

Nicole Mardell

From: Valerie Ells <valerie@lairdsuperfood.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 9, 2020 3:42 PM
To: Nicole Mardell
Subject: Project number: CP 20-03, ZM 20-02, Sisters Woodlands
Attachments: Support letter for Sisters Woodlands.pdf

Good afternoon Ms. Mardell,

Please see attached letter related to the public hearing for the Sisters Woodlands project.

Thank you,

Valerie Ells

Dear Ms. Mardell,

I am writing in support of the proposed zone change being presented on Thursday, September 10th. I apologize for not being able to be there in person to voice my support, but I appreciate the opportunity to have my voice heard.

Growing up on the Oregon coast, I had the opportunity to visit central Oregon throughout my childhood. I loved this place from the start, and all it represented-- beautiful surroundings, nearly unlimited opportunity to immerse myself in nature, a small town feel with a strong sense of community, and an underlying rustic charm that resonated with me right away. Very early, I knew that someday I would raise my own family here, and though it took a number of years to find the right opportunity and the right company to make it happen for the long haul, my three boys now get to live in this dreamland every day and we feel so lucky that they get to experience this lifestyle and community on a daily basis.

But my husband and I are not alone in our desire to raise a family in this place, and we see that every year with more and more people migrating to our towns and more and more growth in the central Oregon region. The growth can be daunting and concerning. Seeing our favorite place evolve and change can be hard, especially when you feel like it's not being done the right way, or for the right reasons. And that is one of the reasons I want to speak in favor of this proposal. It is inevitable that change will happen; I feel like it is one of the things we can't control. But what I do think is in our power to control is how we guide that change to occur, and how we shepherd it in the right direction, and not just let it happen to us. In my mind, the folks that have the community's best interest at heart will shepherd that change in the right way. When someone is driven by a love of our community, rather than by a profit, they make choices and sacrifices to do things the right way, rather than to increase their bottom line. From my experience with Mr. Hodge and Mr. and Mrs. Schneider, that immersion in nature, small town feel and rustic charm that I have loved about this area for as long as I can remember are all in good hands. These are individuals that want to ensure our community grows the right way, not the fastest or most profitable way. And we can see that with some of the choices they are making in the proposed development-- saving over 200 trees, creating ample green space for families to enjoy, enhancing the town's decor to keep the Sisters vibe alive and well, and creating options that are affordable to all income levels and not just the top few percent. Driving through Bend you can see numerous examples of this not being the case- where perhaps profit trumped retaining the spirit of the community.

I believe the path forward being proposed today allows for the inevitable growth, but does so without destroying the community's feel and also does not limit the opportunity to raise a family and make a living in a place that has so much to offer to only the few that can actually afford it. I believe the proposal is the right path to balance growth with maintaining the things about this community that we all love and the drove us all here in the first place, and I believe we are in far better hands with Mr. Hodge and Mr. and Mrs. Schneider shepherding this change than an out of town developer with a focus on the bottom line.

I sincerely hope the Planning Commission votes in favor of the zone change for this proposed development and helps shepherd positive and balanced change that will benefit our community for years to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Valerie Ells