

City of La Verkin

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La Verkin City Council Work Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 2, 2022, 5:00 pm.

Council Chambers, 111 S. Main, La Verkin, Utah

Present: Mayor Pro Tem Micah Gubler, Council Members: Richard Hirschi, Patricia Wise, Blair Gubler, Micah Gubler, and Chuck Hardy; Staff: Kyle Gubler, Derek Imlay, Kevin Bennett, and Christy Ballard, Public: John Valenti, Willyne & Douglas Beecher, Dick & Debbie Hoffman, Karl Wilson, Russell Bezette, the David Howard Family, Linda Howard, Daniel McKeenan, Aaron Gubler, Chase & Stephanie Gubler, Richard & Cozette Howard, Hugh Howard, James Marvin, Kevin Lewis, Debra Howard, Bill & Pat Smith, and Ryan Cunningham; Electronic Participation: Mayor Kelly Wilson.

A. Called to Order –Mayor Pro Tem Micah Gubler called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

Mayor Pro Tem Gubler stated that this is a work meeting, so there would be no public comment.

Kyle introduced Mogli Cooper, owner of Iron Mountain Hot Springs in Glenwood Springs, Colorado. Mogli has a proposal for La Verkin City to utilize the hot springs.

Mogli thanked the Council for their willingness to hear her presentation. She received their questions from Kyle and will attempt to answer them at this meeting. Steve Beckley is a partner who was not able to attend this meeting.

A conceptual plan of this project was put on the tv for the Councilmembers and audience to view.

She began by explaining what they had done at Glenwood Springs. That development started in 2014.

The Glenwood Springs hot springs began in 1890 along the banks of the Colorado River. Over the years, there have been several different owners and many different concepts. In 1995 the owner bulldozed the entire property.

Steve built the Glenwood Canyon Adventure Park and was aware of this property. They decided to purchase it to build a hot spring.

Steve is an engineer, and Mogli is a developer, and neither one of them knew much about hot springs, but with the help from Glenwood Hot Springs Pool, they built the model.

She had pictures of the property from 1896 and briefly went over the property's history. She also had a picture of the property from 1995 after the buildings were demolished.

The project began with four pools and one freshwater pool. A river divides the "quiet area" from the "family area."

There is a café and an office/locker room building. They tried to build everything according to the history of the property. There were meetings held with the citizens and community leaders. They were glad for those comments to help guide the development.

The groundbreaking was October 2014. Mogli had photos of the construction. The contractors were all local.

At some point in time, they decided to make eight soaking pools instead of 4. Three months before the grand opening, they decided to add eight more pools.

The project opened on July 15, 2015.

They would like to duplicate what they have in Glenwood Springs here in La Verkin with the addition of a couple of things.

Mogli had a video presentation she showed the Councilmembers while she was answering the questions the Council had submitted to her earlier.

When they held the public sessions, they had the model available, and citizens commented on items they liked or didn't like. One gentleman pointed out that the wheelchair lift chairs were not as discrete as a simple ramp, so that is what they installed in the big pool, and she is glad they did. The top row of the little pools is handicap accessible.

She traveled throughout the world, visiting hot springs to find out how they were done and get ideas on how to build them.

One of the questions she received was if a trail could be built down to the river. She would be interested in having a trail but that is not up to them. Some of the lands would be leased, so that would be a liability for the landowner.

Each pool in Glenwood Springs has its own water source for sanitary reasons. The water turns over every two hours, so it is always fresh.

All floors, sidewalks, and culinary water are heated from the mineral water. She explained the heat is extracted from the water and transported to the different areas of the property. She had a few photos showing the various equipment used for this.

In La Verkin, she would like to build a sauna similar to a salt cave and a snow cave similar to a cold plunge. These are both very good for the body.

The Glenwood Springs development has two very popular infinity pools.

There will be a minimum age of 18 in the hot spring pool area to maintain a quiet atmosphere. There will be a community pool for children that may be turned over to the City.

The development will have a spa building for massages and facials. It will also have a Knight walk. Which is a smaller version of a lazy river that you walk in, and it massages your feet.

There are freshwater pools that are heated by the mineral water.

She explained since they do not add chemicals to the water, it can discharge back into the river. The development in Colorado uses a sand filter to remove the biofilms.

One of the questions from the Councilmembers was regarding the smell, and unfortunately, nothing can be done about that. It depends on the source. In Glenwood Springs, the water only smells occasionally.

They do read all the reviews; that is how they learn. If someone is unhappy, they want to correct it.

They have made hand soaps, body lotion, and mineral bath salts with the mineral water from the hot springs. That is an option with this development.

They do serve alcohol with a limit of two drinks per person. Part of the check in process is to determine if the individual will be having a drink. If so, they are issued a different colored RFID bracelet. These bracelets help maintain order, especially age, so no one "slips through the cracks. "The bracelets open your locker. You can also charge things with them, so there is no need to carry a wallet. The credit card information is collected upfront, and they "settle up at the end." They also serve food.

