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Comments:

To preface: I live in Livingston, Montana, and I love it, but I, like most people in the area, strongly believe that the unchecked, reckless development that has happened over the past few years will be its detriment in relatively short order. My family (who lives in Gallatin County) has a small cabin in Condon that we essentially live at during the summer, and as such, trips to Holland Lake have been a staple (summer highlight?) year after year.

The proposal to "upgrade accommodation and recreation" at Holland Lake Lodge is, in a nutshell, bull****. POWDRs entire proposal insinuates that in removing the old, dilapidated, and unsafe structures at HLL and replacing them with more modern accommodations, their sole purpose is to "enhance visitor experience" and "allow the lodge to operate for decades to come," though it's very apparent that the only thing either entity cares about is their bottom line.

Per the proposal, POWDR/HLL will be removing around 5,000 sq ft worth of established structures to add 22,400 sq ft (a half acre!) in new structures, not including the walkways and parking spaces that will dominate the remainder of the HLL premises. In no way, shape, or form, does that plan construe preservation of either former structures or natural habitat.

With these improvements, anticipated guest capacity will triple from current. The proposal suggests that parking upgrades/day use parking at the lodge will somehow eliminate the traffic/parking issues that have plagued the Holland Falls trailhead for many years, which, although serendipitous, is simply not realistic.

With this massive build/expanded capacity comes the need for more staffing. As such, "lodge expansion will provide up to 25 new jobs." The proposal, however, fails to mention that the jobs will be seasonal, and that despite completely overhauling HLL, only half of those seasonal employees will have access to on-site housing. Western Montana has experienced a crippling housing crisis over the past few years; the execs at POWDR are clearly out of touch with (or don't care about) community needs, but are obviously willing to contribute to them.

WGMs sewer system report clearly states that the wastewater monitoring system utilized by HLL has produced highly irregular results over the years, which implies difficulty making accurate calculations/usage predictions with the proposed development. However, per POWDR, the "current wastewater system is considered sufficient with minor improvements" despite, per WGM, producing readings of "0 gallons in peak summer." This is concerning for obvious reasons.

Further, the proposal states that a "20 foot shoreline protection zone will be maintained throughout the development process." Sure, the old lodge sits close to the shore and has for years which isn't ideal, but proposing a development that places 90% of all new buildings on the water (20 feet back plus some change), seems criminal. Proposing a development of this caliber while claiming to "carefully balance the protection of natural resources" is deceptive and downright condemnable.

Finally, no IES? It seems, based on the review of available proposal documents, that USFS stands to gain monetarily from the endeavor. HLLs profits will increase as a result of these improvements, and as a result, USFS fee profit (which is a sales percentage) from HLL will increase too. Do better, USFS.

This project, under the guise of saving and improving a historic lodge "for the public" is POWDR/HLL/USFSs best effort to capitalize on "the influx of people visiting... the Flathead Valley." HLL could certainly use some work; but there's a big different between improving existing structures and leveling historic buildings to build a ritzy resort.

There are tasteful ways to improve older, historic structures/lodges and improve visitor experience/public access and this isn't it.