

**Sand Flats Recreation Area (SFRA)
Stewardship Committee Special Meeting Minutes
156 E 100 N and via zoom
Tuesday, April 29th, 2025
3:00 pm**

In attendance:

SFRA Stewardship Committee members- Molly Taylor (MT), Mark Pope (MP) Mike Kelso, (MK)

Grand County Planning and Zoning- Acting Director Cristen Hoffine (CH)

Grand County Commission representative- Melodie McCandless (MM)

Sand Flats Director- Andrea Brand (AB), and SFRA Recreation Technician Matt Olding (MO) via zoom.

Call to Order

AB- What we need to determine at today's meeting is do we want to send a letter to the commission? Do we like the draft? Also included in the packet is the GC Planning and Zoning staff report, Steen family (applicant) letter, summation of citizen comments and planning commission comments from last P&Z meeting.

Presentation

Cristin Hoffine to discuss rezoning application for Raven's Rim property.

CH- Background. Overview application for a general rezone from Range and Grazing to Resort Commercial for 234 acres. Access is only available via Hell's Revenge and it is surrounded by BLM and City property. Planning and Zoning (P&Z) is recommending a denial on this application. P&Z have threshold issues that we have to reach before we can even contemplate this application. One is access and the other is annexation. If it is going to have city services then (Moab) city has to have a seat at the table. Applicant has to approach the city, county cannot do that. Without city's voice P&Z really can't go further. I did on this one because applicant asked and they did not want to be annexed.

MT- This does not include the property from Raven's Rim entrance?

CH- That is not the access to the parcel. There is legal access and granted access.

MT- If P&Z says "No" and SFRA says "No" why does it go further.

AB- GC Commission has final say.

CH- If someone puts forward an application then P&Z needs to move forward with this process.

AB- They don't want access from Raven's Rim.?

CH- Any road created would be a city road. For the county's purposes we have to have legal access which is via Hell' Revenge.

MP- Are there any activities happening that are not consistent with Range and Grazing?

CH- Currently they have a CUP that allows the activities that are happening there now.

MP- Applicant is not identifying what they want to do?

CH- Correct and that is why we have to consider and contemplate the full use of Resort and Commercial.

MP- County asked them to submit this request?

CH- No, when they came to the county for this rezone we processed it. They said they first approached the county about a CUP. But previous staff wanted them to do a rezone. We did have a discussion with the city and they said they would be open to an annexation and we went back to the applicant and told them this but they wanted to proceed with the rezone and not get an annexation from the city.

MP- I am trying to understand the driver to this. Applicant said something about tourists trespassing on their land. Did applicant contact SFRA?

AB- No they never contacted us. County has had the easement since 2012.

JJ- I recalled an incident pre- pandemic when the land owner gated off a road.

AB- The Grand County Sheriff was called two times in two years because land owner had gated off a class D road. The Sheriff went out in the field and opened it back up. It was during the first two Jeep Safari's after the Zip Line was constructed.

MP- If this is a problem then we should address it separately.

JJ and AB- concerns about SFRA losing easement?

CH- Easements are held in perpetuity. They are perfected easement. We have prescriptive use.

Losing an easement is a non- issue for both easements. Also there have been years and years of people not asking permission to go on the private property. They would need to address this by exerting their property rights.

MM- He is talking about people wandering off the trail onto his property from Hell's Revenge. How would visitors know? Part of the agreement he said is that the county would keep people off their land. They would need to put up a fence to do this.

Group discuss easement locations on maps. Hot tub region and also by Tip Over and Slickrock.

MP- What is the driver for this request? Concern about people trespassing on the land?

AB- SFRA keeps the trail marked.

MM- Ultimately the driver is the new map that calls it Resort Commercial. You have land that is Range and Grazing low value land and you have opportunity to up zone it to Resort Commercial, because land use map says that, what would you do?

AB- Does the map say that? I thought that was for the North corridor.

