

Victoria Davis - Regarding Case #U_2017_0009

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Date: 12/20/2017 2:01 PM
Subject: Regarding Case #U_2017_0009

To whom it may concern,

I am writing today to express my extreme concern regarding the impact and location of the proposed commercial development at 33380 Pine Mountain Road.

I believe that a more appropriate site can be found among the vast and beautiful lands of Sonoma and Mendocino Counties, for these main reasons:

1) The very remote location of the proposed development is advertised on the website of Collective Retreats Sonoma as providing "easy access to the area's best wineries, cycling, and hiking." This could not be further from the truth. Pine Mountain Road is a narrow, at times un-paved, mountain road with numerous blind switchbacks, and no guard rails to protect drivers unaccustomed to this type of road.

Once at the resort, the guests would have access to their own firepits.

We are all too aware of the recent tragedies of the fires in Sonoma County, during which The Pocket Fire could be seen - one mountain ridge away - from the property where the proposed development would take place. Imagine the scene had the wind shifted direction, and 150 wedding guests attempted to flee down the mountain road, blocking current residents also trying to escape.

Imagine the scene should one of the firepits cause the fire. These sites are not going to be used by people accustomed to fire safety in the height of the dry summer season, in the middle of a dry pine and oak forest. The entire top of the mountain would be engulfed while people tried to escape down the single dirt road, with CalFire attempting to pass them on a road that does not have the width to accomodate that traffic.

My parents live adjacent to the proposed development site. It is unconscionable that anyone would propose such a high increase in the level of traffic on these unpaved, dangerous roads when there are already people living in this incredibly fire-prone community, which has but one escape route for them. I am horrified at the thought of a careless resort guest starting a fire, leaving my parents trapped behind the panicked exodus.

2) The natural beauty, tranquility, and remote-ness of Pine Mountain is so unique, it takes my breathe away every time I visit. There is zero light pollution, something I value as an astral photographer, and the lack of human-made noise is so acute that you can almost hear the very words being spoken by workers in the vineyards two hills over.

I can hardly imagine the din that party guests would create. The sounds of car doors closing, car alarms setting, people yelling to each other from one part of the property to another, "cheers-ing" at

events, playing music, calling dogs, dogs barking- all of this will create a very substantial change to the current environment at Pine Mountain. The loudest sound you can hear most days is the wind through the Ghost Pines, the coots in the pond, or the coyotes and bullfrogs at night.

It is absolutely ludicrous for Collective Retreats to claim in their application for development that cutting trees, creating a paved parking lot next to a natural pond environment, traffic and dust from guests, caterers, housekeeping, management, trash services, waste services, and others would result in "less than significant impacts."

If the existing community on Pine Mountain had wanted to live in a high-traffic area full of the sounds of revelry late in to the night, they would have spent their lives saving to buy homes in a more suburban area. But they did not. The Pine Mountain community is comprised of family farms, and the proposed development by Collective Retreats shows no respect for the existing feel of this unique place.

As a frequent visitor to the Sonoma region, I can attest to there being numerous large properties along Highways 12, 29, 101, 116, and 128 which would more truly provide "easy access" to the area's attractions, as well as being safely accessed, and already developed to accomodate large groups without endangering the neighboring communities, or detracting from the natural beauty, serenity, and tranquility of the surroundings.

I am certain there are plenty of property owners who would be willing to lease or sell land to Collective Retreats for this type of development, which would help to revitalize the areas already devastated by fires, without creating new and serious fire threats to areas as-yet unaffected.

I thank you in advance for your consideration and understanding, and look forward to your rejecting this thoughtless and irresponsible permit application.

Sincerely,

Jessica O'Brien