Jan 13, 2021

To: Stevensville Planning and Zoning Board Members, Greg Chilcotte, Meghan Hanson, Dan Ritter, Paul Ludington

Dear Board,

Zoom meetings are woefully inadequate to allow for public participation in the review process of the 220 family unit and 16 commercial lot Burnt Fork Estates (BFE) subdivision. As with the Board, meetings will fail again to hit a high bar with Town Council Meetings. This is evidenced by few call-ins and comment letters because citizens don’t know about the meetings with legal notices irregularly in the paper and not as required by town policy. The town website as well is not user friendly and is clunky.

In the midst of a pandemic there is only one way to protect public right to know and that’s through public open air meetings in the spring or when a majority of Phase 1B vaccinations for those 70+ and those 16-69 with health concerns are completed in Ravalli County. Please recommend to the Town Council a major subdivision with multiple impacts must be tabled until the public is safe to participate. Your Board and the Town Council work for Stevensville citizens, not the developers and their agents who want a speedy approval.

A Board member at the Jan 6 meeting said, “if a town doesn’t grow, it dies.” That rang out loud and clear as a rubber stamp for development over common sense. This kind of talk points to the fragility of the current model of growth and development. Short term gains for long term financial burdens especially for small towns. A Ponzi scheme dilemma that comes back to haunt. I recommend you all review Burnt Fork Estates like you’re paying for all the long term deficiencies the developers will dodge and it’s next door to your home.

On the preliminary plat look carefully at Clover Lane, a spur road in Creekside Meadows (CM). BFE has a 6 lot cul de sac faced into CM with no other access to BFE! Talk about confusion for those BFE lot owners. CM has different covenants, different HOA, and resident supported parks. Board, recommend those lots be turned into BFE to connect to the BFE road and sidewalk system. To do nothing on this is in violation of state subdivision law.

Last week at the 1/6 meeting I questioned the ownership of CM’s storm water system and the ability of BFE to attach. If BFE roads are to be private as per the Application, maybe that’s still a relevant question as the road system contains the storm water structure. The reason I even questioned ownership is based on a call I made to Stevensville’s Public Works Department a month ago and asked if the town owns CM’s system and if the town monitors and maintains it. I was told ownership by the town is unknown and Public Works has never monitored or done any maintenance on CM’s system. The outlet of CM’s storm water system is through a large culvert into a ditch that flows to North Swamp Creek I believe and it’s clogged with aquatic vegetation. The discharge flows over the ditch and has made CM’s Phase 2 park a bog seasonally. Town Hall needs to take system ownership and maintenance especially if BFE is connected to CM with their big and overly complicated storm water system. To the Board and the town administration, don’t let this slip thru the cracks like CM’s streets that are heavily fractured and have never been sealed and maintained as they should be.

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