

Friends of Park County

P.O. Box 23, Pray, Montana 59065

Promoting thoughtfully planned growth in order to protect and enhance Park County's vibrant communities, sustainable working lands, and healthy natural resources.

**Testimony of Ken Cochrane
During Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda
Before the Park County Planning Board
December 17, 2020**

Good evening. I am Ken Cochrane, a co-founder and board member of Friends of Park County. My address is 60 Majestic Ridge Trail, Livingston, Montana.

I am here tonight with an invitation. We are inviting you to participate in some educational programs and events Friends of Park County is considering organizing in 2021 on the potential negative impacts of scattered rural residential development in Park County. Future West is likely to be co-sponsoring some of these events.

The potential impacts we are interested in exploring in these educational programs and activities are:

- The *tax increases* required to build, maintain and operate City facilities and services to low density residential development.
- Wells used for irrigation and drinking water becoming inadequate or running dry.
- Pollution of drinking water supplies by septic sewage systems and other sources.

- Risks to lives and property because homes are allowed to be built in areas where wildfires and floods are likely.
- Falling populations of fish and wildlife – a phenomenon that is already being documented.
- Damage to the tourism industry as a result of landscape degradation.
- Loss of commercial farm and ranchland and conflicts with ranching and farming operations, like vandalism, gates left open, and lawsuits over the use of chemicals, noise and other factors.

Along with the potential problems we will consider potential solutions, including thoughtful land use regulations, taxpayer impact statements and conservation easements and other land use regulations which, by their own cataloging, are not currently in our Planning Department's quiver.

You could participate in a variety of ways. For example, some of you might like to be members of a panel that responds to what you have heard. If the County Commission authorizes it, and we trust they would, city staff might like to present information on some of those topics. For example, someone from public works could share data on the cost of building and maintaining County roads. The Planning Board might want to be one of the official co-sponsors for some of the events.

We don't need any formal action from you. But we would appreciate hearing each of your opinions about whether you think these educational programs would be helpful to you and what roles you might like to play, as individuals or a Board.

Finally, we were pleased to see your colleague, Taya Cromley participating in Livingston's Planning Board meeting last night. But given that the meeting ran for four hours she may already be regretting her decision to serve on both Planning Boards.

Happy Holidays and thank you for your attention this evening and your service to our community.