She had pictures of the bracelets and the Glenwood Springs food court area before and after COVID.

They also have annual passes available.

There is signage at each pool stating the name, temperature, and the different minerals in the water. The temperature is updated periodically throughout the day.

No smoking will be allowed on the premises.

Children cannot regulate their body temperature, so that is one of the reasons for the age restriction in the hot springs.

Glenwood Springs has rejuvenation stations where ice-cold water comes out.

A big question from the Council was lighting. The lighting for the hot springs is all downward cast. She had several photos showing the stair lighting and pool lighting.

She had a proposed layout of the La Verkin project and answered the questions given to her previously by the Councilmembers.

- There will be a buffer between residential and commercial. It will be an 8-foot wall with pine trees planted along the commercial side. She had photos of wall examples.
- The salt pools will not go beyond 480 South.
- Nothing can be done with the odor.
- A trail along the river would be up to the Conservancy District and what they will allow them to do. The main concern for her would be public safety, both the neighbors and the guests. The insurance carrier would review the possibility of the trail as well.

In Glenwood Springs, they have received a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers for beaches along the Colorado River.

- What type of employees is in the hot spring workforce? They have 60 employees. That increases during the busy season.
They have changed to a reservation system. The spots are for 2 ½ hours, and the bracelets change colors with each slot. It is working great.
They have a general manager, assistant manager, retail, front gate, maintenance, and food and beverage managers. Each of those departments has several leads under the manager.
- Will they compete with local businesses? That depends on what they are looking for. The only employee they are bringing with them is a general manager. Everyone else will be local. They will also be hiring local contractors to build the development.
- Are they planning on having workforce housing on-site? They didn't plan on doing that in Glenwood Springs, but the town priced itself out of the market for people to afford to live there. They just finished building 15 employee housing units on site. They could do this in La Verkin if they needed to, but they would prefer to build them off-site.

- What is the timing for the hotel and restaurant? The hotel is 18-24 months after the pools are open. It will be about three stories with 100-125 rooms. Until the hotel is done, they will partner with local hotels and offer a discount to the resort for their patrons. They are also willing to partner with food services and guiding services.
 - How loud will the music be? No. The speakers are on the ground and look like rocks with soothing music playing. They also have signage to make sure people know it is a quiet zone.
 - Outdoor lighting. She mentioned that earlier. There is a large clock that is backlit, so people know what time it is.
 - Will you blend into the landscape? Absolutely. The whole idea is for the resort to look organic. They have learned to place trees to shield the pools for privacy for the guests and the surrounding properties.
- The design for the city pool has not been determined. She thinks it would be about 30x80 feet and would be about three or four years after the mineral pools were complete.
- This would be a good work meeting topic so they can find out what the City would like to see.
- It would not be covered, so it could be open for probably eight months out of the year. It may need a cooling tower in the summer to cool the water.
- They are willing to run the community pool in conjunction with the City rec department if that would be helpful. They would also be opened to extending that time frame or having a management agreement with the City where they would run it for La Verkin.
- The pool and hot springs would each have their own access and separate fee.
- They are not in the restaurant business, but they have included a pad on the plan for someone interested in building one.
- The resort will have a food court but not a restaurant.
- The property allowance with the Conservancy District goes past 400 West; what are the plans for the property?
 - Councilwoman Wise clarified that the trail in question would run parallel to the river and under the bridge over to Confluence Park. Zac Renstrom is in favor of this trail.
- Mogli stated they support trails, but the one thing they can't have on their property is a trail without a fence for liability reasons.
- What are the estimates for visitation? Glenwood Springs had about 200,000 people in the second year of business. She hopes La Verkin will be par.
 - If someone comes to visit, is it a daily visit or for multiple days? They hope for multiple days by adding different experiences like the snow cave and the Knight walk. That is where the hotel comes in so that they can stay multiple days.
- This will be a destination resort.
- Are they still in negotiations with the Washington County Water Conservancy District? Yes, but they are just about to the end-stage. The last concern was the community pool and getting La Verkin City on the same page. Zach Renstrom visited Glenwood Springs and walked away with a positive opinion.
- This development is not going to be a "hippy dip." It will not be a loud or obnoxious development. It will be a spa.
- Has an environmental study been done regarding taking and returning water to the river? No. The simple reason is in Glenwood Springs, nothing is added to the water. It is only pumped through a sand filter, so it goes into the river the same way it goes out.
- There is nothing you can do to desalinate the water, and the State knows this.
- There are signs around the resort reminding people to shower before entering the hot springs to keep the water as pure as possible.

Councilman Gubler thanked Mogli for taking the time to come to La Verkin and answer questions.

B. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 6:07 pm.

April 6, 2022

Date Approved

ATTEST:

Christy Ballard
Christy Ballard
City Recorder

Kelly B. Wilson
Mayor Kelly B. Wilson

