

City of Ketchum, Idaho

P.O. Box 2315 Ketchum, ID 83340 (208) 726-3841 Fax: (208) 726-8234



August 15, 2011

To: Lisa Horowitz, Director of Community and Economic Development

From: John Kearney, Recreation Supervisor

Jen Smith, Director of Parks & Recreation

Re: Warm Springs Ranch Resort development agreement and Parks & Recreation staff comments

CC: Rebecca Bundy, Associate Planner: City Of Ketchum

The City of Ketchum Parks & Recreation Department appreciates the opportunity to comment on the following issues relative to the Warm Springs Ranch Resort Development.

- Development requirements based on Ketchum's Comprehensive Plan data
- "Active" recreational amenities (tennis, golf & trails) proposals
- Appropriate mitigation due to decrease in project size and scope

The Ketchum Comprehensive Plan is very specific regarding the need for active park space. It is also specific in directing the city to "*actively pursue active recreational or usable open space for the Warm Springs Neighborhood, particularly on flat, undeveloped land in Central Warm Springs. (Policy 4.9.6)*" The City has placed a high priority on "no net loss of recreational facilities" when reviewing PUD and annexation proposals. With a project of this magnitude (largest project on record to be reviewed by the City), appropriate steps need to be taken to ensure future sustainability of the City's existing recreation programs, services and amenities.

TENNIS

When the "active" recreational facilities at Warm Springs were decommissioned (8 tennis courts and 1 nine-hole golf course), Ketchum's park facilities saw a noticeable increase of use and subsequent deterioration of the City's only existing four public tennis courts. The WSRR development will add extra strain on our current facilities that are already receiving over-use. Since the onset of the economic downturn, our department has witnessed a noticeable increase in demand for programs and services. The recession has increased our use and

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208.726.7820

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participant numbers across the board. Atkinson Park houses the only public tennis courts in northern Blaine County. During the summer months, most of them are being used by our Summer Youth Recreation Program during the weekdays.

The current proposal by Helios to build two (2) courts in phase 1 and then one (1) court in each of the two (2) additional phases is not sufficient enough for either current use levels nor for anticipated increases in the future. The proposal leaves the City with a net loss of four (4) courts. Helios' revised proposal lowers their initial recreation mitigation contribution from \$500,000 to four (4) tennis courts. The Ketchum Parks & Recreation Department finds this unacceptable due to reasons cited above.

The Ketchum Parks & Recreation Department was heavily involved with the previous Warm Springs Tennis Club and allowed for the sharing of instructors, provided courts for Park Junior Tournaments, provided training clinics for park tennis staff and shared equipment to help reduce overhead costs for tennis programs. Nearly 500 juniors and adults used the Warm Springs courts each summer before they were decommissioned.

We respectfully recommend that WSRR build six tennis courts on their site within the next year, to be used as public courts in perpetuity. It is this department's belief that the six re-built courts would mitigate the "recreational loss" due to the decommissioned tennis courts and proposed smaller scope and size of project.

GOLF

A "golf practice facility" is now proposed en-lieu of a 9 hole golf course. This is still a "net loss" of recreation according to our department and the City's 2001 Comprehensive Plan. It is this department's position that a "practice facility" does not adequately replace a 9 hole golf course.

We respectfully request more time to review the description of what the "practice facility" entails (as we have none), to make a well educated recommendation to our elected and appointed governing bodies.

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TRAILS

The Ketchum Parks & Recreation Department is supportive of a trail being constructed with the help of WSRR from the Warm Springs base area to the River Run base area. This proposal has not been altered since the last review, and we believe the trail systems that were proposed throughout their property and beyond are an integral part of this project.

CONCLUSION

At this time we understand that the scope and size of this project has been decreased. Ketchum's 2001 Comprehensive Plan states that we must (Policy 8.11) "Protect and enhance existing recreational facilities." This is true as the developer must work with the City to make sure that their "guest impacts" on these facilities are realized and accounted for. It is our understanding that the developer believes that with their new proposal, there will be "no net loss" of recreation opportunities for Ketchum residents and visitors. The demands on our facilities will only increase and that is why we believe that our recommendations hold true. In Chapter 2.8 of the Comp Plan, it states that "Active park space is the biggest recreational need for Ketchum. Ketchum is operating at a deficit for active park space."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Kearney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

John Kearney
Recreation Supervisor: City of Ketchum Parks & Recreation Department

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