CH- Future land use map for Spanish Valley. The North corridor/ North gateway plan is separate. Why that land is called out on that map I am not sure. The new zone calls out a number of things that would be applicable to this area but doesn't contemplate all the uses for the future land use plan. P&Z needs to make our recommendations based on what it is now.

MP- Is it an error that it is named Spanish Valley future land use map?

CH- Map is guiding what code will look like. Map is creating areas on the map that don't exist yet. Those restrictions will look very different than what is in place now. People applying for a zone change based off a land use code that doesn't exist yet is creating issues.

JJ- How did this happen?

CH- Two different groups of planning staff. P&Z has had a hard time keeping staff onboard. Process would start and then people would leave. Prior staff wanted land use code updated before map was adopted and then new planning director came in and swapped those.

AB- What are they applying for now? Current zoning or future zoning?

CH- Current zoning but based off this map.

MM- They adopted this map in December for future land use code for Spanish Valley.

CH- This area wasn't considered in any of our meetings.

MP- This land has no city access, has a steep bluff that can't be developed and then transitions into Sand Flats Recreation Area. As far as future development, you could put a restaurant right along Hell's Revenge?

CH- If code allows a thousand-unit hotel, we have to consider most intense use.

MT- Planning commission already has an opinion of a negative. You draft a letter, we vote to approve the letter, very simple, just going against the commission, we don't have to analyze it.

AB- I want to understand this.

CH- Rezones are legislative decisions. There are reasons why they could contemplate approval of this. It is considered constraint plans so density would automatically be limited by 50%.

MT- At most they would get a really nice road up there.

AB- It would be like a Lion's Back on the other end of Sand Flats?

CH- The easement or access would be Hell's Revenge and this would be the road that they would improve to reach their property. If commission approves this, they also approve Hell's Revenge being improved. They would have to improve Hell's Revenge to meet commercial standards.

JJ- This would dramatically change Sand Flats and the character and quality of the experience.

CH- These are unintended consequences of rezone.

AB- And all those businesses that depend on their livelihood from the Hell's Revenge trail and the 17 million dollars that is brought into the community every year from Sand Flats would definitely be impacted.

MT- It would be a section of Hell's Revenge that no one uses, exit road. In reality probably tie it into Raven's Rim Road.

CH- County P&Z can't move forward with this until the city says that they do not want to annex the property.

MP- How binding is that?

CH- Half the property is city. Could ask for annex at any time.

MT- Applicant does not want to annex. If the application was only for a small area near Raven's Rim, then it probably would be annexed. But for some reason they asked for all this acreage for a zone change.

MP- Have the option for rezoning.

CH- I stepped in at the end of the process. Applicant put in what they wanted to do and then planning staff follows through with the process.

MP- Key words that JJ is saying about experience.

AB- I didn't know anything about Hell's Revenge trail.

CH- Very expensive and chance of it happening not likely.

MP- Well, we didn't imagine what is happening at Kane Springs.

CH- You have to imagine the most that could happen. There are strong restrictions on ridge line development but the parts that can be built can be built intensely.

MT- Intriguing that they aren't asking for the parcel next to 191 to be rezoned.

MP- Portion of bypass and exit crosses into that lot. Down below there is a separate parcel that is not in question this time but surprised it isn't, because this would be a good place to build and develop the entire lot.

MM- I think they will build their own road in there after going in the exit.

AB- County/SFRA does not have an easement for the Hell's Revenge exit. SITLA said they would get to it but they didn't. Also don't have an easement for where Hell's Revenge goes

through Lake Michigan to the dinosaur tracks. Road Dept. not worried because this is a class D road.

CH- I thought we perfected all easements over the last 4 years.

AB- Maybe something happened and I wasn't included. Before I read the SFRA draft letter let's look over highlighted questions from applicant letter narrative. "C) Need for Use- There is a strong demand for amenities and recreational attractions accessible from the Sand Flats Recreation Area including the Hell's Revenge OHV trail and the Slickrock Bike trail." What is this based on?

