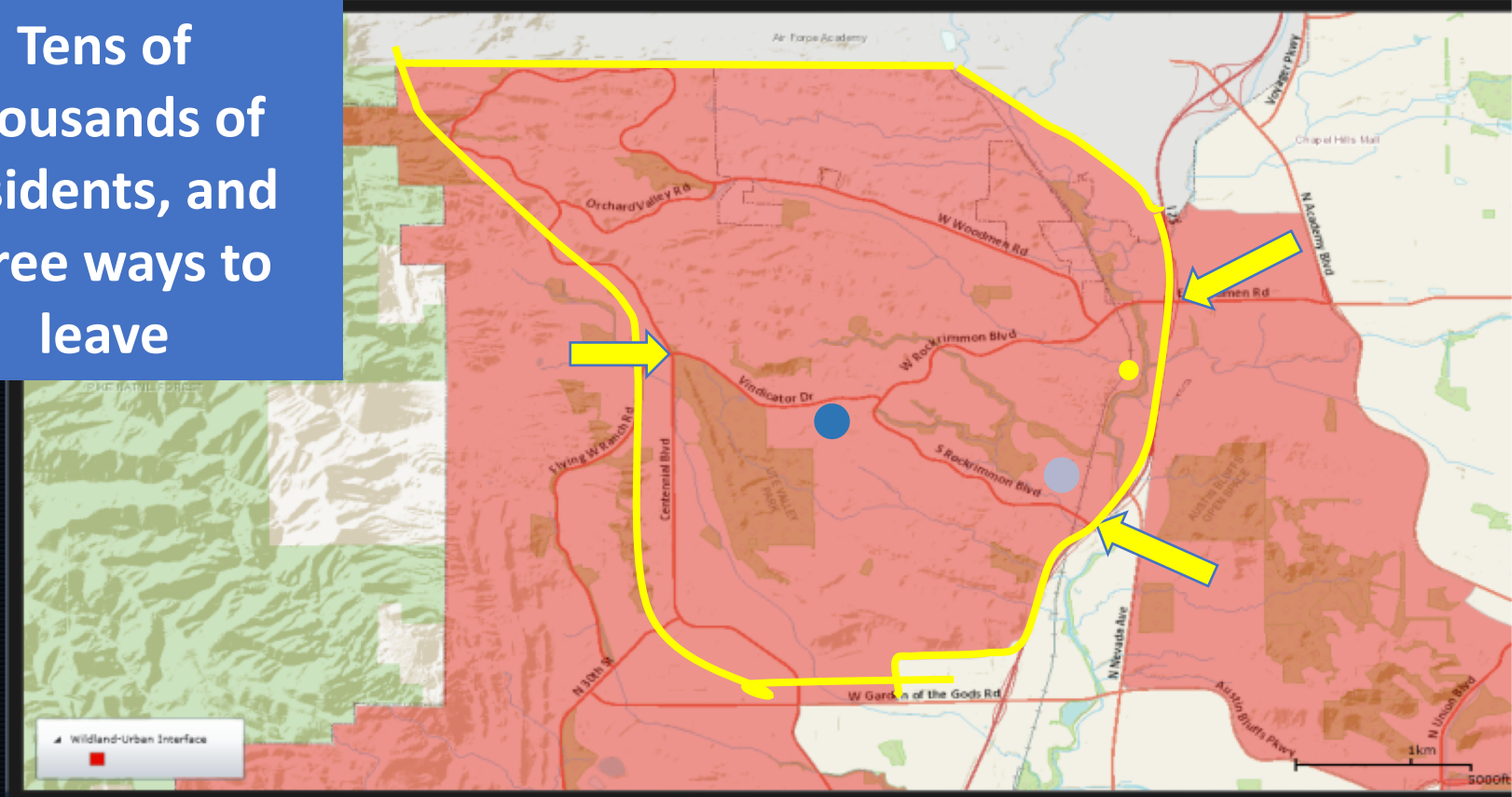
- Diagram of limited egress points in Rockrimmon – Woodmen Valley area
- Annotated 2014 Woodmen Edition article on the incidence of wildfires



Wildfire Mitigation

CSFD Wildfire Hazard Rating System

Tens of thousands of residents, and three ways to leave



Yellow arrow → Egress point
Yellow dot ● Cottages location
Yellow line — Boundary, population area of concern

...and it will happen again

Our own Fire Department says we will have more wildfire incidents

-Woodmen Edition, May 2, 2014

Woodmen • EDITION
Life, Business, News in Rockrimmon, Peregrine, Pine Cliff, Woodmen Valley, Yorkshire, Brookwood, Briargate, Pine Creek and Wolf Ranch

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Preparing for it to Happen Again

City Asks Residents to Get Ready for Another Fire Season

Area residents gathered handouts and fliers with information about fire preparedness at the city's public meeting at Cheyenne Mountain High School last week. Speakers covered a wide variety of topics including the area's current fire risk, the city's capabilities and how residents can best prepare for the possibility of another wildfire season.

By Dave Volz

Without an alarmist tone, City of Colorado Springs officials made it clear they think another wildfire is coming, and they want everyone to get ready.

"We will have a large wildland fire event again," said battalion chief Russ Renck of downtown's Fire Station 1 at the city's public fire preparedness meeting which drew about 300 people to Cheyenne Mountain High School on Thursday, April 24.

"Don't let your guard down. Be prepared," said Renck, as he also emphasized the city's emergency preparedness theme, "Share responsibility."

"You are in the area of the city at a higher risk," said Renck, referring to any Colorado Springs residents living west of I-25.

Representatives from the city's fire, police and emergency management departments discussed wildfire mitigation, evacuation planning and other details of how to prepare for another fire emergency similar to what has happened the last two summers in the Colorado Springs area.

"Have a plan in place," said Colorado Springs Fire Chief Chris Riley. "Don't wait for fire to be in sight or for someone to tell you what to do," he said.

Officials went over the need to plan ahead for emergencies residents may want to protect or take with them in the case of a fire evacuation, the wisdom of packing an emergency supply kit that meets their specific needs and the value of discussing where to meet family members in case a disaster separates people and cuts off cell phone service. They emphasized thinking through the different scenarios of what could happen, for instance if a fire started when the adults are at work and the kids, pets or important documents are at home. They suggested having phone lists as hard copies, staying in touch with neighbors to help each other out and paying particular attention to the conditions on "red flag warning" days of highest fire danger.

Christina Randall of the city's wild-fire mitigation department reviewed how fire risk is assessed and emphasized that they "can't predict" fire. Randall said they do have ways to evaluate when the risk is highest. She said while the Colorado Springs area has been getting some "rain events" this spring, high winds and high temperatures in between cause small rain events to quickly dry out the vegetation and increase the risk. She said even spring moisture isn't likely to take away the threat but it could delay the fire season till fall.

Amy Sylvester, also with the wild-fire mitigation department, discussed what people can do on their properties to help reduce the risk of fire damage. She said city residents can look up the wildfire hazard rating of their homes on the city's website, participate in neighborhood chipping projects to reduce available fuels and schedule an appointment to have a property reviewed for free mitigation advice.

"We are not looking to have you

Continued on page 12

Now is the time to give input about what's important for city parks. The city is reviewing its master plan and looking for feedback.
See Story Page 3

Rockrimmon Reading Champs
The Battle of the Books team at Rockrimmon Elementary took home the top prize in the citywide reading quiz competition.
See Story Page 2

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The wildland is open recreation space, with many hiking trails – all it takes is one cigarette, or one match, one spark from a train or off-road vehicle, a lightning strike,...