

Where did the Cowboy go?

Well, it's another month, and another milestone in the continuing saga of Cove development. At next weeks Hurricane Planning Commission meeting (Thursday, April 11, 6:00pm), the application for a zoning change will be discussed by the Commission. But some thing is strange here, there are just maps of empty lots, no details such as roads, commercial venues or housing units as in previous meetings. Indeed, the applicant is not Mr Thomas with his Lost Cove wild west show anymore, it is the property owner through an LLC, so has the Cove been lost? Apropos property owner, for those who attended the now legendary Feb 7 meeting, might remember an elegant lady pleading for approval because property taxes on her \$15 million property were killing her? She also had been mentioned in the St George News article about that meeting. Checking public records revealed that in 2018, this unbearable burden was a tax bill for\$171.35! Looks like class acting here, worthy of an Oscar for supporting actress. It elevates the term shedding crocodile tears to new heights. And apparently it had an effect, as it took the stern City Attorney to prevent the City Council from approving the application on the spot.

What about the Wild West show, did the bad people from Sky Mountain chase the cowboy away? Probably not. The property owner has apparently put the property back on the market, no word about the fate of wild west show however. So it looks like its not going to be happening in Hurricane, despite the Mayor's valiant effort to get Mr. Thomas interested in other suitable properties in Hurricane. In a way that is unfortunate, I sensed that there was and still is a real interest in having a local family entertaining venue, besides the local Fine Arts Theater with some excellent performances and the public Sky Mountain Golf course.

One can only conclude that, Mr. Thomas has served his purpose in enabling the land use change from

single home to commercial use for about a third of the property approved, and he and his Lost Cove show are not longer needed. Maybe he is on his trusted steed heading into the sun set looking for more fertile grounds for his dream. We wish him luck!

All the publicity, with presentations of the Wild West Show to the City Council in December, and later to the Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club, were just a ploy to get the City of Hurricane to grant a land use change to allow commercial development for the Cove property, and there is little evidence of actual intent to build the Lost Cove. Looks like a lot of folks ended up with egg on their face. The City Council and the business community fell for this wild west charade, hook, line and sinker! The residents of Hurricane ought to be outraged about being misled in such blatant way! One can only hope that the City will learn from this travesty and will have the opportunity to set the record straight. Maybe the city can ask the courts to vacate its decision?

Yes , there are lessons to be learned. Foremost, Hurricane is a fast (and maybe too fast) growing town. This is attracting developers of all flavors, including some less than honest ones. While dishonesty is not a crime in itself, we simply can not afford a City Council that falls for any con-artist who comes along, just because he spins a charming yarn. The future of this City is too precious and important to hand its land use over to some con-artist to “give him a chance to do his thing” as one Council member justified his favorable inclination.

With election coming up this summer we need to vote for candidates who have the smarts to recognize a fake developer, something that is apparently lacking in the current Council. Indeed , some municipalities check out potential developers well before they are allowed to submit proposals. This is something the City of Hurricane should think about. In the end it saves not only city resources but also avoids disappointments.

Hmm, while writing this letter I went through the various Cove meetings in my mind, and it struck me that at the final meeting on March 7, it was mentioned several times by Council members that Mr. Thomas, or maybe a developer other than Mr. Thomas might actually develop the Cove. I did not realize that we had some clairvoyants in the Council, but maybe I am kicking a sleeping dog here....