CH- This is their narrative, they can state whatever they want.

MP- That expresses intent better than anything else I have seen.

AB- "D) Granting a rezone will ... increase accessibility to SFRA without placing additional strain on the residential roads that are traditionally used for access." How would SFRA county (day use) fee be collected?

MT- Unless access comes up from main street.

AB- "I) Uses Compatible with Surrounding Area: The surrounding area of the Sand Flats Recreation Area establishes this land as an area for recreation, the rezone allows for additional recreational opportunities." What opportunities- Swimming pool, golf course, bar?

CH- Current business is operating via a CUP.

AB- The first I heard about this was from the Road dept. concerning a food truck.

CH- Until the site plan is over we don't know. The approval is for all uses. With a zone change we lean on the land use code and say what could be here and how impactful this would be to the community and is that appropriate. Any rezone should be considered this way.

MM- These folks might want a food truck but next people that buy it could develop it to worst case scenario. We have to consider most intense use. If they develop it under Resort Commercial like Fairfield and Canyonlands by Night, if we had all that going on, on the top of the rim. Not sure what rim regulations are. Put a resort up there, have a lot of infrastructure to put in, but if you have the money, developers can fathom it.

MP- Value of the lots goes up considerably.

MM- Heard that this was pushed through planning and zoning for a lot of years.

MP- Why did it never change?

MM- Maybe now with the map?

AB- We worked with them in 2012 on Raven's Rim.

CH- North Gateway plan was city project, 2008-2012 if you wanted to develop anything up to the bridge you had to work with the city for annexation. North Gateway plan is still in place, developed when Canyonlands by Night was built. City wanted to improve the area coming into the city. City plan was called Broken Windows. City had first rights for refusal of annexation.

MT- They reference the North Gateway plan in their application.

JJ- Wouldn't development have to get services through the city?

CH- Yes, city would have to annex.

AB reads the letter to the group. Based on suggestions of group AB adds easement info to second paragraph. Adds easement dates to sixth paragraph.

MP- Commercial development violates the mission.

MT- In the application they say that zone change would improve recreational experience. We don't think that it would.

CH- Future land use map was specific to Spanish Valley not North Gateway plan.

MP- Devastating impact on the Slickrock Bike trail. Lose control of these trails.

JJ- Management issues will increase and be more challenging.

CH- Letter would be part of the public hearing process. You could submit it right away because you are advisory to the committee.

MM- AB you could speak as part of the public hearing, send the letter to all commissioners and then also put it in public comments through portal on Grand County website.

CH- Proper way to submit it for the legal record.

MP- Letter should tie back to our mission. Our job is to assess how we best serve our customers. Best served by giving them a recreational experience that is representative of being away from town. That is who we are representing.

JJ- Lacking in commercialization of the public lands.

MP- That is what our mission statement says.

MT- Preservation of recreation area.

JJ- Management of the recreation area. Pre 1994 initial application to Americorps since SFRA has been all about maintaining natural resources and quality of experience for folks within the SMRA without commercialization of a physical sort.

MT- Recommend drafting a letter and getting it into county public portal asap.

MM- If you want to speak as individual along with the letter you can at the meeting.

CH Discusses process for public hearing on May 6th.

AB- Is the applicant going to do another presentation to answer some of the planning commission questions?

CH- We will invite them to do that. You don't have to wait for the public hearing to turn in the letter. Make sure red-lined letter is emailed separately to each member and they reply separately.

Citizens to be Heard

None

General Business- Action Item

MM- Do I vote?

AB- Yes, county liaison is a voting member.

CH- explains when vote is appropriate and since this body advises GC commission it doesn't make sense for member to vote to advise self in this matter.

SFRA Stewardship Committee vote on letter to Grand County Commission in opposition to the rezoning application for Raven's Rim property as it applies to SFRA because it is in conflict with the SFRA mission.

MP makes motion, MT seconds it. All members vote in favor except MM who recuses herself.

Adjourn

