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May 15, 2024

Rockville Town Council,

Hello, my name is Chelsea Holmstead. I grew up in Springdale, my parents built Oscar's and Lazy Lizard Boutique. My boyfriend is Brett Jessop, local mechanic since 1999 and the guy most of you call to fix your vehicles.

I bought a piece of property on the South Mesa knowing that the town has not been allowing much use so we had low expectations. Especially when I reached out to Linda Brinkley and was told something along the lines of 'talk to Vicki Bell but we don't like those illegal lots'. "Illegal Lots" or "Illegal Subdivision" is a term we hear a lot about those properties but once we got looking into (a) their history, (b) how they were deemed illegal, (c) local attitudes, and (d) how the town has selectively not improved or allowed use of them since its formation, we thought we should learn more and start participating in town meetings.

We were present for the April 9, 2024 Planning Commission Regular Meeting ("*Planning Meeting*") and the April 23, 2024 Town Council Special Meeting ("*Special Meeting*"). During the Special Meeting two select letters were read. One of which gave a single interpretation of "events that unfolded during the Planning Meeting". I had a much different perspective of those events which I would like to relay to you and the public as follows.

1. With regard to the voting process and conflict of interest, the very first items addressed in the Planning Meeting were that (a) Chairman Garth Tyler was participating remotely so Vice Chair Tim Arnold would be leading the meeting, and (b) Vice Chair Tim Arnold did not have a conflict of interest that would prevent him from independently and objectively participating in decisions regarding Mr. Anderson's requested permit. This all seemed to be well-disclosed and in keeping with the town's Conflict of Interest Policy.
2. As far as the interaction between Member Jane Brennan and Tydon Oler, I saw Mr. Oler's face when Member Brennan accused him of profanities. He looked as shocked as the rest of us were when she yelled the 'F-word' over her microphone and talked about "mouthing vacuum like in elementary school". It must be said that she made more than a few of us very uncomfortable and if anybody created a disruptive environment during that meeting, it was Member Brennan.

3. As for confusion and delays during the Planning Commission Meeting, I would like to take a moment to remind everyone here of the duties, ethics and standards of conduct set forth for Planning Commission Members in the Bylaws.

ARTICLE III SECTION 2 – DUTIES, ETHICS AND STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Paragraphs 1-2:

The primary duty of the Planning Commission is to help the landowner accomplish, in a manner consistent with the Town's General Plan and Land Use Code, what the landowner desires to do with his/her land. Planning Commissioners are advocates for the public interest.

The Planning Commission's role is to apply, in a professional, ethical, consistently fair and common sense manner, their knowledge of Town Codes and Ordinances to the planning and land use process. The Commission can only serve this valuable function when it works within the constraints of the law and without regard to public prejudice or clamor.

Additionally

ARTICLE II SECTION 7 – PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS – RIGHTS AND DUTIES

Paragraphs 5-7:

Commissioners shall perform work between meetings as needed, e.g., review prepared materials prior to meetings, participate in site visits and contribute in preparing other work required of the Commission.

Members shall review all agenda items in an objective, fair and consistent manner and shall use the goals and objectives of the General Plan and requirements of the Land Use Code to guide their decisions on all applications. Members shall refrain from expressing personal opinions regarding any application under review.

Consistent failure to perform the above stated duties and responsibilities shall be considered non-performance of duty and cause for removal.

It is clear in old minutes and recordings as well as previous town surveys that these lots have been a topic of conversation for plenty of time. In fact, during the March 12, 2024 Planning Commission Regular Meeting it seemed that a lot of information relating to the road on South Mesa was presented to Planning Commission for review. This knowledge would have been helpful to the Members in determining legality of Mr. Anderson's request if it had been reviewed ahead of time. Most of this information has been gleaned from public record by property owners. Town of Rockville representatives seem unwilling to absorb new information and adapt to legal requests of lot owners. That is a failure to prepare and/or a failure to perform duties on behalf of the Member and should not constitute delays or denials to a property owner in light of a valid request.

On the more personal note, while we are happy for friends like Logan and Angie who have been able to realize the dream of homeownership in such a beautiful place, Brett and I have very real discussions about what we will do and where we will go when we get priced out of our rental in Virgin. And while they have had the chance to raise their children in the hills where we grew up, we have made choices not to have children based on the barriers like the economy and uncertainty of ever owning a home.

Rockville is not operating in a vacuum here. Almost everywhere in the world is experiencing major housing issues. In fact, Governor Cox and other elected representatives were just speaking to St. George News about his mandate to small towns to work with property owners, specifically regarding smaller lots for more affordable home ownership.

"Utah Rep. Neil Walter-R...told St. George News it will take a conscious awareness effort by local leadership to overcome "not in my backyard" concerns about smaller residential lots. Walter said. "What people forget is that if we stop providing room for the next generation, we lose all of the workforce. We lose all of the services, we lose all of the critical support," Walter said. "We can't just drive out young people, working-age people because we don't want more traffic or we don't want more people to come here to this community. If that were the case, we would be 10,000 people in a small outpost in the middle of nowhere stuck in 1960." (Reed, 2024)

We realize there are processes and limitations to what may be permitted in such an area but the Town of Rockville owes a conversation to property owners up there and has a duty to work within the town guidelines to facilitate some kind of use of those properties. Therefore, we request the following:

1. Communication with the Utah Office of the Property Rights Ombudsman need to be transparent and accessible. Mr. Carter from Five County Association of Governments was brought into the Planning Meeting to advise Planning Commission regarding Mr. Anderson's request. He can be heard saying at least three (3) times during that meeting that he was not given all appropriate information to accurately advise Planning Commission on the situation. We do not want this to happen again with the Utah Office of the Property Rights Ombudsman.
2. These proceedings need to be timely with some sort of desired resolution date. No timeline was mentioned at the Special Meeting. We do not want this dragged out and ignored like similar issues in the past. There are quite a few of us paying attention at this point and will require full resolution in a timely manner.
3. We ask that no changes be made to any codes, rules, resolutions, or governing documents including but not limited to the General Plan and Land Use Code as well as rules governing non-resident participation in public meetings until these proceedings and any others regarding lots on the South Mesa have been resolved.

4. Finally, we firmly request that all representatives of the Town of Rockville including Planning Commission Members, Town Council Members, and Town Clerks immediately cease use of the terms "Illegal Lots", "Illegal Subdivision" and any variations when referring to the South Mesa lots. This kind of language creates discord and animosity between neighbors, discriminates against property owners, and suggests criminality without any proof.

We appreciate your time and efforts on behalf of the community and look forward to these proceedings moving forward in a kind, professional, and timely manner.

Reed, Chris; April 30, 2024; Utah Gov. Cox gives local communities one year to make progress on less expensive starter homes

<https://www.stgeorgeutah.com/news/archive/2024/04/30/cdr-utah-gov-cox-gives-local-communities-one-year-to-make-progress-on-less-expensive-starter-homes/>