

Feb. 28, 2022

Grand County Commission  
125 East Center Street  
Moab, UT 84532

RE: Tin Roof Resort OAO Approval

Dear Commissioners,

With this letter you will have received the revised Site Plan and Master Plan which reflect changes specified by the DRT review, the single public comment letter provided, staff comments, and lastly, concerns expressed by the Planning Commission at the hearing held a few weeks ago. In addition to these changes, we wish you to consider the following.

The Taylor Family have ranched in the Beaver Basin area for well over 100 years. In that century plus of ranching, some four generations have been active stewards of both their lands and abutting SITLA grazing leases. As well, the family has ranched several other locations in Grand County. The condition of their lands, both leased and owned, bear out the families care and commitment to lands stewardship. I've known Jick Taylor for 40 years and know that he currently is, and will continue to be, an able caretaker of these lands. In fact, my family has enjoyed ownership of adjoining lands for 50 years and in that time have witnessed the ethical, long-term uses of the Taylors lands.

Mr. Taylor now wants the opportunity for others to enjoy these lands as he has by creating a boutique campground catering to those Grand County visitors that want something in the mountains, something private and secluded, something away from the crowds frequenting Moab and the adjacent public lands. The proposed development accommodates just that.

In a letter from a concerned resident, the author accurately states that "the northeast side of the La Sal mountains is the quietest and least visited area of the entire mountain range". That's exactly what makes this a desirable destination for the discerning visitor that Jick hopes to host. If approved, each of the cabins will accommodate two persons. Two people in each cabin, and assuming a full camp park, means 24 people in an area of thousands of acres of Forest Service Lands, BLM Lands, Utah Trust Lands, and the applicants' private lands. Anyone visiting this development will have already driven thru more than a mile of Taylor lands before arriving at the campground. These periodic visitors will have minimal impact on the thousands of acres available. This project provides an opportunity to support visitors to the area by providing them with a sustainable, locally owned, locally managed, and approved overnight accommodations. This will help offset the visitors that often camp in unapproved areas that pose a greater risk to La Sal Mountains and forest management. This can be emphasized by the 2021 Pack Creek fire that began due to campers mismanaging a campfire at an unmanaged site. Without this project these visitors will continue to come but instead will be camping in twelve other unimproved sites and creating twelve times the impact that they would have by staying in the proposed campground.

A valid concern of staff, and mentioned at Planning Commission as well, is wildfire hazards. The applicant proposes a development that complies with the Wildlands-Urban interface code. As such, prescribed defensible spaces and fire retardant building materials would be utilized. Cabins will have

central heating as opposed to fireplaces or woodstoves and no exterior fires will be permitted. Water, both tanked culinary water and roof collected runoff, will be available for fire protection.

Other concerns mentioned included access to the site. All roads accessing the area are County Class B Roads, seasonally maintained by the county. The proposed development will not generate an extensive need for additional maintenance. Roads and Drives within the park will be the owners to build and maintain. Culinary water will be hauled from a certified public water source. Should the owner subsequently develop his own water source, it will comply with the applicable standards. A soil study determined the onsite soils suitable for an alternative onsite wastewater treatment system. This study has been reviewed and approved by the SEUHD. The site has available public power provided by Rocky Mountain Power. The cabins will be lit using LED lighting that will be offset by the installation of a grid-intertie solar array.

A recent study noted OAO approvals were needed to sustain the tourism industry and pay for the increased services of staff, law enforcement, and the many other agencies impacted by the industry. The relatively new requirements for securing an OAO approval were created to par down the approvals to projects more palatable to county residents, lessen the impact of wholesale lodging construction, and provide some redeeming value to the County. It was not the intention of that legislation to halt the development of OAO lodging altogether but rather provide tools to the developer and the county by which better, more sustainable and less impactful OAO projects could be developed. We understand the updated county general plan will include an updated land use plan. Based on conversations with county officials, we understand this area was not directly studied and therefore will not be influenced by the updated plan.

The Tin Roof Resort project is an ideal proposal when considering impacts. It is on the east side of the La Sal Mountains. The owner's business plan calls for drawing a large percentage of his guests from the west slope of Colorado, hopefully accessing the area from Gateway. Should the guests desire to go to dinner, Gateway is closer. Should they want to go to the desert, the north half of Grand County is available without going through Moab. If they are content with spending their time on the La Sals, chances are they won't be in town. As noted in the public comment provided, cars and visitors are few thus, not much of an impact is felt. All in all, this project is an opportunity to provide employment, provide income for the county via lodging taxes, and will provide more property tax revenue on this small parcel than the entirety of the applicant's greenbelt taxes on his remaining acreage.

The Grand County Commissions are an elected body that represents the stewardship of the county and its people. As discussed in the Planning Commission meeting, this project will support a local resident who has adequately managed his property and wishes to share the area with visitors of like mind. Although there can be impacts imagined by accepting this project, it is my opinion that the proposed project provides far greater benefit to the area, to a lifelong resident, and to the people of Grand County, than any potential impact. I, as a neighbor to the project, as a county resident, and as a county taxpayer, encourage the Commission to grant approval to this OAO project.

Regards,

Timothy M. Keogh